

**Aljazeera TV's Role in Shaping Arab Political  
Awareness  
(The Egyptian Revolution 25 Jan – 11 Feb 2011)**

**Hadeel Sameer Masoud Shqair**

**PhD**

**University of York**

**Theatre, Film, Television and Interactive Media**

**September 2021**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates Aljazeera TV's role in shaping Arab political awareness during the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution, from 25 January to February 11, 2011. Situated within media impact studies based on news content analysis, the research is an ethnographic research on Aljazeera with thematic analysis of its news content during the Revolution. The study aims to understand the channel's role between covering the events on the one hand, and participating in the event on the other hand. The study explores how the channel employed its staff and media discourse to play its role in the political change. The research focuses on the emotions in journalism, arguing that Aljazeera, by satisfying the audience's cognitive and emotional needs, was able to gain their trust over a long period of time, which enabled it to influence the shaping of their political awareness.

Based on the aims of the study, I employ semi-structured interviews and archive analysis to produce an intimate narrative analytical account of the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in a notable and important level of detail. The study primarily focuses on the themes and impact of Aljazeera's main news bulletin, news reports and political commentary of the Arab thinker Azmi Bishara during the Revolution through an analysis of the archive. To understand how the channel produced its coverage of the Revolution, the study depends on semi-structured interviews with Aljazeera staff who produced the coverage.

The analysis shows how Aljazeera overcame the Egyptian authorities' measures against it and broadcast all that the regime's media ignored and denied during the Egyptian Revolution. Aljazeera employs the themes and visual elements of its news content in favour of the revolutionaries, which contradicted the objective journalism principles, and contributed to the benefit of the Revolution by encouraging, alerting and guiding the revolutionaries.

The results of this research illustrate that satisfying Arab audience's needs for knowledge and collective values enhances Arab television media's ability to influence the audience's attitudes. Aljazeera, by employing its financial capabilities, network of correspondents and dealing with news in a different approach from what Arab media used to adopt, satisfies Arab viewers' needs for knowledge and collective values. This role, regardless of hidden agendas, would increase in awareness that enables people to monitor regimes, challenge it, and eventually move to demand their rights through revolutions.

## LIST OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>PAGE 2</b>
<b>LIST OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE 3</b>
<b>LIST OF IMAGES</b>	<b>PAGE 6</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>PAGE 7</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>PAGE 8</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>PAGE 9</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 9
1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	PAGE 10
1.3. RESEARCH CONTEXT	PAGE 11
1.4. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE	PAGE 14
1.5. CHAPTER OUTLINE	PAGE 15
1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	PAGE 16
1.6.1. ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH	PAGE 17
1.6. 2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	PAGE 19
1.6. 2 .1. ARCHIVAL DATA	PAGE 20
1.6. 2 .2. INTERVIEWS	PAGE 21
1.7. CONCLUSION	PAGE 24
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>PAGE 25</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 25
2.2. LITERATURE ON ALJAZEERA	PAGE 26
2.2.1. DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE	PAGE 26
2.2.2. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE	PAGE 30
2.2.3. THE ALJAZEERA IMPACT LITERATURE	PAGE 32
2.2.4. ALJAZEERA NEWS PRODUCTION LITERATURE	PAGE 36
2.3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	PAGE 37
2.3.1. JOURNALISM & EMOTIONS	PAGE 39
2.4. CONCLUSION	PAGE 40
<b>CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>PAGE 42</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 42
3.2. THE BIRTH OF ALJAZEERA	PAGE 43
3.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALJAZEERA'S VALUES	PAGE 45
3.4. OBJECTIVITY AND BIAS	PAGE 48
3.5. REASONS WHY ALJAZEERA IS A PHENOMENON	PAGE 52
3.5.1. SPECIALIZATION	PAGE 52
3.5.2. STAFF QUALITY	PAGE 54
3.5.3. PRESENTING ALL PERSPECTIVES	PAGE 58
3.5.4. FREEDOM	PAGE 61
3.5.5. ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF CRITICAL EVENTS	PAGE 62
3.5.5.1. THE 2 <sup>ND</sup> PALESTINIAN UPRISING – 2000	PAGE 63
3.5.5.2. THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN – 2001	PAGE 66
3.5.5.3. IRAQ WAR – 2003	PAGE 70
3.5.5.4. GAZA WAR – 2008/2009	PAGE 73
3.5.5.5. ARAB REVOLUTIONS – 2010/2011	PAGE 75

3.6. CONCLUSION	PAGE 80
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: THE JOURNALISTIC PROCEDURES OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION</b>	<b>PAGE 82</b>
4.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 82
4.2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCEDURES OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE	PAGE 82
4.2.1. THE CONTINUOUS COVERAGE DECISION	PAGE 83
4.2.2. CUTTING OFF THE INTERNET AND PHONE SERVICE	PAGE 89
4.2.3. THE CLOSURE OF ALJAZEERA'S BUREAU	PAGE 91
4.2.4. ALJAZEERA'S TEAM IN TAHRIR SQUARE	PAGE 93
4.2.5. CUTTING OFF ALJAZEERA'S BROADCAST SIGNAL ON NILESAT	PAGE 96
4.2.6. THE CAMEL BATTLE	PAGE 98
4.2.7. NEWS SOURCES AND UTILIZING THE CITIZEN JOURNALISM	PAGE 103
4.3. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OVER THE OBJECTIVITY OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE	PAGE 106
4.3.1. ALJAZEERA'S CAMERAS ON TAHRIR SQUARE	PAGE 106
4.3.2. ALJAZEERA'S PROMOS	PAGE 110
4.3.3. ALJAZEERA'S PRESENTERS PERFORMANCE	PAGE 113
4.3.4. THE PHONE-INS	PAGE 118
4.4. CONCLUSION	PAGE 119
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: ALJAZEERA'S HARVEST BULLETIN DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION</b>	<b>PAGE 122</b>
5.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 122
5.2. HARVEST BULLETIN'S THEMES	PAGE 123
5.2.1. DEMONSTRATING THE POWER OF THE REVOLUTION	PAGE 124
5.2.2. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE DEMANDS OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE MISTAKES OF THE REGIME	PAGE 132
5.2.3. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION IN EGYPT	PAGE 136
5.2.4. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WITH THE ARMY	PAGE 140
5.2.5. PROMOTING THE SYMBOLISM OF TAHRIR SQUARE	PAGE 141
5.2.6. IDENTIFYING THE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE	PAGE 142
5.3. HARVEST BULLETIN'S VISUAL CONTENT	PAGE 153
5.4. CONCLUSION	PAGE 160
<b>CHAPTER SIX: ALJAZEERA'S NEWS REPORTS DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION</b>	<b>PAGE 161</b>
6.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 161
6.2. ALJAZEERA'S EDITORIAL STANDARDS FOR NEWS REPORTS	PAGE 162
6.2.1. THE REPORTS' LENGTH	PAGE 163
6.2.2. THE REPORTS' STYLE AND LANGUAGE	PAGE 164
6.2.3. THE REPORTS' OBJECTIVITY	PAGE 167
6.2.4. THE REPETITION OF REPORTS	PAGE 169
6.3. NEWS REPORTS ANALYSIS	PAGE 171
6.3.1. MAZEN IBRAHIM REPORT - 8 FEBRUARY 2011	PAGE 172
6.3.2. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 28 JANUARY 2011	PAGE 174
6.3.3. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 31 JANUARY 2011	PAGE 178
6.3.4. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 6 FEBRUARY 2011	PAGE 180
6.3.5. FATIMA TRIKI REPORT – 6 FEBRUARY 2011	PAGE 182
6.3.6. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT - 11 FEBRUARY 2011	PAGE 184
6.4. CONCLUSION	PAGE 187

<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: ALJAZEERA'S POLITICAL EXPERT'S COMMENTARY DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION</b>	<b>PAGE 188</b>
7.1. INTRODUCTION	PAGE 188
7.2. WHY AZMI BISHARA?	PAGE 189
7.2.1. BISHARA'S INTELLECTUAL APPROACH	PAGE 190
7.2.2. BISHARA'S KNOWLEDGE	PAGE 195
7.2.3. BISHARA'S STYLE OF PRESENTATION	PAGE 197
7.3. ANALYSIS OF BISHARA'S POLITICAL COMMENTARY DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION	PAGE 199
7.3.1. CONTEXT OF ENCOURAGEMENT	PAGE 201
7.3.2. CONTEXT OF WARNING	PAGE 207
7.3.3. CONTEXT OF GUIDANCE	PAGE 214
7.4. CONCLUSION	PAGE 217
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>PAGE 218</b>
8.1. FRAMING THE DISCUSSION	PAGE 218
8.2. ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION	PAGE 219
8.3. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ALJAZEERA'S ROLE IN SHAPING THE POLITICAL AWARENESS OF ARAB	PAGE 225
8.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES	PAGE 227
8.5. FINAL THOUGHTS	PAGE 228
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>PAGE 230</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>PAGE 233</b>

**LIST OF IMAGES**

<b>Image 1:</b> Egypt in the heart of the Middle East	Page 14
<b>Image 2:</b> Tahrir Square Area	Page 107
<b>Image 3:</b> Tahrir Square Area	Page 107
<b>Image 4:</b> Egyptian State TV, 3 February 2011	Page 120
<b>Image 5:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011	Page 126
<b>Image 6:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 131
<b>Image 7:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011	Page 131
<b>Image 8:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 29 January 2011	Page 134
<b>Image 9:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 30 January 2011	Page 134
<b>Image 10:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 137
<b>Image 11:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 137
<b>Image 12:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 29 January 2011	Page 145
<b>Image 13:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011	Page 152
<b>Image 14:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011	Page 154
<b>Image 15:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011	Page 154
<b>Image 16:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 156
<b>Image 17:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 156
<b>Image 18:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 156
<b>Image 19:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011	Page 157
<b>Image 20:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 30 January 2011	Page 159
<b>Image 21:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 31 January 2011	Page 159
<b>Image 22:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 31 January 2011	Page 159
<b>Image 23:</b> Fawzi Bushra Report, 28 January 2011	Page 177
<b>Image 24:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 29 January 2011	Page 198
<b>Image 25:</b> Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 30 January 2011	Page 198

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have received a great deal of support.

I would first like to thank my university, the **University of York**, for all the support they gave me to overcome difficulties and ensure my safety in carrying out my research journey.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisors, **Professor Kristyn Gorton** and **Dr. Edward Braman**, whose expertise was invaluable in guiding throughout my studies. You provided me with the tools that I needed to choose the right direction, and your insightful feedback pushed me to sharpen my thinking and brought my work to a higher level.

I would also like to thank the Head of Theatre, Film, Television and Interactive Media, **Professor Duncan Petrie** and **Dr. Jenna Ng**, for their useful critiques of this research work.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge **Aljazeera Media Network** for their cooperation in conducting interviews in Doha, even though it was during the most difficult times of COVID-19.

I am indebted also to **the Jordanian Embassy in the UK** for helping me with my travel arrangements during the time of the pandemic.

Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the support of my husband, **Dr. Sultan Alotain**, for his wise counsel and sympathetic ear, and for providing stimulating discussions. You are always there for me. I also thank my daughter, **Hadeel**, for having endured what is difficult for a child to bear while I was busy, and for praying for me as if she were my mother.

*I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.*



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

'If you polled Arab leaders and asked:  
Which would you get rid of first, Israel or  
Al-Jazeera?  
Al-Jazeera would win hands down.'

—Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 2001

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

During the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, Aljazeera allocated exceptional live coverage to Egypt, dropped its regular schedule, and stopped its programmes, providing more coverage for the Egyptian Revolution than other Arab news channels. Since the first days of the Revolution, the Egyptian authorities closed Aljazeera's office in Cairo, cut off the channel's broadcast on Nilesat, and imprisoned a number of its reporters. As a result, the channel sent reporters from Doha to work in Egypt secretly, thus Aljazeera was in Tahrir square all the time. Montaser Marai, one of Aljazeera's staff who was secretly reporting from inside Tahrir Square says, during an interview (M. Marai 2020, personal communication, 26 March): 'A thief does not steal except in darkness, Aljazeera camera in Tahrir Square was like a light so as no thief can come to steal the Revolution'. The light that protected the Revolution came from a 'matchbox', the description that Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak<sup>1</sup>, gave to Aljazeera when he visited its studios 12 years before the Revolution. He exclaimed: 'All this noise is coming out of this matchbox!' (The Economist, 2001). At that time, Aljazeera's noise had not yet reached the level of noise that the channel would cause later during the Revolution. Mubarak's astonishment was, according to the political commentator Thomas Friedman, that Aljazeera was a 'tiny TV station in the smallest Arab state, which had taken away many TV viewers in Egypt, the biggest Arab state' (Friedman, 2001. p.23).

---

<sup>1</sup> Fourth President of the Arab Republic of Egypt from 14 October 1981 to 11 February 2011.

I began to crystallize the idea of this study after years of careful critical observation of the role played by Aljazeera since its inception and through the significant events in the Middle East. Such close examination enabled me to identify the key research question, as many believe that Aljazeera played an important role in raising Arabs' awareness regarding the political events and to an extent affected Arab revolutions. The study considers the nature of Aljazeera's role given the different opinions of those who believe that Aljazeera played a major role in the events of the Middle East, and those who believe that its role was limited to influencing the political awareness of Arabs, and those who see that Aljazeera did not make any difference. Thus, this study aims to monitor and analyse Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution so that the nature of the coverage and its procedures, style, and themes are clear through this analysis.

Since it is a television channel that has been considered an element in a political conflict, this requires research to understand the nature of its role. This role has involved it in politics more than other television channels in the Middle East, to the extent that it has created enemies, especially from the ruling political regimes in the Arab world. As politics and media overlap, an issue which media studies discuss, and Television studies particularly, Aljazeera channel is in the middle of this area of overlap between politics and media. In this respect, the study assumes the multiplicity of elements that contribute to the media content of the channel and contribute to activating its role in politics. This research is a contribution to the ongoing debate over the nature of Aljazeera's role in Arab world, and during the 18 days of Egyptian Revolution in particular.

## **1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What effect did Aljazeera have on Arab political awareness?
- What is the nature of Aljazeera's role during its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, between covering the events on the one hand, and participating in the event on the other hand?

- How did Aljazeera employ its staff, technology, media discourse, news bulletins, news reports and political commentary to play its role in the political change during the Egyptian Revolution?

### **1.3. RESEARCH CONTEXT**

Since the launch of the first regular Arabic television broadcast in Iraq in 1956, Lebanon in 1959, Egypt in 1960, Kuwait in 1961, Morocco in 1962, Tunisia in 1966 and Jordan in 1968, television, instead of radio, became the major medium for Arab citizens to know news. In the beginning, Arab television was a means of entertainment, but it soon was under the sovereignty of the authorities and a tool used by Arab political regimes to pass their messages, as every regime in the Arab world imposed its control over local television, especially over news. The control of the regimes was evident when the television stations were ignoring events that the authorities wanted to avoid showing to the people. In a documentary titled *Arab Television between Governance and Opposition*, Professor of International Media at Cairo University, Sami Al-Sharif, explains that Egyptian television did not cover the events of January 1977 which included protests in Cairo streets after the government decision to lift subsidies on basic goods, including bread, but instead broadcast a comedy play to keep Egyptians at home (Al Jazeera Documentary, 2017). Moroccan television also did not mention anything about the events of the June 20, 1981 strike in Morocco, which was suppressed violently by the security forces (Al Jazeera Documentary, 2017). In Jordan, Former Director General of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, Bayan Al-Tal, confirms that in 1996, in an attempt to block the news, the government did not like Jordan TV to use the name 'bread riots' for Karak protests against increasing the bread prices (Al Jazeera Documentary, 2017).

Arabs in the Middle East remained hostage to the official national television channels, until private Arab television channels were launched during the nineties, including MBC, ART, and Orbit, followed by the launch of news channels like Aljazeera, the Qatari-based Arabic language television satellite channel, as the first specialised Arab news channel launched in 1996. In his book *Al Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World*, the journalist Hugh Miles (2005) describes the state of Arab satellite channels compared to Aljazeera:

Many of these new TV stations are simply Arabic versions of successful Western channels. The other Arab satellite news channels which have sprung up in recent years, like Abu Dhabi TV and AlArabiya, are clear imitations of AlJazeera, and other, established channels, like the LBC (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation), Future, MBC, ART, Orbit, ANN and many state television news channels, have changed their style to be more like Aljazeera (Miles, 2005, p. 329).

Miles' description becomes clear considering what Aljazeera established soon after its inception, as it formed a media and political phenomenon distinct from the prevailing Arab media style. The channel's distinction was evident in the nature of its media message, and the boldness in presenting issues, especially in its programs such as *The Opposite Direction*, which discusses sensitive political issues in a bold unprecedented manner in Arab media. From the Palestinian Uprising in 2000, Afghanistan war in 2001, Iraq war in 2003, Gaza War in 2008 to Arab revolutions, which I will discuss in Chapter Three, Aljazeera was the most watched news channel in the Middle East. Professor of Critical Theory Mohamed Zayani in *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* (2005) mentions that Aljazeera was widely watched in the Arab and Islamic world, according to a 2002 Gallup poll conducted in nine countries. The poll's results indicate that 'viewers in countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon are more likely to turn to Al Jazeera first to catch up on world events' (Zayani et al., 2005, p. 4). Zayani attributes the distinctiveness of Aljazeera to several reasons. The unique access to information, which may not otherwise be available, providing comprehensive coverage of news and events, being committed to bold live unedited and unfiltered news without screening out controversial statements, offering courageous reporting, the honesty and the journalistic objectivity of its reporting were the main factors that made the viewers vote for Aljazeera (Zayani et al., 2005, p. 4). The poll's findings regarding Aljazeera's popularity were embodied in what the former prime minister and foreign minister of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabor Al Thani mentions during an interview on *Qatar TV* that the aim of the establishment of Aljazeera was to be heard by all Arabs and non-Arabs, and to be as neutral as possible. He asserts that after two or three years of establishment, he felt regretful because of the many problems that Aljazeera caused to the State of Qatar. Bin Jabor Al Thani indicates that the channel adhered to a certain line that 'opened a

horizon for Arab citizen to know the truth' while 'there are certain Arab countries that were not used to the freedom of expression' (Bin Jabor Al Thani, 2017).

At the end of 2010, Arab people began to move and shift from the stage of demanding political reforms to the stage of calling for the removal of the rulers and political regimes with acceleration that the Arab region never witnessed before. From Tunisia, to Egypt, then Libya, Syria and Yemen, once a revolution ends with the realization of its demands in a country, another new revolution erupts in another country. The revolutions of these countries which coincided in some of their events and results were not a result of the moment but a result of political, economic and social accumulations and demands for many years, until it matured into a revolution. Aljazeera was the companion of the Arab citizen in his/her journey to the stage of revolution.

Aljazeera devoted its broadcast to the events of Arab revolutions, one after the other, with non-stop coverage and up-to-the-minute reporting from the streets. At this stage, *Foreign Policy* reported that the expectations of many Arabs became a reality that Aljazeera would help spark a popular revolution in the Middle East, asserting that Aljazeera played a prominent role in the Tunisian revolution and Egyptian Revolution which ended with the overthrow of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes (Alnabulsi, 2011, p.85). The magazine pointed out that because of Aljazeera influence in the Arab region the tyrannical Arab regimes have become threatened by protests that may include Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (Alnabulsi, 2011, p.86). As *Foreign Policy* expected, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt severed diplomatic relations with Qatar and imposed an economic and political blockade on it, on June 5th, 2017, accusing Qatar of funding terrorism across the Middle East for decades. The anti-Qatar alliance issued a 13-point list of demands to end the crisis, shut down Aljazeera TV and its affiliate stations was one of these demands. Aljazeera has condemned the call for its closure as 'nothing but an attempt to end freedom of expression in the region and suppress the right to information' (Aljazeera.net, 2017). In an interview with Charlie Rose, Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, responded to the demand that he would not close the channel, confirming: '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' (Bin Hamad Al Thani, 2017).

#### **1.4. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE**

Scholars from disciplines including media, communication and political science have studied Aljazeera channel from political media perspective, without looking in depth at its journalistic procedures, themes, and approach to dealing with events that enable it to play a role in influencing the audience. Thus, it is important to study Aljazeera from the perspective of journalistic work and its impact on the public, which this study does through conducting semi-structured interviews and archive analysis. The significance of the study lies in producing a detailed ethnographic analytical account of the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. It is also important to understand how the channel employed elements of the television media process to be able to conduct the coverage and play a role in that stage. Focusing on the details of Aljazeera's coverage of Revolution, by studying its news content in terms of the journalistic procedures and the dominant themes in the news bulletins, news reports and political commentary, contributes to deeply understand the channel's effect on a critical stage in the history of the Arab region. This understanding of Aljazeera's role indicates the extent to which the media, and specifically television, can influence the political situation and public attitudes of Arab.

The significance of the study is related to the importance of Egypt and the event. Egypt's strategic location in the heart of the Middle East, with 101,264,179 population, in the population census of 2020 (CAPMAS, 2020), and being the administrative centre of the League of Arab States, makes Egypt an indicator that by understanding a situation related to it we can understand the state of the Arab world in general. Thus, studying Aljazeera's influence on Egypt reflects the influence of news television channels on Arabs. As for the significance of the event, it lies in the fact that the 2011 revolutions were the first time that the ruling regime in the Arab world changed following a popular movement, and not a military coup. This makes it important to understand the role of the media in the region.



*Image 1: Egypt in the heart of the Middle East*

## 1.5. CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis is organised into 8 chapters. The following provides an overall description of each chapter:

**CHAPTER 1** introduces the thesis, presenting the research questions, the context of the research and its significance, and detailing the methods chosen to investigate the research topic.

**CHAPTER 2** is divided into two subsections, with the first section exploring the previous literature about Aljazeera channel. This section looks specifically at the descriptive literature, comparative literature, the Aljazeera impact literature and Aljazeera news production literature, highlighting the contribution of this research. The second section discusses the emotions in journalism.

**CHAPTER 3** addresses the historical context surrounding Aljazeera, which is important to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the presence and role of the channel in the event under study. Through employing semi-structured interviews with Aljazeera staff and using secondary literature, this chapter focuses on Aljazeera channel's history, the objectivity, and bias in its discourse, and the reasons that made it a phenomenon in Arab media. Aljazeera's coverage of critical events is addressed, including the second Palestinian uprising, the war on Afghanistan, Iraq war, Gaza war and Arab revolutions.

**CHAPTER 4** explores the details of the journalistic procedures of Aljazeera's live coverage of the Egyptian Revolution through using semi-structured interviews with Aljazeera staff who produced the coverage. This chapter focuses on the measures taken by the channel to face the challenges that were imposed by the Egyptian authorities. It also discusses the controversial issues over the objectivity of Aljazeera's coverage.

**CHAPTER 5** This chapter is organised around the dominant themes in the main news bulletin in Aljazeera, the *Harvest Bulletin*. Analysing the archive focusing on these themes beside the visual content of the bulletin helps in understanding the role that Aljazeera played in the Revolution, between covering the event and participating in it.

**CHAPTER 6** presents an analysis of six of Aljazeera's news reports that broadcast during the period under study. These reports show Aljazeera's style of news reports, particularly its in-house reports, which have become known among Arab media researchers as the journalists Fawzi Bushra and Fatima Triki's reports. Analysing these reports helps to understand Aljazeera's role in the Egyptian Revolution, through understanding Aljazeera's thought which appears in these reports explicitly and frankly in texts that clarify the channel's thought and opinion, unlike the Harvest bulletin's themes which reflects the channel's thought implicitly and indirectly.

**CHAPTER 7** discusses the political commentary of the Arab intellectual Azmi Bishara on Aljazeera during the Egyptian Revolution. By examining the details of Bishara's political commentary, and analysing the themes of Bishara's discourse, approach, and emotional impact at the time of the Egyptian Revolution, this chapter helps to understand Bishara's role in the Revolution as a critical part of the general content that Aljazeera provided to the Arab viewer during the eighteen days of the Revolution .

**CHAPTER 8** concludes the thesis, presenting a narrative based on the findings drawn from the detailed aspects of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, and detailing the understanding of the nature of Aljazeera's role in shaping the political awareness of Arab, and detailing the contribution to knowledge. Recommendations for future studies are also discussed.

## **1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

I use an ethnographic analytical approach, aims at reaching 'an accurate understanding of the big picture' (Braun, 2006. p.102). This conception I tried to figure through digging into the previous research about Aljazeera's news coverage, but mostly found conclusions concerned with numbers without discussing what is 'important to the description of a phenomenon' (Daly, Kellehear and Gliksman, 1997, p. 611). Thus, this research demonstrates the value of employing an ethnographic approach to create an intimate narrative and thick description of Aljazeera channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution.



As I examine Aljazeera's archive of the Egyptian Revolution coverage and employ semi-structured interviews with Aljazeera staff who produced the coverage, thematic analysis is the path I chose to take the news content and the historical experience through to identify implicit and explicit ideas within the data, going beyond merely counting phrases or words in a text (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). This thesis, with thematic analysis, reveals the meanings by paying attention to the details of the channel's main news bulletin, news reports and political expert's commentary.

I discuss the emotions that Aljazeera's coverage might have provoked among the Arab audience in general, and the Egyptian audience in particular, during the period of the Egyptian Revolution, since 'emotion is an important territory to be considered within a study of television audiences' (Gorton, 2009. p.2). The importance of studying emotions lies in the fact that Aljazeera, in its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, provided, in addition to news and information, content that did not fall within the news or educational content, such as the demonstrations images, enthusiastic songs and music. Thus, it is important to consider the presenters' performance, the language of news reports and political commentary. Therefore, examining these elements highlights the emotions they might have provoked, which are the emotions that result from the collective values of the Arab audience, such as Arabism, nationalism and religion, in addition to emotions based on the values of civil society, such as enthusiasm for democracy, freedoms and social justice.

Aiming at creating an intimate narrative of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in a significant level of details, I employ ethnographic methods, which I discuss in the next section, as it is vigorous methodology to achieve the methodological contribution of this research.

### **1.6.1. ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

Ethnographic methods are qualitative, inductive and exploratory, capable of achieving a dense and rich description over a relatively narrow area. As a research approach, ethnography has been used to address several types of media-related issues, divide into two categories: audience ethnography or media production ethnographies (Murphy, 2003, p.385). Relating to this research's subject, production ethnographies is the area under study. Concerning media organizations and professionals in the contexts of the

cultural industries and creative personnel involved in media production, Aljazeera channel and its staff are under focus here.

In order to produce ethnographic descriptions rigorous enough to be considered scientific, Patrick D. Murphy (2003) asserts that 'media ethnographers need to labor more purposely with bringing the process to the product in an effort to evoke a fuller sense of place, context, community, intercultural exchange, and, yes, the consciousness that is articulating that experience' (p.397).

I chose to study Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution qualitatively, as I seek to 'build a complex and holistic picture, analyse words, report detailed views of informants, and conduct the study in a natural setting' (Creswell, 2007, p.15). Creswell in his *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions* explains the strengths of conducting qualitative research:

We also conduct qualitative research because we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature...We also use qualitative research because quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem. Interactions among people, for example, are difficult to capture with existing measures, and these measures may not be sensitive to issues such as gender differences, race, economic status, and individual differences. To level all individuals to a statistical mean overlooks the uniqueness of individuals in our studies. Qualitative approaches are simply a better fit for our research problem (Creswell, 2007, p.40).

In additional discussion, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) in their *Handbook of Qualitative Research* show the distinctive nature of the qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3)

Conducting the research qualitatively led me to talk directly with Aljazeera staff, who produced the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. In ethnographic research 'doing fieldwork has constituted a sort of rite of passage' (Murphy, 2003, p.381) to create a narrative account that complements the study's analysis, which depends initially on archive analysis of the coverage, a research technique whose two pillars I explain in the next section.

### **1.6.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Within a huge number of references, having more than one method to answer the research questions is considered as a key point for validity in research design (Davies, 2006, p.33). 'Unquestionably, the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information' (Creswell, 2007, p.43), Creswell extends his emphasis on the multiplicity of data sources in his short list of 'characteristics of a good qualitative study':

The researcher employs rigorous data collection procedures. This means that the researcher collects multiple forms of data, adequately summarizes-perhaps in tabled form-the forms of data and detail about them, and spends adequate time in the field. It is not unusual for qualitative studies to include information about the specific amount of time in the field. I especially like to see unusual forms of qualitative data collection, such as using photographs to elicit responses, sounds, visual materials, or digital text messages (Creswell, 2007, p.45).

It is not necessarily that the multiplicity of data sources leads to using multiple types of data analysis, but in this research I see that it is important to combine data analysis methods to strengthen the study, especially since I deal with different types of data from different sources, and I conduct a qualitative study that 'explore the shadow side or unusual angles' of a case (Creswell, 2007, p.43). In the same context, Yin in his *Case Study Research: Design and Method* says that the type of analysis of such data can be a holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of a specific aspect of the case (Yin, 2003). Yin, Stake and Creswell agree that it is a rich analysis if the researcher goes through a detailed description of the case (Stake, 1995) in which she/he shows aspects of the history of the case, the chronology of events, or a day-by-day rendering of the activities of the case (Creswell, 2007, p.75). After the detailed description, the research continue with focusing on a few key issues or analysis of

themes to understand the complexity of the case and to show both expected and surprising aspects (Stake, 1995, p.123). Creswell explains this strategy:

We examine the qualitative data working inductively from particulars to more general perspectives, whether these perspectives are called themes, dimensions, codes, or categories. One helpful way to see this process is to 'recognize it as working through multiple levels of abstraction, starting with the raw data and forming larger and larger categories....We (re)present our data, partly based on participants' perspectives and partly based on our own interpretation, never clearly escaping our own personal stamp on a study. Throughout the slow process of collecting data and analyzing them, we shape our narrative-a narrative with many forms in qualitative research. We tell a story that unfolds over time. (Creswell, 2007, p.43)

I analyse archival content and interviews. Through analysis of Aljazeera's news bulletin, reports, and approach in dealing with the events, I attempt to understand the role of the channel in the critical events in the Middle East, focusing on the Egyptian Revolution, the nature of this role, its procedures and tools. To analyse the content of media texts I use ethnographic approach with focus on thematic analysis. Although this study focuses on Aljazeera's news coverage during the Egyptian Revolution, I discuss the channel's history at the beginning. I begin this study with a historical background of Aljazeera's news coverage of the critical events since the birth of the channel leading up to the event under study.

Based on the above and in the light of my research questions and my research scope, I chose to use two methods to collect the data:

#### **1.6.2.1. ARCHIVAL DATA**

The first part of the study depends on accessing Aljazeera's archive of its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, as the news content is the backbone of this study. The news content which I analysed help to answer the research questions, as well as raising points to be explored through the other method, the interviews.

Aljazeera's archival content that I obtained from the channel consists of six hours per day for the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution from January 25 till February 11, 2011. The archive includes three parts, which represent a purposive sample of the channel's coverage of the Revolution that I chose based on my observation of the channel's coverage during the period under study. This material is divided as following:

- Aljazeera's main news bulletin, the *Harvest Bulletin, Alhassad* in Arabic.
- Aljazeera's news reports.
- The Political commentary of the political philosopher and intellectual Azmi Bishara.

I used thematic analysis to analyse the archival material as it 'works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality'' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.81), by 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (2006, p.79). After transcribing the archival material, I started searching across the data set to find repeated patterns of meaning (2006, p.86). Since the theme is what 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (2006, p.82), I looked for emerging themes from the news bulletin, news reports, and political commentary organising from general into specific, with commentary supported by excerpts from the data.

Thus, the thematic analysis of the archival content is a major part of my research to produce a deep and intimate ethnographic and analytical account of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, primarily strengthened by the analysis of the interviews with those responsible for creating the archival content.

#### **1.6.2.2. INTERVIEWS**

After obtaining the archive of the news coverage under study, transcribing it and analyzing it thematically, I conducted interviews with the channel's staff who produced the coverage, as they are the specialists in the field and witnesses to the production process. Ann Oakley defines the interviewing process as 'rather like marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets' (Oakley, 1981, p. 31) which explains the reason I chose the interview method to collect the information on the research. The kind of data a researcher can obtain from interviews cannot be collected by surveys or observation or archive. The use of in-depth interviews put the researcher in a better position to get the data from the interviewees. Through changing from one subject to the other, the

researcher can effectively comprehend and thus easily identify any dominant institutions and powers that tint their own lenses and frame personal views, as any research interview is a social process based on exchanging of ideas and meanings, which leads to explore and develop various realities and perceptions (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). As 'the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather explore the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue' (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 5), the semi-structured interviews are the best choice to get data in this research. Since the nature of this research needs a more in-depth data gathering method, the semi-structured interviews make it possible for actors in various levels and organizational positions of decision-making processes to present their insights.

Before interviewing, two basic elements must be considered: what to ask and whom to talk to, which is known as the topic guide. A good topic guide creates an easy and comfortable framework for a discussion, providing a logical and plausible progression through the subject of the study, as it should be essentially designed to capture the aims and objectives of the research and based on a critical reading of the literature, observation of the field, discussions with experienced colleagues, and creative thinking (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 4). So, to choose the people to interview, I went through the list of Aljazeera's staff in the sectors of interest to my research, and chose members of the staff who produced the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in editorial and managerial positions, as well as journalists and reporters who wrote the news stories, news directors and producers, who were still working in the channel at the time of the interviews. In Doha Qatar, I conducted fifteen in-depth interviews to obtain the details I need to know regarding the journalistic procedures of the coverage that were conducted both at the channel's main headquarters in Doha, and in the field in Egypt, and to draw a substantive picture of Aljazeera's own perspective of its role in Arab political awareness during the Revolution, beside the perspective I try to figure through the archival material regarding the same topic. The list of interviewees is as follows:

- Abdelfattah Fayed, Editor of Egyptian affairs at Aljazeera, the channel's Cairo Bureau Chief during the Egyptian Revolution.
- Montaser Marai, Manager of Media development, news producer and field correspondent in Aljazeera in Tahrir Square during the Revolution.

- Mostefa Souag, the director general of Aljazeera, the news director during the Revolution.
- Mohamed Dawood, Executive Director of Quality and Editorial Standards in Aljazeera, News Planning Director during the Revolution.
- Jamal Rayyan, Principle Presenter at Aljazeera.
- Mohamed Krichen, Principle Presenter at Aljazeera.
- Khadija Binguenna, Principal Presenter at Aljazeera.
- Ahmed Alsheikh, Media Advisor to the Chairman of Aljazeera, editor-in-chief during the Revolution.
- Jamal Elshayyal, correspondent and producer at Aljazeera during the Revolution.
- Fawzi Bushra, senior journalist.
- Fatima Triki, senior journalist.
- Yasser Bishr, the Executive Director of Digital at Aljazeera.
- Tayseer Allouni, Director of Aljazeera bureau in Afghanistan.
- Tamer Meshal, Aljazeera correspondent in Gaza.
- Azmi Bishara, Arabic intellectual, political philosopher and author.

The interviews questions, appended to the Appendices section, ranged from questions about the beginning of the persons' work in the channel, to then go deeper discussing their view of the channel and its principles and values and its presence in the Arab and international media. Then the questions moved on to detailed discussion of the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in three aspects. The first aspect addressed the journalistic procedures conducted by the channel to produce the coverage. The second aspect focused on the news content of the coverage, including the main news bulletin, the reports of journalists Bushra and Triki, and the political commentary of the thinker Bishara. The third aspect discussed the reasons that enabled the channel to accomplish the work in this way.

Good quality transcripts of the interviews are the first step toward the analysis which aims to look for meanings and understanding, since what is actually said is the data, but the analysis should go beyond looking for common content themes and the functions of these themes. Analysis and interpretation require involving in reading with the traditional techniques, marking, adding notes to the text, the identification of

concordance in the context of certain words, note cards and card sorts, and finally thematic analysis (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 18-19).

### **1.7. CONCLUSION**

This study is designed to explore Aljazeera's role in shaping the political awareness in Arab region, through studying the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, besides discussing its history, values and its coverage of critical events. Since this study of Aljazeera is ethnographic study situated within media impact studies based on news content analysis, employing semi-structured interviews and archival analysis aim to produce an intimate narrative analytical account of the Egyptian Revolution in a significant level of detail. In the next chapters of the research, and after reviewing the literature, I start answering the research questions, moving from the broader scope of Aljazeera's influence to the specific scope of the study. After addressing the history of the channel, I look at its influence in the eighteen days of the Egyptian revolution in a significant level of detail.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Since this research studies the role of Aljazeera, I focus in the first section of this chapter on previous literature that has dealt with the channel in various aspects. Furthermore, given the broader context within which this research is located, and since the study examines the role of a news channel in political awareness during a pivotal political stage, I focus on emotions in journalism in particular.

By reviewing previous studies published before the emergence of Aljazeera, I have faced rich body of literature analysing and comparing approaches, aspects, and consequences of the political media effect on the public sphere, studying international channels such as BBC, CNN, and FOX, focusing on major changes in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, while the Middle East in general and Arab world in particular seemed to be lagging behind. Before Aljazeera, the television media in the Arab world did not include political actors to be subject to study. After Aljazeera put an end to the Western media monopoly of the news coverage, especially when international channels relied on it in covering the war in Afghanistan, many studies started to address Aljazeera channel as a political phenomenon.

Many of the studies and articles which address Aljazeera, Arab Studies in particular, attempted to prove that the channel is either an angel, or a devil, and either it was the engine that caused Arab revolutions, or the weapon that brought destruction to the Middle East. This study is a contribution to the debate over Aljazeera's role; especially during an important stage of the signs it carried, such as the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution, to understand the nature of the media's role on the Arab public. My aim, therefore, is to contribute to a more comprehensive and intimate understanding of Aljazeera's news content, procedures and institutional thinking adopting the ethnographic qualitative approach. It is not my aim to prove or disapprove whether Aljazeera is good or bad. I rather explore the ways in which Aljazeera channel played a role in political awareness during a critical stage in the history of the Arab region.

## **2.2. LITERATURE ON ALJAZEERA**

I categorize the literature on Aljazeera into four categories. The first is descriptive presenting Aljazeera channel and network with information and details about its history, which is more of an introduction of Aljazeera as a player in the media field. The second is comparative where Aljazeera is presented along with other news TV channels like the BBC, CNN, Al Arabiya, etc., from a media studies perspective. The third is more politically driven focuses on Aljazeera's impact at the regional and global levels. The fourth focuses on Aljazeera's news production aspect and the journalistic practices.

### **2.2.1. DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE**

The descriptive literature which addresses Aljazeera presents a large amount of information and details, especially about its history, which sometimes weakened the analytical side. Hugh Miles' *Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World* is one of the famous works of this type of literature. It presents historical details about Aljazeera, telling the story of what Miles calls 'a seed planted in the desert' that make 'a splash in the Arab world' (2005, p.v). Miles seeks to show that Aljazeera changed the traditional Arab obstacles bringing free speech to the region:

One Jordanian politician I met, who has written extensively about human rights and the freedom of the press, told me he thought Al-Jazeera was the first step towards an Arab version of the European Union. 'Of course Al-Jazeera is bringing democracy,' he told me. 'Before we had been ignorant about how Arabs lived in other countries; now Jordanians know and care about events on the other side of the world' (Miles, 2005, p. 327).

Despite the large amount of information that Miles provided, especially regarding the historical account of the important events covered by Aljazeera, the voices he used in his book were of people who witnessed those stages, and not those who made the coverage. Therefore, in addressing the case of my study, the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, I used the testimonies of those who produced the coverage, especially as I am looking at the role of the channel, it is important to understand the perspective of those who worked on it.

Another introductory work by Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, similar to Miles' book approach, explains the idea of 'we are what we watch' (2002, p.1). The

writers try to answer the question of how Aljazeera scooped the world and changed the Middle East, as they mention that it is not only a historical account of how a satellite television network emerged in the Middle East; it is also the story of peoples' quest for freedom of opinion and expression. Comparing Aljazeera's programs with other Arabic televisions, they said: 'Traditionally, most discussion programs on Arabic TV stations are noncontroversial and do little else but serve as a public relations outlet for governments. Al-Jazeera provided the first exposure to opposing voices, using the power and persuasion of television' (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002, p.11). This book mentions one of the important topics this research discusses, Aljazeera's staff as one of the reasons of the channel's success: 'The staff of editors, reporters, and producers-of various Arab nationalities-was grafted into what seemed like an experimental station in an obscure location. Since then, this core group has gone on to formulate the vision and direction of Al-Jazeera' (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2002, p. 32).

The authors emphasize that the final ingredient in the channel's success is its staff, especially as they combine professionalism of Western journalistic traditions, with understanding of Arab politics and audiences, which I address in details in chapter three, in the discussion of Aljazeera's staff quality. In their historical account of the channel's story, the authors did not address the details of the media content and the tools of television coverage, which are the aspects that I study in this research to form an integrated understanding of the case of my study, and not just a narrative.

Tareq Al-Shammari's study, *Al-Jazeera, a Channel or a Party or a State*, also sheds light on the channel's staff, specifically the talk shows and political programs presenters, as an element that shaped the channel's image, but in an accusatory context far from the positive context presented by the previous book. The study tries to identify the 'truth of Al-Jazeera' (2007, p.5), its goals, its media policies and its impact on Arab regimes and the Arab media, and to define the features of this influence with its political and media dimensions. Therefore, the study delves into the research on the extent of the channel's independence. The study concludes that Aljazeera is acting as not only a news channel, but rather a state with a policy that worried Arab regimes, and a political party that has an ideology to move the Arab peoples. And here, Al-Shammari explains that the presenters of Aljazeera programs are biased in their political and ideological orientations when presenting their programs on the channel. In conclusion,

the study confirms that the channel has achieved some goals and interests of Qatari politics. Hence, Al-Shammari's study, despite addressing the media aspect, the political aspect of the channel and its relationship with Qatar dominated the study. Therefore, although Al-Shammari examines the role and influence of the channel, which is the key issue this research discusses, he delves into a broad issue, thinking that it is possible to search for what he calls the 'truth' of the channel, and this is what I was wary of delving into, as I see it detracting from the objectivity and credibility of the study.

Discussing the close connection between Aljazeera and Qatari politics, Mohammed Abualrub's *Al Jazeera and Qatar, Speeches of Policy and Policies of Speech* (2010) is one of the studies which are limited to researching Aljazeera in this aspect only. The study examines the channel's role in building a regional and international standing for Qatar through its 'controversial' coverage of events in the Middle East region. The researcher explains this by understanding Qatari politics within two contexts: Qatar's direct diplomacy through its policy and diplomatic corps on the one hand, and Aljazeera's diplomacy on the other hand. The study reveals that analysing the media discourse of the channel, in the context of its role in shaping Qatar's international relations, showed processes of blocking, moulding and reshaping of events in order to serve the Qatari policy and coverage of its political and economic projects with the United States and Israel. Thus, the study took a political direction in its essence, away from delving into the media aspects of the channel's content, especially since it indicates the existence of confusion in understanding the channel's role towards Qatar.

Although Abualrub studies Aljazeera's media discourse, he did not do so in depth from a media perspective, as he relies in his analysis of the discourse on linking it to Qatari politics and its relations, addressing a long period of time. In the case of my study, in which I study the role of the channel at a specific stage, it is important to delve into the archive to extract the topics that dominate the channel's discourse at that stage, and it is also critical to engage with the coverage makers, seeking to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the case study.

*The Al Jazeera Phenomenon...Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media* includes 11 articles, is also an important source to prove that there are few phenomena that are more controversial in Arab world than Aljazeera. This work takes another angle in

introducing Aljazeera; the contributors to this work present a more complex image of the channel than just describing it, but, as the title shows, criticism against the network was taken a step further. There are many articles in the book which provide additional information on the network, discussing how Aljazeera affected the public and even the foreign policies of Western governments, like R.S Zaharna's *Al Jazeera and American Public Diplomacy: A Dance of Intercultural (Mis-)Communication*, Ehab Y. Bessaiso's *Al Jazeera and the War in Afghanistan: A Delivery System or a Mouthpiece?* and Mohamed Zayani's *Witnessing the Intifada: Al Jazeera's coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*.

This publication is also helpful to have an insight into Aljazeera's agendas, programs, along with coverage of regional crisis. It is primarily focused on understanding Aljazeera's role in Arab politics. One of the chapters, *Influence without Power: Al Jazeera and the Arab Public Sphere*, written by Mohammed El Oifi, focuses on the idea of the 'three conflictual ideologies' that can be seen on Aljazeera's screen:

A close reading of the ideological orientation and editorial line of Al Jazeera in light of the programs it offers, the subjects it emphasizes and the allegiances its leading figures have reveals a subtle balance between three trends: the Arabist, the Islamic and the liberal (2005, p.72).

El Oifi says that Aljazeera has played a central role in liberalizing Arab media discourse, creating an autonomous media narrative and giving the nascent Arab public sphere a platform to develop (2005, p.66). Some aspects discussed in this publication are informative and consistent with what I discuss in my research, so it constitutes a good reference that I used, especially because of the multiplicity of writers, which provides a multiplicity of viewpoints and enrichment of the content.

These studies, and other studies that elaborated on the description of Aljazeera, helped in setting the general perception of my research and the precise definition of its aim. They provided me with a basis for my research, and I relied on them to support the historical context of my study. Although my research studies specific aspects of a specific stage of history, it did not ignore the general picture of the channel while analysing the content of the case under study, which helps to reach a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

### 2.2.2. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The comparative works which discuss Aljazeera present it along with other news TV channels like the BBC, CNN, Al Arabiya, etc. These studies go into detail down to the point that makes the similarities and differences clear, as they study the channels' coverage of a single event.

The emergence of studies comparing Aljazeera's coverage with another Arab news channel was somewhat late, due to the delay in the emergence of an Arab competitor to Aljazeera. As soon as Al Arabiya channel appeared, there were many studies dealing with the two channels' coverage of Arab events in particular. Fares Al-Mahdawi's study *Iraq News in Arab Satellite Channels* (2009) analyses the news content of both Aljazeera and Al Arabiya, and takes from Iraq News a case study as it was an example of the hot and continuous news since the US occupation of Iraq in 2003. The study finds that the Iraqi news case has created a change in the methods of journalistic writing and news editing, due to the huge amount of accelerated news. This change addressed by the study appears precisely in the fact that the news is no longer just a description of current events. Rather, there has become a special method for making the news that has transformed it into a tool through which everyone presents his/her opinion and promotes their ideas, whether for or against what is happening in Iraq. Thus, the researcher concludes that despite the two channels' great interest in Iraq news, their content differed in terms of details, affecting the balance and objectivity in presenting the news. Although Al-Mahdawi's study is similar to my study in its focus on news coverage of an event in a specific period, and its use of content analysis, I relied, in addition to thematic analysis, on interviews with coverage makers, as I delve inside history, the approach that leads to understanding how Aljazeera worked in particular moment.

Another channel that has been compared to Aljazeera in many studies is the BBC. Amel El-Afify's study *The Coverage Tahrir Square Protest from 25 January to 11 February 2011 by Al Jazeera and BBC* (2011) focuses on how the two channels have framed events. El-Afify concludes that there were clear differences in the coverage between them, in terms of choosing and presenting news of the protests. Like most studies in this context, the angle on which the discussion in the study is based is to examine the channel's coverage balance. Thus, the study indicates that although the coverage on the

two channels was in the interest of the demonstrators in general, the coverage of Aljazeera, according to the study, did this more than the BBC which was more neutral in coverage. With the similarities in several aspects between El-Afify's study and my study, I realized the importance of interviewing Aljazeera staff who produced the coverage under study. I found that many studies did not use the interview method, which made me pay attention to the contribution that this method will provide my research with. The close encounter with the archive narrates what went on screen as one side of the historical event, while the interviews provide another critical aspect of the event, leading to a clearer picture of the stage.

With a wider area of comparison and more details, Leon Barkho's *Strategies of Power in Multilingual Global Broadcasters: How the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera Shape their Middle East News Discourse* choose the most prominent news channels, at that time; the British channel, the American and the Arab one, to discuss the issue of objectivity. Barkho criticizes the common views that the news channels under study are objective, unbiased, and present their discourse without the influence of the political authorities on their choices of news content and angles. Comparing between the three institutions, the study concludes with similar findings indicating that 'journalists and editors have to respond to the needs, whether political or economic, of those to whom they owe their existence regardless of their 'ideational' assumptions' (Barkho, 2008, p. 18).

Through my review of comparative studies that compared Aljazeera with other news channels, both Arab and non-Arab, I see that they did not contribute to enriching the research content in television studies as did the studies that I have reviewed in the descriptive literature, and the Aljazeera impact literature, which I discuss in the next section. In many comparative studies, the comparison regarding the objectivity aspect of channel coverage dominated the depth and attention to detail that pertains to television studies. Since these comparative studies are useful when studying narrow aspects to compare between two or three parties, they will not provide much in a case study analysing an important historical stage that bears many results from the past and affects the future. In the case study of this research, understanding the role of Aljazeera in the Egyptian Revolution, and in order for the research to produce the results in depth

and detail, requires including all aspects of specific news coverage, for this specific historical period.

### **2.2.3. THE ALJAZEERA IMPACT LITERATURE**

The studies in this type of literature explore the channel's political, social and cultural impact, regionally and internationally. In addition to the studies introduced and described Aljazeera, the aspects discussed by the studies regarding the impact of the channel constitute the basis for providing a comprehensive understanding of Aljazeera as a phenomenon in the Arab media, helping researchers to identify topics that require further research.

The change Aljazeera contributed in the Arab public sphere is the main focus of these studies. Mufid Al-Zaidi confirms in his study *Al Jazeera Channel, Breaking the Taboos in Arab Media* (2003) that Aljazeera attracted numerous number of Arab viewers, and became the only news source for them despite the availability and multiplicity of the information sources, but what Al-Zaidi calls the channel's professionalism, credibility and experience, presenting opinion and other opinion, and breaking the taboos are the most important factors that made it distinguished among Arab satellite channels and international media. Al-Zaidi believes that what Aljazeera has achieved is due to the experience of its staff and their ability to highlight issues that were prohibited to address before the ordinary Arab citizen in the past. Despite the importance of the subject of the study, the researcher used the survey method to reach the results, while, in my opinion, a broad and important subject such as influence and change in the media needs another method that supports the results of the survey. As my research is similar to Al-Zaidi's in studying the influence of the media, the topic in my research takes two historical contexts, one of which is the main one, which studies the role of Aljazeera in a specific historical stage, the Egyptian Revolution, and the other is supportive of the main one, studying the channel's role in the stage that preceded the case study. Therefore, I decided to diversify collecting data methods, in order to delve deeper into the subject of the study.

Ezzeddine Abdelmoula, in his research *Al-Jazeera's Democratizing Role and the Rise of Arab Public Sphere* (2012) was more specific in his topic than Al-Zaidi, as he dealt with its democratizing role in particular. As the study falls under political science,



Abdelmoula discusses the concept of democracy in depth, which made the research scientifically rich. The research focuses on the hypothesis that Aljazeera has strengthened democratic efforts in the Arab region by creating an intellectual framework based on a plurality of opinions. The study concludes that the Arab Spring made a change, as the media are no longer subject to politics, in the countries where the revolutions took place, and the media gained influence that facilitates and accelerates the pace of changes. Although Abdelmoula's study falls within the framework of political studies, it is one of the important references that I use, especially as he employs the method of interviews to obtain his research data, which enriched his conclusions.

A more detailed version of Aljazeera's transformation of Arab politics can be witnessed in Marc Lynch's *Voices of The New Arab Public...Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (2006), which is a useful reference I use in the historical context chapter. Lynch argues how Aljazeera was able to provide a stable platform to stiffen voices to openly participate in debates regarding Palestine, Islam, Arab identity, Iraq, and other prominent social and political issues by challenging the status of state control:

Such open arguments over the most sensitive issues, involving strong representatives of both sides of the dispute, represent the hallmark of Al-Jazeera's approach to Arab politics. Where Arab public life had for decades been dominated by the voice of the state, Al-Jazeera ushered in a new kind of open, continuous public politics in which a plethora of competing voices clamored for attention (Lynch, 2006, p.2).

In a context related to Lynch's approach, and considering Aljazeera as 'an Arab media ambassador and the voice of the Arab world' (Awwad, 2005, p.vi), Julian Awwad analyses in her research titled *Al-Jazeera's Discourse of 'Arabness'* three live talk shows: *The Opposite Direction*, *Without Boundaries*, and *For Women Only* with the aim of characterizing Aljazeera's cultivation of perceptions of identity through the formation of a discourse of Arabness. Awwad indicates that Aljazeera in constructing a discourse that reinforced the Arab identification on a regional level had used typical anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist terms. Awwad concludes that 'Al-Jazeera could at least claim credit for being the catalyst that sped the opening up of Arab media' and 'for its Arabic-speaking audience, it is an alternative medium through which "Arabs" see themselves through their own eyes' (2005, p.260), especially with its linguistic and

cultural access to events which grants it an edge over its competitors in covering the Arab region (p.257). Awwad's selection of a specific number of the channel's programs to analyse, as well as her choice of a specific concept to focus on in her study, contributed to conclude her study's results with clear concepts.

Over the years, the area of discussion of Aljazeera's impact expanded, so the topics that researchers highlighted in the scope of the channel's impact in the Arab world expanded to address its global impact. While Lynch refers to the impact of the shift in the Arab public sphere on the Arab world's foreign relations, Philip Seib discusses the impact more broadly. Seib in *The Al Jazeera Effect* shows that Aljazeera's impact on international politics is extraordinary as it is making traditional borders irrelevant by unifying peoples scattered across the globe indicating that 'this phenomenon - the Al Jazeera effect - is reshaping the world' (Seib, 2008, p. xii). On the other hand, Seib says that although the media has the power to affect, it cannot force change, but it can only inspire it; 'media effects are just parts of a large political universe, the constituent of which must come into alignment if democratization is to take hold' (Seib, 2008, p. 141).

Before the Arab revolutions that began in 2011, studies on the impact of Aljazeera continued focusing on the Arab public sphere, including topics of debate, freedoms and overcoming the taboos of the official Arab media, until the peoples exceeded this stage with their revolutions, so most studies focused on the role of Aljazeera at this point. In Muhammad Abunajela's study entitled *Al Jazeera and Arab Revolutions* (2012), he shows that the media, especially Aljazeera, by providing wide areas of coverage, served these revolutions. Abunajela discusses the relationship of Aljazeera with 'Arabism' and its impact on other Arab media outlets. Based on the findings of the study, Abunajela explains that Aljazeera is not just a phenomenon that deserves to be clarified, but also deserves to be understood. While the studies that address Aljazeera's coverage of revolutions examine the role of the channel at the time, like Abunajela's study, I discuss in my studies, in addition to studying the role of the channel during a stage, the history of the channel to understand the status and the image that Aljazeera reached before it covered the revolutions.

While Abunajela's study and others address a broad field, studies have emerged discussing one or two revolutions, instead of the so-called Arab Spring in general.

Sabah Al Harahsheh (2013), in her study analysing the discourse of Aljazeera, focuses on the channel's coverage of the events of the Syrian conflict, specifically in the program *The Opposite Direction*, indicating the importance of this discourse in light of the sensitivity of the period under study. Through analysing the rhetorical text of the program, the study finds that the presenter of the program, Faisal Alqassem, played an important role during that stage relating to the Syrian crisis. Alqassem's role, according to the study, is represented in the escalating discourse that he adopted in order to favour the military solution to the crisis, as the program address this crisis within the framework of a specific idea which is the impossibility of reform and completely excluding a political solution to the crisis. Hence, the study concludes that the program does not present two opposite directions, but rather that its discourse tends to favour one direction for specific goals. Here, like Awwad's study, which I discussed earlier, Al Harahsheh's selection of a specific program at a specific stage helps the study to reach accurate results, but the study would have been more authentic if it had used another method besides textual analysis.

In another study that focuses on analysing Aljazeera's discourse during the events of one revolution, the results of Raiya Al Kharusi's study on the channel's debates on the Yemeni revolution were consistent with the results of Al Harahsheh. Al Kharusi studies four debate programs between 2011 and 2012: *The Opposite Direction*, *In Depth*, *Behind the News* and *the Revolution Talk*, as she aims, by analysing the discourse, to understand how 'discourse is to abuse power relationships' (2016, p.1). Al Kharusi's study shows the prominent role of discourse in shaping the ideologies of media institutions, as the study concludes that Aljazeera displayed clear bias when it excluded the Yemeni government from its debates, and thus it contradicts the objective journalism on which its mission is supposed to be based.

While my research examines the role of the channel, it falls, in a significant part of it, within the literature discussing Aljazeera impact, but in the context of ethnographic analysis that considers the description of the channel and its news production, which I will address in the next section. I sought to add more to the studies on Aljazeera, by analysing its coverage during a very specific stage thematically, besides going deep into the journalistic practices and procedures, supported by the testimonies of its staff, thus filling the gap in the qualitative studies by obtaining deep objective results that do not

depend on mere numbers and quantities. In order to enrich the content of the study, I discuss the historical context of the channel, which, I believe, cannot be ignored, as understanding a phenomenon at a certain stage requires understanding its historical background, in order to stave off any imbalance in the results.

#### **2.2.4. ALJAZEERA NEWS PRODUCTION LITERATURE**

Some of the aforementioned studies may have dealt with the production of news content on Aljazeera, but in the context of the political approach. Through research on previous studies, Aljazeera's news production aspect and the associated journalistic practices is almost the least subject to research. And since the news content production aspect is rich in evidence and reflections on the political and historical situation, it needs to give it more attention, so that the study of news production is the focus of focus instead of politics being the main focus.

Al-Habsi's study *Offering a New(s) View of the Arab World* delves into Aljazeera's news model of program production and the practice of journalists, as it is a different format adopted by the channel compared to others in the Arab news environment. Al-Habsi looks at the relationship between Aljazeera's journalists' news form and audience, and the way this understanding shape their practice. It also discusses how the journalists' collective understanding of news form and audience shape the news agenda and their stances on the stories. The study concludes that Aljazeera journalists view their audience as a diverse audience in terms of race, religion and culture, and 'deeply attached to their cultures and as having problems with their local governments' (2015, p.200), the view which shapes the production process and the structure of the channel news output. Although Al-Habsi used the same methods that I used to collect the study's data, she did not focus her research on a specific historical stage, which would be reflected in the understanding of the channel's approach to different events, and lead to more credible results.

In a closer approach to discussing the process of producing news, Hamdi Alfatih investigates the impact of using graphics templates in the production of news programs in Aljazeera. Alfatih confirms that 'modern technologies of all kinds have contributed to a qualitative shift within the channel' as a result of using 'interactive elements of dazzle and excitement' (2020, p.36). Despite the importance of the aspect that Alfatih

addresses, his study is an example of studies dealing with the news production process, but in a way that does not go into the details of such topics to create an academic contribution.

One of the few studies that raised the news production aspect is Reem Abboud's *The Relation between Modern Technologies Used in Arab News Channels and the Level of Knowledge of the Arab Public about Current Events* (2006). The study is based on a descriptive approach using the survey method to study the Egyptian and Syrian audiences. The study concludes that Aljazeera diversifies the forms of reporting the news that it used, as at the forefront of these forms appears the presentation of the news by a presenter with the reports of correspondents, followed by the presentation of the news by the presenter with a live video material, then the presence of a guest in the studio only for the last stage. The study shows that Aljazeera has excelled in terms of diversifying the use of news presentation forms and that the channel relies on its correspondents as sources of news, then on news agencies. Again, as is my point of view regarding a previous study, being satisfied with only one method for collecting a study's data does not lead to accurate and reliable results. However, Abboud's findings regarding Aljazeera's distinction in diversifying the news presentation forms match what I found through my analysis of the archive of the case study stage.

The lack of research in this aspect, despite its importance, made me interested in researching the details of Aljazeera's coverage that relates to this aspect, from producing news content and journalistic procedures and practices, besides studying the coverage themes in terms of linguistic and visual content. This is what I sought to research through my analysis of the archive and the interviews I conducted with those who produce this coverage.

### **2.3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Historically, media in the Arab world was in the hands of the governing authorities, to the point where the political media concept was central to policymaking process, and was the tool that governments use to effect on the people. In the past two decades, structural developments radically changed this process and turned this situation upside down. As a result of the globalization, which led to diversity and plurality of news

sources, political media moved from the traditional domination of the state and the governor towards the control of media institutions which are on the side of people.

To understand the change in using of political media concept, it is imperative to look at its definition. Political media is a branch of media specialized in covering the political issues, distinct in its ability to influence and to cause alterations and persuasion and to achieve political goals. It is considered as one of the key and effective tools any political system depends on in achieving its various strategic objectives (Ismail, 1997, p 48). In other words, Political Communication is a subfield of communication and political science that is concerned with how information spreads and influences politics and policymakers, the news media and citizens (Norris, 2004).

As a key medium in spreading the political messages, television has been under focus more than other forms of media, especially since 'television continues to be the most accessible media' (Gorton, 2009. p.12). The concern of most research into television is the effect debate, to figure if it has the power to change peoples' behaviour, attitudes or promote values and ideologies. About the effect debate, Gerbner says that we live in a world based on the stories we hear and see and tell, and most of what we know, or think we know, we have never personally experienced (Gerbner, 1999). This brings us to understand the substance of media which is based on creating new reality from parts of the actual reality reconstructed and rearranged by the viewer's mind, so as a result it affects individuals', communities' and societies' behaviour and implications socially, psychologically, culturally, economically and politically. No matter how stable or developed the societies are, media plays its role causing changes, especially with new technologies and the speed of development. On the other hand, another point of view considers that media has limited effect emphasizing that media contribution and involvement in the political and democratic reforms depends on the nature of media role in societies, the amount of the democratic liberties and the political philosophy of the ruling regime (Alalem, 2013, p7).

The debate about the influence of the media on audiences is an ongoing debate. In this era of global media, this debate is no longer about the presence or absence of the influence, or whether the audience is active or passive, as Professor Kristyn Gorton argues: 'It is perhaps most useful to think of the audience as active, but at times passive, and never completely Knowable' (2009, p.4). Rather, the discussion is about the extent,

manner, and methods of this influence. The diversity of media sources enables the masses to search for news through many sources, even in cases of information being blocked by state authorities, until they reach what they consider 'the truth'. Thus, the more the audience believes they become convinced, and thus they are naturally influenced. This point is precisely what concerns me in the research, since I do not explore whether Aljazeera has effect on Arab or not, but I aim to study the pillars of its effect instead, by examining how did it effect on Arab political awareness, especially during the Egyptian Revolution.

In this research, I discuss the shaping of political awareness among the Arab audience, a change to which the media has contributed, especially as Aljazeera's coverage might satisfy the needs of the Arab viewer, by providing knowledge and promoting the principles of freedoms, democracy and social justice which the viewer did not find in the official media channels and other satellite channels. In the next section I will discuss the journalism and emotions concept, as I see a pivotal link between the emotions and the role of Aljazeera channel in shaping the political awareness of Arab since its inception until the stage of the case study, the Egyptian Revolution 2011.

### **2.3.1. JOURNALISM & EMOTIONS**

Defining emotion as 'the awareness of situational demands and personal concerns, often including physiological change along with hedonic quality, comprising the felt need to act or not to act, to serve one's needs, goals, or concerns' (Frijda, 1986; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Konijn, 2012) puts the emotions in the centre of journalism and raises the interest in 'exploring how emotions influence journalistic industries, production, content, and influence' (Lecheler, 2020).

Research on emotions in media is becoming increasingly important as emotions and affect play a pivotal role in processing the information provided through media exposure (Lang, Newhagen, & Reeves, 1996). Although 'affect and emotion are hard to measure and can be implicit rather than explicit' they 'serve to structure action and discourse' (Moran & Usher, 2021, p.1156) Moreover, 'affective processing of media fare may modify the way in which the presented information is perceived, stored, retrieved, and valued, and how it becomes integrated into our real-life knowledge structures, whether fictitious (entertainment) or factual (news) media' (Konijn, 2012).

In other words, emotions in journalism 'likely changes how individuals and the groups they belong to make sense of the world, it changes how public opinion is formed, it influences stereotypes, and group identities' (Lecheler, 2020).

The relation between emotions and awareness makes it necessary in this research to understand how Aljazeera employed emotions as a primary tool in attracting collective and individual attention. Thus, I argue that Aljazeera by combining satisfying the viewers' needs for knowledge and arousing emotions created trustful relationship with the audience that enabled it to influence the shaping of their political awareness.

In this sense, I study Aljazeera's coverage in light of the relation between journalism and emotions, especially since the view of the channel's coverage ranges between admiration and criticism, which may be due to its use of emotion within its news media discourse. Aljazeera has earned the admiration of many ordinary Arabs almost from the day it was launched in 1996, as well as the resentment of leaders in the Arab world. Being admired in some cases and source of discontent in others is due to the news Aljazeera presents for audience, especially in the case of withholding of information by ruling authorities, Aljazeera sought to satisfy the audience's cognitive, affective, and social interactive needs. This point has led Aljazeera to having more viewers than all other Pan-Arab news channels combined. For example, according to two studies by Ipsos and Sigma, the independent research centres, conducted in 2014, Aljazeera recorded the highest percentage of Arab viewers across the MENA region at a rate that exceeds the four nearest competitors combined, namely: Al Arabiya, BBC Arabic, France 24, and Sky News Arabia, with a viewership rate of 53.9% for the first nine months in 2014 (arabi21.com, 2014).

## **2.4. CONCLUSION**

This research, although it addresses the description of Aljazeera in part and its impact on other hand, it focuses in its essence on the news content of Aljazeera, the production of this content, including the language and visual elements, and the journalistic practices and procedures that produced this content. With the lack of studies addressing Aljazeera as a media player comparing to studies addressing it as a political actor, I found it useful to study the channel's coverage of a specific historical stage, using the archival material and semi-structured interviews with the channel's staff who produced the coverage of the case study, and analysing news content and journalistic practices



thematically and historically, without neglecting its political impact, as it is impossible to ignore the presence of Aljazeera in the Arab political situation.

Looking at the media's role in making an impact, in my analysis of the content of the study I discuss its aspects in the light of journalism and emotions , which I see as explaining the nature of the channel's role in the Egyptian Revolution and the reasons that enabled it to play this role.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the research revolves around Aljazeera's coverage of a historical stage, any attempt to understand the channel's coverage of this stage will be incomplete if the historical context of the channel's inception and its coverage of pivotal events preceding the event I study in this research is not understood. Therefore, in this chapter, I address the emergence of Aljazeera, the discussion of objectivity and bias in the channel's presentation and the controversy in this regard, the reasons that made Aljazeera a place on the Arab media map, including its coverage of important events, up to its coverage of the Arab revolutions. Moreover, since this research deals with the Egyptian Revolution, it was necessary to understand the channel's relationship with Egypt, or more precisely, with the Egyptian regime, by looking at its coverage of the Egyptian issues and the nature of its work in Egypt before the Revolution.

While the chapters addressing the historical context of Aljazeera in the literature about it are usually limited to narrative content of historical events, the importance of this chapter in this study is that it deals in detail with what I consider the first step in what I call a timeline of causes and consequences in the presence of Aljazeera in the Arab world. Through my research of the channel, I aim in this chapter to understand the details of Aljazeera's emergence and its presence on the Arab and international levels. This understanding helps leading to a clearer picture of Aljazeera's role at a pivotal moment in contemporary history, which is the Egyptian Revolution. Hence, one cannot seek to answer the questions of this research about the channel's role in the Revolution without looking back at its history.

In this chapter, I review the discussion points through academic research that addressed the history of the channel, and I support the discussion through interviews that I conducted in Qatar with the channel staff, especially with the veteran ones, who started with it and witnessed its coverage up to the Arab revolutions in 2011. The testimonies of employees that I obtained through in-depth interviews are key in enriching the

historical context of the channel, as they provide rich material with large amount of data by narrating the answers from the standpoint of their view of the topic in question. I analysed this data through thematic analysis, especially in addressing the reasons why Aljazeera is a phenomenon in the Arab media, in light of historical analysis, especially in the context of addressing the channel's coverage of critical events.

### **3.2. THE BIRTH OF ALJAZEERA**

Creating an atmosphere of uncensored media in the Arab region and liberating media from the government's control was the Qatari dream that the ruling Emir in 1995 aimed to achieve among his first decisions. Jamal Rayyan, a Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, was among the first to know the idea of establishing the channel. He explains, during an interview (J.Rayyan 2020, personal communication, 2 April), that Adnan Alsharif, his colleague at the BBC, who later became the general manager of Aljazeera, discussed with him the idea in London, in 1995, 6 months before the closure of BBC Arabic channel. Rayyan recounts that Alsharif told him that the Emir of Qatar, who has been a friend of Alsharif since college, had the idea of establishing a television channel for which all financial resources and a high level of press freedom, such as the BBC, would be secured (J.Rayyan, 2020). In February 1996, the Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, signed an Emiri decree establishing an Arab news channel and selected Aljazeera as its name. The decree also stipulated that the channel is an independent Qatari institution based in Doha. It is a specialized channel focused on broadcasting political, economic, sports, and other topical topics.

Aljazeera's actual birth was when Qatar took advantage of an opportunity. The opportunity arose when the agreement between the Saudi Orbit TV and the Arabic section of the British Broadcasting Corporation collapsed in April 1996 as a result of the British-Saudi dispute over the level of freedom that could be allowed in the news coverage. BBC Arabic, based on high competencies with long experience in the field of professional radio work, broadcast in Arabic and succeeded in attracting about 14 million listeners in 1994 (Hamdi, 2002, p.285). Mohamed Krichen, a Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, sees the issue of establishing Aljazeera on BBC Arabic roots from another perspective. He says, during an interview (M.Krichen 2020, personal communication, 23 March), that not only was Aljazeera lucky that the BBC was shut down, it was also lucky that the BBC was an encrypted channel. He points out that BBC

Arabic was not widely known at the time, because it was not available on the air for free, as it was on the Orbit network package. The Qataris knew it and its presenters well because it was available on cable in homes in Doha, while it was not known to the rest of the Arab countries, as the price of the Orbit TV receiver was too high for a middle-class Arab home to buy (M.Krichen, 2020). Krichen (2020) recalls the period preceded the launch of the channel:

Our colleague, who was the first director of Aljazeera, Adnan Alsharif, was working with us as a presenter. He resigned from the BBC and went to Doha and was trying to attract some faces to Aljazeera from the BBC, but he did not succeed much, as it was difficult for any of us to leave London and the BBC to go to Qatar to an unknown channel and still in its infancy, but to coincidence and the good fortune of Aljazeera, the BBC was closed in April 1996 while Aljazeera was in the process of preparing, so everyone who wanted to continue his journalistic experience outside his homeland, who came from Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, they all found their way on Aljazeera, so they went to Doha.

Thus, in its beginnings, Aljazeera was almost an exact copy of the BBC, in the technical issues, news bulletins, news reports, interviews, which made Aljazeera's launching strong and distinctive, especially since the majority of Arab did not know the Arabic version of the BBC.

The new Emir's ambition was achieved more easily than if it had started from scratch. A tripartite committee appointed by the Emir to establish the channel includes Alsharif, the Emir's financial advisor Mohammed Sahlawi and the undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al-Thani. The team moved to London to discuss ways to establish the channel with Arab journalists based in Britain to work in the new channel (Al-Zaidi, 2003, p.35). Krichen (2020) notes that the team interviewed journalists, technicians, presenters, directors, producers, lighting technicians, confirming: 'They came to get the most of the BBC's staff'. Ahmed Alsheikh, the Media Advisor in Aljazeera chairman's office, explains, during an interview (A.Alsheikh 2020, personal communication, 22 March):

It was fortunate for them that there was a channel from which a well-trained group came out, believing in the importance of freedom of speech, aware of the correct method of work, and helped launch Aljazeera in such a short period. I always likened Aljazeera to Christ, and I say if Jesus was born speaking in the cradle, Aljazeera was born speaking and walking among people, even when it was in its infancy...No one expected Aljazeera to achieve what it achieved, or to pursue a free editorial policy because people in the

Arab world are not used to finding a media outlet that enjoys this freedom and this bold presentation in dealing with various issues.

Alsheikh's view confirms that the content Aljazeera provided to its Arab viewers satisfied their needs of freedom and bold presentation, which they never experienced before in the Arab media. Thus, Aljazeera was strong since its beginning, and gained the audience's loyalty as they found a media that stood by their side instead of the regime's side for the first time.

JSC, Aljazeera Satellite Channel, started broadcasting on November 1, 1996, via satellite Arabsat A2 and Eutelsat W2, six hours a day, then increased until it reached 24 hours a day on January 1, 1999, through six satellites (Al-Thani, 2008, pp.433-435).

### **3.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALJAZEERA'S VALUES**

Aljazeera was distinguished from the rest of the Arab news channels. In its dealing with the news, and its presentation of political programs, Aljazeera provided the Arab viewers with new rhetoric of news. In his book *Arab Media: Pressures of the Present and Future Challenges*, Professor of Media Studies Abdulrazzak Aldulaimi indicates that the reason behind Aljazeera's distinctiveness was that 'the Arab citizen was not accustomed to the direct and immediate access to events, and not accustomed to hearing the opinion and another opinion in this kind of presentation. This uniqueness of Aljazeera has become a necessity for the Arab viewer' (Aldulaimi, 2011, p.246). Thus, Aljazeera proved that it is the peoples' channel, as it presented the content that the people needed to know, unlike other Arab channels at the time, which were all official channels and presented the content that the state want to broadcast. On this change created by Aljazeera, Arab thinker and political philosopher Azmi Bishara says, during an interview (A.Bishara 2020, personal communication, 7 May):

Aljazeera opened the Arab media public sphere in the mid-nineties; this is its historical achievement. Qatar, for reasons related to its geostrategic conditions, created a media outlet that can be called a modern media for the first time, modern in the true sense of the word, not in the technological sense of having cameras, live broadcasts and decorations, but rather in the sense that it is A media that is partly separate from the owner, so the owner does not control it 100%. This is the modern media. Modern media is a media in which the ownership of the media is separated, to some extent, from the editorial board. In Qatar, with the presence of a political leadership willing to give relative freedom to Aljazeera, it has become there is a TV station that does not start its news with a story about the president. That was very strange. That is first. Second, dealing with the Arab

world as a unity, suddenly the Arabs to a large extent discovered each other. A television media channel appeared, with relative freedom of expression, criticism of the regimes, and the presentation of issues in a way that was not previously done.

Thus, the unfamiliar that the Arab citizen found on Aljazeera, specifically concerning the lack of control of the official authorities over the media content, is the issue that helped the channel in its presence in the Arab media, as reflected in the words of Bishara. However, Bishara mentions that the state of Qatar does not control Aljazeera 100%, which means that it controls it to some degree. He repeats that the state of Qatar is to some extent separated from the channel, which confirms that the state is generally not separated from the channel. Thus, Aljazeera is not a completely free media outlet; as its content, including news selection, framing of the news stories, is consistent with the state of Qatar policy. But what made Aljazeera's presence different from other Arab channels regarding this issue, in my opinion, are two reasons; the first is that it did not give the state of Qatar any distinctive importance within its news and coverages. The second reason is that Aljazeera satisfied Arab viewers of their needs of knowledge, freedom of expression, criticism of the regimes, which were more important to the Arab citizen than any other issue.

From the perspective of many Arab interested in media, Aljazeera's emergence was not merely a Qatari dream. They linked its emergence to the phenomenon of globalization. The Egyptian economist, academic, and writer Jalal Amin says that Aljazeera is a phenomenon associated with globalization, it belongs to a tiny country, and because of the technology associated with globalization, it was able to record a tape of al-Qaeda leaders in the Afghanistan war and broadcast it a few hours after it was acquired (Amin, 2002, p.112). Along the same lines, the researcher Abdulwahab Alafandi says that 'Aljazeera was born from the womb of the twin earthquake that struck the region in the early nineties' (Alafandi, 2002). Alafandi explains that the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the disintegration of the limited Arab solidarity, after Kuwait war in 1990, had led to a breakdown of taboos and revealing facts that were hidden, thus 'Aljazeera was born in this atmosphere of fundamental upheavals, and the continuation of this situation is what gave Aljazeera its size and location' (Alafandi, 2002).

Being the first Arabic news channel with an unusual style of news presentation in Arab media, by breaking the taboos prevailing in Arab politics and media, bold presentation of these issues, the dissemination of thought advocating the principles of freedom, democracy, and justice through its programs, the channel's interest in Arab and international affairs and its lack of interest in the local affairs of the State of Qatar, had placed Aljazeera between an optimistic view and a conspiratorial view. Whereas intellectuals received Aljazeera as a 'gift' to Arab viewers (Eloifi, 2005, p.68), other intellectuals questioned the channel's agenda, considering that it 'occasionally spoils poison' (Amin, 2002, p.112). Edmund Gharib, a Lebanese-American Professor at the American University in Washington and Political Analyst, concurring with the optimistic view about Aljazeera told *Albayan* newspaper in 2000 that 'Aljazeera became the most-watched Arab stations in the Arab world because of its independence and its desire to break the taboos imposed by governments' (Al-Zaidi, 2003, pp. 6-7). Going further in viewing Aljazeera positively, the writer and media researcher Waleed Alhadithi, among his researches on the Arab media discourse's problems, considers Aljazeera as a pluralistic platform. Alhadithi claims that Aljazeera seeks the truth, adheres to professional principles within an institutional framework, and seeks to raise public awareness of issues that aspire to build the bridge between peoples and cultures, which promotes tolerance, democracy, and respect for freedoms and human rights (Alhadithi, 2007, p.195).

Going beyond viewing Aljazeera as a 'gift' to Arab viewers, the Egyptian Professor of Media at Cairo University Sulaiman Saleh indicates that Aljazeera is considered the most important Arab media and political phenomenon, which contributed to the development of Arab television (2011, p.220). He adds that Aljazeera provides the Arab public with coverage of events without being subject to censorship. It also conducts a free political debate beyond the Arab politics' taboos and discusses sensitive political, cultural, and social issues to the extent that made some Arab regimes wanted to increase their media power compared with Aljazeera, as Saudi Arabia when it established Al-Arabiya (Saleh, 2011, p.220).

On the opposite side, those who received Aljazeera with a conspiratorial view had mainly originated their opinion from the channel's problematic geopolitical context. In his research about Aljazeera's democratizing role, Ezzeddine Abdelmoula mentions that

although Qatar is a 'tiny state' geographically and demographically, it 'has gone through a number of regional disputes in its short history since independence in 1971' (Abdelmoula, 2012, p.146). Existing in such a situation had raised doubts and questions. Mohamed Zayani, in a book discussing Aljazeera from a variety of perspectives raises some of these questions about Aljazeera's host country's motives: 'Does Qatar genuinely believe in what Al Jazeera stands for, including freedom of speech, or is it just using Al Jazeera as a public relations tool to claim a space in the region and play a more important role?' (Zayani, 2005, p.10).

In this regard and with more clarification, some critics indicate that Aljazeera explores and discusses other Arab countries' issues to 'distract viewers from its host's own internal politics and its arrangements with the US-which has its largest military base in the region as well as its Central Command in Qatar' (Zayani, 2005, p.10). In other words, Jon Alterman, the senior vice president and the director of the Middle East Program at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, states that 'Qatari issues such as the power struggle between the current Emir and his father, whom he displaced, do not find an outlet on Al Jazeera, nor do critiques of Qatari foreign policy' (Alterman, 1998, p.24).

All the preceding emphasizes that Aljazeera, since its inception, has been the subject of controversy, whether it is objective in addressing various issues, or it is blatantly biased to one aspect of any issue. The controversy over the channel increased in light of the Arab revolutions, as Seham Alshujairi, a Professor of Media at University of Baghdad, indicates in her book entitled *Media bias* that 'the Arab revolutions put the media neutrality in the Arab world to the test, and proved that absolute neutrality is unattainable' (Alshujairi, 2018, p.278).

### **3.4. OBJECTIVITY AND BIAS**

Glasgow University Media Group called objectivity 'utopia of neutralism'. Since utopia means an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect, this means that they consider objectivity to be an imagined perfection, confirming that many of their findings deny it, as the news is not a 'neutral product' (Eldridge, 1995, p.41). Likewise, experts and specialists in media have shown that objectivity in the media is an ideal, illusional, impossible, elusive and challenging concept, but the media is trying



hard to achieve it and reach it. For example, the Edward Herman - Noam Chomsky propaganda model, the conceptual modal both media critics developed in 1988, shows how objectivity in practice turns out preferring the ruling power and governing authority's biases and interests and depending on authority's sources of news (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

As for the Arab media, it suffers from a real crisis and accusations about its credibility and objectivity. For instance, the Professor of Communication and Media at the University of Baghdad Mohsen Alkanani in his work on Aljazeera argues that it is the most controversial channel, being criticised and accused of manipulating the standards and norms that rule the planning and preparation of television programs in general and talk shows in particular. This angle appears mainly when it 'deals with issues of interest to Arab and International countries boldly, causing sometimes tense relations between these countries and Qatar, while it does not address the issues of other countries that may be as important as the issues it dealt with' (Alkanani, 2012, p. 207).

In the context of the Arab revolutions, particularly the Egyptian Revolution, there are viewers who believe that Aljazeera's coverage of the events of the Egyptian Revolution was objective and professional, and represented the transfer of facts as they are, others believe that the channel did not have that professionalism and objectivity in its coverage. This divergence regarding the objectivity of Aljazeera was under scrutiny in one of Carnegie Middle East Centre's papers, *Egypt's Media in the Midst of Revolution*, which states that 'Aljazeera brought professional television journalism to the Arab world and presented a sharp contrast to the news presented on Egyptian television' (Abdulla, 2014). On the other hand, the paper questioned this 'objectivity' recalling that the channel criticised Egyptian and Arab officials and heads of state routinely, but it 'never criticised Qatari officials or the Muslim Brotherhood' (Abdulla, 2014). Regarding the ongoing debate on objectivity, in light of the Egyptian Revolution, in particular, Bishara (2020) discusses impartiality in his interpretation of the concept:

I do not see a match between objectivity and impartiality, the person may be biased and objective. To be objective in covering the Revolution in Egypt, I do not necessarily have to be neutral between the victim and the executioner. I may be with the victim and cover the events objectively, although I sympathize with the victim and express my sympathy by exposing the facts related to the oppression, murder, and persecution, and what the

victim was subjected to, there is no problem with that, I do not consider it contrary to professional objectivity.

Bishara's opinion agrees with the opinion of Aljazeera staff in general. Fatima Triki, Senior Producer at Aljazeera explains, during an interview (F.Triki 2020, personal communication, 25 March), this opinion in the context of the discussion of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution:

Was Aljazeera neutral between Mubarak and the revolutionaries? No. And I was not neutral, I was with the Revolution. I supported these rights, and I hope they lead to real change. With the traditional approach, we can see that Aljazeera has gone beyond the news role. I do not believe that the media is merely a carrier of news, yes there is objectivity, but as for impartiality in its absolute, abstract, idiotic sense, I call it the idiot neutrality.

As Aljazeera appeared after the Arab viewer was accustomed to the fact that official channels are biased towards the ruling regimes, it excelled, according to Triki, 'because it respected the mind, respected the people, respected the people's emotions, and was very similar to them' (F.Triki, 2020), as it was often biased towards peoples, their freedoms, and rights.

My initial interest in this study was sparked by the disparity I witnessed during the Egyptian Revolution days, as there were protests in Jordan at the same time as the protests in Egypt. The Jordanian protests began with the beginning of the Egyptian demonstrations but were not put forward for the presentation, discussion, and analysis Aljazeera did regarding the Egyptian protests. The channel just presented brief news about the protests of the Jordanian street in the mobile news bar at the bottom of the screen. For example, on the third day of the Egyptian Revolution in the mobile news bar appeared the following: 'Human Rights Watch: The Jordanian authorities should stop 'stifling dissent' and allow 'freedom of peaceful expression' (Aljazeera, January 27, 2011). The follower of this news noted that it was not usual news; it was essential mainly if the follower resided in Jordan and was aware of these conditions on the ground.

These protests were to worsen and evolve in Jordan, perhaps in the direction of a revolution no less than the Egyptian Revolution. On the seventh day of the Egyptian Revolution, news about Jordan increased in the mobile news bar, for example: 'A delegation from the Islamic Action Front Party in Jordan met with Prime Minister

Samir Rifai,' 'The Islamic Action Front Party in Jordan calls for the resignation of the government, the formation of a national salvation government and the amendment of the elections' law' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). All this news indicates the tense situation in Jordan, but had not advanced to be under debate in the bulletin. These observations raise questions: What if Aljazeera highlighted the protests and demonstrations of the Jordanian street with the same momentum and analysis as the Egyptian protests? Would we have witnessed a Jordanian revolution?

What I receive as an exclusion from any focus on any event outside the scope of the Egyptian street is explained during an interview by Mohamed Dawood, Director of Quality and Editorial Standards at Aljazeera (M.Dawood 2020, personal communication, 31 March), as being due to what he considers a 'simple and clear reason', which is the difference between the size and influence of Egypt and Jordan politically, economically, cognitively, demographically and geographically. To confirm his point of view, Dawood says that there were also demonstrations in Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman, which did not receive the media coverage that Egypt received, he adds: 'We were accused by Shiite colleagues in Lebanon and elsewhere of ignoring Bahrain for sectarian considerations, while others accused us of ignoring Oman for considerations related to our presence in a Gulf state' (M.Dawood, 2020). Aljazeera's coverage of Bahraini protests of 2011 witnessed comparable controversy. Activist and opposition leader in Bahrain Nabeel Rajab criticised the channel's coverage of his country's protests of 2011, saying that it 'represents an Arabic double standard' (Alsamany, 2011). Supporting Rajab's view, Ali Hashem, Aljazeera's Beirut correspondent, resigned from the channel after leaked e-mails, shows his discontent over the outlet's 'unprofessional' and biased coverage of the Syrian civil war compared to Bahraini protests of 2011, which was not given the prominence of the Syrian Revolution on the channel (Jay, 2012).

Some may see that this is usual in news channels' coverage of events, by excluding certain news, as the channels choose to focus on the most important news, then the important and so on, but in my opinion, the channel could have provided space for all the news in the region, instead of focusing on the Egyptian Revolution, as Aljazeera was intensively repeating the content at that time, which I will address in the coming chapters. In line with my opinion that ignoring news while exaggerating focus on other

news indicates bias, the Professor of Media Policy at the University of Westminster Naomi Sakr highlights the channel's news stories selection. She mentions that while Aljazeera's 'staff prioritizes stories according to their newsworthiness, (...) Newsworthiness criteria, however, are subjective, and Al Jazeera's criteria may well reflect the Qatari leadership's agenda' (Sakr, 1999, p.6).

The controversy over Aljazeera had raised the channel to the level of a phenomenon. Zayani, on the cover of *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*, states: 'Few phenomena in the Arab world are more controversial than Al Jazeera (...) despite its brief history, has made its impact known throughout the world' (Zayani, 2005). What makes Aljazeera a phenomenon, or as the word 'phenomenon' is defined 'an observable fact or event' (The Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2008), is various reasons that are important to highlight to understand the impact of the channel on the awareness of its viewers in general, and Arab audience in particular.

### **3.5. REASONS WHY ALJAZEERA IS A PHENOMENON**

#### **3.5.1. SPECIALIZATION**

News and nothing except news constitutes the content of Aljazeera, which has never been a commercial or entertainment channel. Aljazeera was the leader of such a type of television channel broadcasting in Arabic in the Arab world. BBC, CNN, Sky News, and Euronews preceded Aljazeera at the international level. In the same year, MSNBC and Fox News launched shortly before Aljazeera; the former on July 15, 1996, the latter on October 7, 1996.

The usual Arab channels, before the Aljazeera era, provided the viewer with either little or moderate amount of news. Fahmy Howaidy, Egyptian columnist and political analyst and one of the most prominent modern intellectuals, described the state of Arab television media at that time: 'Before the emergence of Aljazeera, I only watched entertainment programmes or football matches on Arab TV channels ... I searched for important events or ideas through chasing news bulletins, reports, and discussion programmes broadcast on Western television channels, particularly British and American ones. I never thought that I would find 'food' of that nature on any Arab channel' (Howaidy, 2007, p.129). The content that Huwaidi never expected to find in the Arabic language was provided by Aljazeera, which is the same aspect that Rayyan

(2020) sees as one of what distinguished the channel, along with other reasons he mentions: 'Firstly, it broadcasts in Arabic, committed to supporting the nation's issues and constants, the existence of funding, and there are no advertisements. Where did you find this on another channel?! There are many profit-making stations.'

Rayyan's view matches Alsheikh's opinion regarding what distinguished Aljazeera from others, but Alsheikh (2020) demonstrates its distinction by comparing it with the BBC Arabic channel that preceded it and did not reach the Arab audience as much as Aljazeera:

Aljazeera is a channel that appeared in the Arab world, to the Arab world, with its Arab people working in it and in charge of its editorial policies...The BBC is part of British culture and has its British agenda, but Aljazeera is part of Arab culture, emanating from Arab culture, in an Arab environment, with an Arab tongue, It addresses Arabs with Arab money, and thus its impact up to this point is much deeper than BBC Arabic. The impact of Aljazeera is still greater than the influence of the BBC and all the channels that were born after Aljazeera.

As for the official Arab satellite channels, it can be said that its establishment was not the result of a real and urgent need to convey the image of the country abroad, there was also no motivation for governments or Arab elites to recognize the importance of producing and broadcasting images as a cultural and civilizational existence. Instead, many of these channels were founded with purely local motives, not much different from the motives of the establishment of traditional local channels, despite the broad geographical and human framework for broadcasting. In this regard, Adeb Khaddour, Professor of Journalism at Damascus University, emphasizes that Arab countries raced to establish channels characterized by fundamentals and comprehensive plans but 'lack the clarity of objectives, neglect the public, and do not take the audience's needs and opinions into consideration' (Khaddour, 1998, p.5).

Arab's governments and media investors' neglecting the audience's need to know more delayed the emergence of specialized news channels in the Arab space; on the other hand, this situation hastened Aljazeera's popularity. In the Arab world, Aljazeera proved that television channels can succeed without relying on drama and entertainment and that the news and documentary material can suffice to attract the viewer if it is well presented. The Arab public's need for news content made Aljazeera the first source

meeting this need, which enabled it to be an actor that had created a public sphere. Mark Lynch, in his book *Voices of the New Arab Public*, indicates: 'Only when Al Jazeera refocused the satellites away from entertainment and toward politics – more precisely, toward political argument about Arab issues defined by an Arab identity – did it become a public sphere' (Lynch, 2006, p.33).

In every critical event in the Middle East, particularly, Aljazeera has proved that being a specialized news channel is one of the most important reasons for the audience to turn towards it. Aljazeera satisfies the viewers' need for knowledge, especially when they may watch the official television channels of the country where an event took place, but do not find the details, depth, and analysis of news. In this regard, Mohammad Almorisi, the Professor of Media at Cairo University, during an interview on the Egyptian channel DMC discussing Aljazeera's dealing with the Egyptian affairs, argued that 'Egyptian media sometimes allows Aljazeera to mislead the public because we are late in making information available. This delay creates a vacuum that filled with lies, media misinformation, hidden goals, dictated agendas' (Almorisi, 2019).

### **3.5.2. STAFF QUALITY**

From its inception, Aljazeera staff was the best qualified in Arab media. Jamil Azar, a Principal Presenter at Aljazeera, who has been with the channel since its launch, describes the channel's staff: 'a professional and editorial framework in the hands of elite journalists and presenters who have been among the most capable and experienced in the local and Arab arena' (Azar, 2006). The staff, described by Azar, came to the channel on a silver platter, as they were members of the staff who ran the BBC Arabic television, and ready, without training, to run Aljazeera.

The researcher Hasan Alrizo indicates that after the first batch of Aljazeera's employees, the channel adopted the highest standards of competence in employment, as well as professionalism in commenting, editing and presenting news, and mastery of classical Arabic, disregarding the traditional patterns of some channels related to colour, gender, and age, opening the way for all journalists from different Arab countries (Alrizo, 2008, p.133). Khadija Benguenna, a Principal Presenter at Aljazeera, asserts, during an interview (K.Benguenna 2020, personal communication, 24 March), that 'Aljazeera is very tough in terms of its employment standards, especially for

presenters as they are in the front'. Benguenna (2020) states that Aljazeera adopts strict professional standards by examining the political culture, Arabic language, screen performance, body language, diction and voice. Thus, in choosing its staff, Aljazeera paid attention to two aspects, in addition to media and journalism experience: The first is mastery of Arabic, and the second is the diversity of ideologies. These details in selecting the presenters was an issue that Arab channels, prior to the emergence of Aljazeera, did not pay much attention to, as the focus was on appearance, and one nationality was dominant over the channels, which is the nationality of the host countries of the channels.

The nationalities of the channel's staff vary, as well as their personalities. Rayyan (2020) stresses the importance of this diversity, as the channel's presenters are different from each other, but all of them are professionals (J.Rayyan, 2020), and share the mastery of the standard Arabic language, which makes the viewer unable to determine their nationalities. This is due to the fact that in light of the conflict between classical or standard and colloquial or slang Arabic language, Aljazeera is uninterested in colloquial advocates promoting that it is closer to the people. Aljazeera adopts classical Arabic, which, unlike colloquial dialects that differ from Arab country to another, does not reveal the nationality of the speaker, as the channel targets primarily Arab viewers. Aljazeera in its news content employs various linguistic methods such as rhetoric, euphemism, and all literary spectrums blended with creativity mechanisms of persuasion, thus increasing the impact of expressions on the viewer.

The diversity of the staff's nationalities has also enriched the channel with a diversity of ideologies, thereby enriching their ability to address issues (Al-Zaidi, 2003. p.127). Commenting on this aspect, Mohammed Eloifi discusses what he called 'three conflictual ideologies.' He said that 'the ideological orientation and editorial line of Al Jazeera in light of the programs it offers, the subjects it emphasizes and the allegiances its leading figures have reveals a subtle balance between three trends: the Arabist, the Islamic and the liberal' (Eloifi, 2005. p.72). This ideological and intellectual diversity was consistent with the political, religious, and intellectual orientations of Arab viewers, and stirs emotions and engagement with everything broadcast by the channel. Every person has orientation finds what aligns with his/her aspirations in Aljazeera's news, reports, and talk shows, whether he/she is nationalist, Libertarian, or political

Islamist. Aljazeera thus knew very well how to attract its viewers and gain their trust in its early years. This balance, which Aljazeera was able to create from its inception, appears in clear elements. On the one hand, Aljazeera focused on the religious aspect, unlike the news channels, as it used to broadcast a weekly program entitled *Sharia and Life* concerned with Islamic issues, presented by a presenter alongside the Islamic scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, chairman of the International Union of Muslim Scholars. Aljazeera also used to pay special attention to Ramadan, the month of fasting in Islam. It also did not mention the points of contention in the schools of thought in Islam. This interest in the Islamic aspect in the life of the Arabs created a close relationship with the viewer who had an Islamic orientation. On the other hand, the channel strengthened its discourse that carries the Arab national orientation through the talk shows that witnessed a momentum in the presence of prominent figures who are theorists of Arab national thought, such as the thinker Abdullah Al-Nafisi and Azmi Bishara. As for the liberal approach, Aljazeera has paid attention to this thought in its content by presenting Western liberal models in comparison with Arab reality, as models that can follow its approach to the advancement of Arab societies, such as the American and European model.

Not only did the channel pay attention to the quality of its staff, but it also sought to increase their number while maintaining efficiency. Aljazeera has a network of correspondents around the world, with more than 50 offices worldwide. Rayyan (2020) explains the importance of the reporters at Aljazeera:

In Aljazeera, after the centre, the importance lies in the external offices, which made Aljazeera a television news agency. The difference between us and the BBC and CNN is that our offices are present for 24 hours, while other channels, especially CNN, recognize this and take pictures of events from us because when an event occurs it needs time to mobilize, to go there and to focus on the event, or to cooperate with people in the field, but Aljazeera is present. This is the difference between us and them. Hence, the importance of offices and the importance of selecting their employees become clear.

Rayyan (2020) points out that the channel chooses reporters who have previously lived in the region they will cover, and takes into account their specializations and their ability to improvise, especially when the regions' languages are not Arabic. Rayyan, in explaining the importance of the reporters and their position in the channel, mentions that two of Aljazeera reporters later became the channel managers; Yasser Abu Hilala, a



Correspondent for Jordan, and Waddah Khanfar, Afghanistan Correspondent (J.Rayyan, 2020).

Commenting more specifically on the above, Jamal Elshayyal, Correspondent and Producer at Aljazeera, explains, during an interview (J.Elshayyal 2020, personal communication, 22 March), that when comparing Aljazeera to Western channels, Aljazeera correspondents understand the culture of the country that they cover its news, and not like what is in the Western press of what is called a parachute journalist, when a reporter is sent to cover an event somewhere, and then sent to another place after that. In a short period, he/she does not understand the culture of this country, the sensitive matters in it, its religion, nor the composition of its society. In this way, it is very easy for the reporter to convey the wrong image out of ignorance, or intentionally if he/she has a prior point of view (J.Elshayyal, 2020). Aljazeera, as Elshayyal (2020) asserts, was not like that, even in non-Arab countries; the reporters and producers working there were of Arab origin and spoke Arabic, but they were also from the people of the country, as in the case of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Chad, and South Africa. He adds that an Aljazeera correspondent is part of the fabric of society and knows the place well, which gives more credibility and gives the truth a wider platform. Elshayyal confirms that the channel looks for those who have a list of contacts that are not limited to one particular party, he cites the example of Abdelfattah Fayed, Aljazeera's former correspondent in Egypt: 'His relations were good with all parties; he could meet people in the government and the opposition' (J.Elshayyal, 2020). This was confirmed by Fayed himself, as he indicated to me that he had conducted and coordinated interviews with figures from the Egyptian ruling National Democratic Party, in addition to indicating that he was communicating with figures from various political parties, including the opposition, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Between the appearance and the content, Aljazeera was able to attract the viewer with its distinguished presenters in their presence, whom Rayyan described as stars, and says: 'Aljazeera builds presenters' (J.Rayyan, 2020). On the other hand, the content provided by the channel's correspondents in their coverage of pivotal events made the channel its position among other channels. These correspondents also were described as stars, as Alsheikh (2020) says:

The fact that the channel more newsy means that the channel can reach the field more than others with the financial solvency of Aljazeera. We are keen to train correspondents, and instil in them the editorial philosophy of the channel, and our belief in neutrality, integrity, and credibility. We trained them, and some of them became stars.

Thus, I believe that appearance was the first element of attraction to the audience, and then the content proved to the audience that the channel was worth watching.

### **3.5.3. PRESENTING ALL PERSPECTIVES**

When Aljazeera started producing programs of a political and intellectual nature, the Arab arena was vacant of creativity in this field, which enabled Aljazeera to be a role model in dealing with such issues, Arab or international. Aljazeera was characterized by its adoption of the slogan *The opinion and the other opinion*. Aljazeera's slogan opened the way for expression to all parties and led the Arab voices calling for freedom to wrap up around the channel; voices that have been calling for a change in the Arab media model over decades. With admiration, Triki (2020) talks about the values that the channel logo carries:

Opinion and other opinion is not just a news slogan, it is bigger than that. It is a genius slogan, because opinion is free, and it must be free...In the existing equation in Aljazeera, it is unacceptable to host a person from one side while not hosting someone from the opposite party. Thus, the channel will attract everyone, all people will be able to say their opinion in this place, a platform open to everyone.

The channel mentions its slogan throughout its broadcast, either through its channel promo, at the end of which the expression *opinion and the other opinion* appears under the channel logo, or when its presenters talk about the channel's approach by referring to the channel's slogan, or by hosting different opinions. All the previous contributes to establishing Aljazeera's image in Arab's minds, which would affirm that the channel will inform the viewer of the range of opinions in a way that seek to assure the viewers that the channel is different from other channels that exclude the other view. Besides, the channel's adoption of this slogan created a kind of phobia in some Arab regimes, which started to see Aljazeera as a source of disturbance and creation of instability and confusion and its reliance on media charging on the pretext of freedom of access to information and acceptance of pluralism of opinion. The channel has thus destabilised these regimes by creating an opposing viewpoint that moves against systems. For example, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood did not find a media platform that would

host them during the era of President Mubarak, except for Aljazeera. The same was the case in the channel's hosting of Jordanian, Tunisian, and Algerian opposition figures who were not given the opportunity to appear by the official Arab media. In the *More than One Opinion* and *The Opposite Direction* programs, Aljazeera hosted voices from Arab opposition forces and even moderate and radical Islamic forces who expressed their opinions and even offend Arab leaders who were symbols that were not accustomed to be criticized.

In the same context, Aljazeera has been on more than one occasion in a problem concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. Much has been said in the Arab world about the appearance of Israelis on Aljazeera's screen, considering the appearance of Israeli faces on the Arabic screens and especially Aljazeera as an 'unspoken normalisation with Israel', as described in a book titled *Opinion Programs on Aljazeera Satellite* (Boucheikh, 2011, p. 168). Here, what is meant by the Israelis in this context, who were the first Aljazeera to give them the opportunity to appear in the media in the Arab world, are the Jewish Israelis. Israeli personalities' appearance on Aljazeera was perceived by viewers as a prelude to making Israel presence in the Arab world a reality accepted by future generations after getting used to seeing the Israelis speaking to the Arab people in Arabic, mostly sound with no errors. Some have taken a sceptical position on Aljazeera, and some launched violent campaigns against it because it 'presented the voice of Israel as no one has done before' (Boucheikh, 2011, p.169). Aljazeera's staff agrees on the soundness of the channel's decision to host Israelis. Alsheikh (2020) points out that at first he was against allowing the Israelis to appear on the channel, then he explains: 'The logic behind the decision is that they are present and influential, so let's listen to what they say,' stressing that this was a pragmatic stance that did not affect Aljazeera's Arab audience (A.Alsheikh, 2020). As for Rayyan, he was one of those who encouraged hosting the Israelis, 'because if they had a story, I would be able to refute it' (J.Rayyan, 2020). Here, Rayyan's words show his hostile or anti-Israel position, which is the position of many other workers in the channel, and it is the position of Arab in general based on the nature of the historical conflict between the two sides. With a broader view, Dawood believes that Aljazeera has benefited from its decision to host the Israelis, as it has proven its credibility as a media institution that seeks to report what is happening without hidden agendas, and this has contributed to making Western media and Western politicians deal with the channel seriously

(M.Dawood, 2020). Thus, regardless of the issue of hidden agendas in this context, which cannot be proven or not, hosting the Israelis was a precedent in the Arab media that helped Aljazeera to enhance its presence and reputation globally as a professional channel.

Regarding Aljazeera's presentation of the opinion and the opposing opinion during the Egyptian Revolution, Mubarak's regime supporters criticised the channel for not hosting the regime's loyalists, as if it intended to exclude their opinion. Therefore, Aljazeera justifies the absence of the regime's supporters on its screen by the regime's refusal to participate in the interventions to discuss and comment on the Revolution's events, especially after the closure of the channel's office in Cairo by the Egyptian authorities and arresting some of the channel's journalists. Many times during the Revolution, Aljazeera stated that it had tried to call the Egyptian authorities to know their opinion and comments on the events, explaining: 'But so far, there has been no reaction' (Aljazeera, 2011). Krichen (2020) summarizes the relation between presenting all perspectives and the channel's slogan on the one hand, and the Arab political and media scene on the other hand, which illustrates the impact of this approach on the channel's position and role in the Arab region:

Because we did not have such a thing in the Arab world as the other opinion, so it was as if Aljazeera told the audience: We offer goods that you do not have at all. In the Arab world, we only know the one opinion, the one party, and the one leader who understands everything and no one comments on his words even with a word. We said the world is wider than that. In the world, there are different opinions and there is a possibility to listen to multiple opinions, and listening to the other opinion does not mean that you are right and others are wrong. The issue of relativism in opinions, a matter that the West reached decades ago. We (Aljazeera) have entrenched this pluralistic culture in the Arab world and created a new media reality.

Aljazeera, by providing a range of opinions, satisfied the Arab viewer's need for broad knowledge of the details of the events, which may make the Arab citizen feel that this channel respects his rights, which he/she did not find in Arab channels before. Thus, the importance of this feature lies in distinguishing Aljazeera in the Arab media, since it was unusual in the Arab world. This is confirmed by the fact that Aljazeera English slogan is different from Aljazeera Arabic slogan that I discuss in this section, as its slogan is *Setting the news agenda*. This indicates that the principle of presenting all

perspectives distinguishes the channel in the Arab world only, as for the Western media, it is accustomed to this principle, and it will not be effective when used as a slogan.

#### **3.5.4. FREEDOM**

Aljazeera was distinguished by its selection of programmes topics, which were often sensitive topics for the Arab world, where taboos are abundant such as government corruption, Islamic fundamentalism, women's civil rights, sex and polygamy, and the consequences of discussing such topics require courage. Aljazeera's presenters dare to present any controversial or sensitive issue on the one hand, and on the other, the channel has the freedom it needs to raise these issues. Focusing on this point, Abdelmoula considered the margin of freedom Aljazeera enjoy as one of the essential elements that enabled the channel to play its role regionally and globally. He emphasized: 'Freedom is not the only condition for success, as many other factors are also required, among which is the financial support. But, without free operation in news-gathering, processing and dissemination hardly any success could be achieved' (Abdelmoula, p.146).

In the same direction, Triki (2020) says that when Aljazeera appeared, it was entirely different with its very high boldness, as it raised issues that were unimaginable that the Arab press, or television, in particular, could present. Triki notes: 'It broke a huge wall, and changed the face of the media, this is a fact' (F.Triki, 2020). The channel has enjoyed a reputation on both Arab and International levels by departing from traditional media that is in line with the current reality to a new media breaking the taboo barrier. In a book about Arab public opinion, the author Shibley Telhami, a non-resident senior fellow in Foreign Policy, Centre for Middle East Policy, describes Aljazeera as the 'Most-Feared News Network', indicating that 'Aljazeera became an instant counter weapon' by 'providing a credible fresh news outlet that focused on Pan-Arab issues' (Telhami, 2013).

Aljazeera has been able to establish new bases, standards, and concepts that differed from those adopted by traditional Arab media and news policy in Arab channels and satellites. Official Arab media, with the absence of freedom, used to focus only on the news of Arab kings, presidents, and leaders' speeches, trips and receptions, and present

the crude and persistent propaganda of the Arab systems and Arab governments and their policies, all this in ways that upset the public and made them stay away from these channels with the first opportunity to do so. The appearance of Aljazeera was that opportunity.

With a clearer description of the state of media freedoms in the Arab region, Bishara (2020) warns of an inverse relationship between the local media in any Arab country and the media of Aljazeera. Bishara points out that wherever there is a strong local media with a wider margin of freedom the role of Aljazeera is less, and wherever the local media is weak and has no margin of freedom at all Aljazeera has a stronger influence. He clarifies that in the case of Egypt specifically, people used to follow the Egyptian media more than Aljazeera, as it was watched by the elite. Hence, the role that Aljazeera played before the Revolution that it gave the opposition a platform that was not available to it in the Egyptian media, as Bishara asserts: 'Before the revolutions, Egyptian opposition figures appeared on Aljazeera, some with a populist discourse and some with less populist discourse, and this is before the emergence of social media, as they did not have platforms at all' (A.Bishara, 2020). Therefore, Aljazeera was their only platform, as I explained earlier, and through it they were able to discuss taboos such as government corruption and criticizing Arab leaders and political regimes.

### **3.5.5. ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF CRITICAL EVENTS**

On another front, realising the reasons behind Aljazeera being a phenomenon can be conceptualised through understanding the way the channel covered specific critical regional and international events. The importance of discussing the channel's coverage of these events lies in the fact that they were pivotal stages in shaping the relationship between Aljazeera and the Arab audience, up to the stage of the Arab revolutions, specifically the Egyptian Revolution, which would create public confidence in the channel and its approach based on what the channel used to provide to its viewers.

Furthermore, in my opinion, Aljazeera would not have had such a distinctive presence, and even controversial in some of its aspects that I discuss in the coming chapters, in its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, if it had not made this history of coverage. As a result of its experience in previous coverages, Aljazeera was able to cover the Egyptian Revolution in the manner that took place.

### **3.5.5.1. THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PALESTINIAN UPRISING - 2000**

The second Palestinian uprising, Intifada, erupted after Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited the courtyard of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on September 28, 2000, under the protection of 2,000 Israeli soldiers and Special Forces, and with the approval of Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Sharon toured the courtyards of the mosque, saying that the Temple Mount, Al-Haram Al-Sharif, would remain an Israeli area, which provoked Palestinian worshippers resulting in clashes with the Israeli forces. Later, the city of Jerusalem witnessed violent clashes that resulted in the injury of dozens and quickly spread to all cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Al-Aqsa Intifada ceased on February 8, 2005, following a truce agreement between Israelis and Palestinians at The Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

All Arab satellite channels covered the events of the Intifada in varying coverage, depth, and level of detail. The Lecturer in Georgetown University-Qatar Abbas Eltounsy says: 'All the Arab satellite channels, although in varying degrees, have opened an unprecedented outlet for scenes of the ferocity of Israeli practices against the Palestinians' (2002). This disparity in the depth and details of the coverage is confirmed by Zayani, as he indicates that 'many' of Arab channels have played a significant part in highlighting the Israeli-Palestinian struggle during the uprising, but Aljazeera 'more than any other channel (...) has capitalised on the importance of the Palestinian question' (2005, p.172). Aljazeera surpassed others in this coverage with the amount of details, images and historical and geographical explanations., to the extent that Alsheikh acknowledges that the channel became known more and more with the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada, as it was 'the heroine of the coverage of the uprising', and a pioneer before others, which increased its global leadership (A.Alsheikh, 2020).

Talking about the distinctiveness of the channel's coverage of this event does not go beyond the general and superficial description without going into details, which requires identifying the characteristics that shaped the coverage, which I define in four aspects as follows: the intensity and repetition of news and footage, the channel's bureau in Palestine, competition with the Israeli media, and highlighting the history of the conflict.

Aljazeera's intensive coverage of the Palestinian uprising was illustrated by what Zayani describes as 'a great impact on news-hungry Arab viewers' (2005, p.173). Zayani explains that this impact was due to 'the pictures and rhetoric of Al Jazeera' which enabled the Arab audience to follow the news of the uprising in 'the Occupied Territories at close range' (2005, p.174). Several researchers in this field (Korn, 2004) (Stein & Swedenburg, 2005) cited, as an example, the killing of the child Mohammed Aldurra on the second day of the uprising. The incident took place in the Gaza Strip on September 30, 2000, and was filmed by a Palestinian cameraman freelancing for France 2. Jamal Aldurra and his son Mohammed, 12-year-old, were caught in a crossfire between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, resulting in the death of the child. Miles in his book about Aljazeera, and within the context of the Intifada, indicates that 'Al-Jazeera ran repeatedly the clip of the boy being shot, and for several days the picture of his dying became the network's emblem of the intifada,' which had a 'deeply galvanising effect on the wider Arab public' (Miles, 2005, p.73), and 'inflamed passions', in the words of Zayani (2005, p.173). The impact of Aljazeera becomes clear if compared to other channels' coverage in the first days of the uprising. Miles notes that 'Jordanian TV was still running its usual fluffy programme schedule of saccharine music and vapid talk shows, interspersed with dreary staged monologues by government spokesmen' (2005, p.73), despite the fact that Jordan shares the longest border with Palestine, and the largest number of Palestinians outside the Palestinian territories reside in Jordan.

Aljazeera's news coverage of this period, its cameras' 'high-profile shooting', according to Zayani (2005, p.174) and 'the best footage of the intifada' (2005, p.74), as described by Miles, has come from Aljazeera's bureau in the West Bank led by its correspondent Walid Alomary and his news team. Working within the occupied territories has exceptional circumstances, and under the exacerbation of conflict between the two parties, these conditions become more challenging. Where the danger is around, and it is difficult to deal with two conflicting authorities to cover one issue, Alomary, with his 'in-depth knowledge of Palestinian and Israeli society, his language skills, bravery and hack's obsession with a good story' (Miles, 2005, p.70) covered the uprising. Miles, within a long narrative about Alomary's role in the uprising, emphasises Alomary and his news team's reputation 'for the courage and wherewithal to go out and start



reporting anywhere at any time' (2005, p. 103), which contributed to locating Aljazeera on the world media map.

The position occupied by Aljazeera in the global media required pulling the rug from under the Israeli media. Miles describes the situation as a 'shock' for the Israelis, as 'their traditional hegemony over the media came to an end and they realised that they had to develop new strategies to win world public opinion' (Miles, 2005, p.68). Nevertheless, it was not a question of finding new strategies; it was a matter of irreversible change. Since then, Israel no longer has a monopoly on events, as Aljazeera provided another version of what was happening. Miles explains: 'It was the first time that the full tragedy of what was happening in Palestine had been beamed directly into the homes of millions of Arabs' (p.76). He further noted that 'Israel could no longer claim to be using reasonable force to suppress the Palestinians, when Al-Jazeera showed otherwise' (p.80).

Refuting the Israeli narration of events, Aljazeera not only told the events, but it has also provided viewers with the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the history of the Palestinian people. Zayani notes that through its programmes, Aljazeera reminded its viewers continually of critical moments in the conflict, such as 'the expulsion of the Palestinians from their lands in 1948, the 1967 Six-Day War, and the October 1973 War' (2005, p.173). While the Arab world and the Middle East were familiar with the history of this conflict, other parts of the world were not necessarily aware of the background of this conflict. Greg Philo and Mike Berry, in one of the Glasgow University Media Group's studies, draw attention to the lack of clarification regarding the history of the conflict. GUMG's *Bad News from Israel* focuses on television news coverage, particularly BBC and ITV news, of the second Intifada and its influence on audience belief and understanding of the ongoing conflict. They emphasise the importance of the knowledge of events, since it is 'extremely difficult to understand the rationale of the different participants in the conflict or even where it was happening' without the knowledge. They found that 'this knowledge was not available on much of the news – indeed some bulletins would be likely to add to viewers' confusion' (Philo & Berry, 2004, p.109). GUMG's study confirms that even when journalists made references to the history of peace negotiations, they were 'brief' and 'such a sequence

of references to past events implies a level of knowledge which is simply not present in many viewers' (p.112).

Overtime on the uprising, Aljazeera 'became a household name across the Arab world' (Miles, 2005, p.68). He continues: 'although it remained still largely unknown in the West,' which soon changed, in Afghanistan. The attention and focus Aljazeera gave to the Palestinian cause, which is the number one issue for the Arabs, enabled it to strengthen its media presence in the Arab world, as the channel satisfied the nationalistic sentiments of the Arab viewer. Whereas in the case of Afghanistan, the channel's satisfaction of the viewer's need, especially the western viewer, for knowledge, which is not used to being lost in Western channels, is what strengthened the channel's global presence.

### **3.5.5.2. THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN - 2001**

To destroy Al-Qaeda and establish an operational base in Afghanistan, by removing the Taliban from power and with the support of the Allies, the United States invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, in the first military action, after the 9/11 attacks, in what former US President George W Bush described as the War on Terror. This war became a central focus of Bush's policy, both internally and globally. It constituted a turning point, which was described as dangerous and unprecedented in history, an indistinct war, different from conventional wars, as it is a multi-dimensional and multi-purpose war.

Many see Aljazeera's coverage of the 1998 US-led attack on Iraq, Operation Desert Fox, as the first significant event towards Western media competition, as Majed Abdelhadi (Alaraby, 2014), Senior journalist at Aljazeera, emphasizes. Alsheikh (2020) agrees with this view, as he states:

I think that Aljazeera's access to the world began in 1998 when Bill Clinton ordered the bombing of Baghdad in Operation Desert Fox. Aljazeera had an office in Baghdad, and we had a satellite system from which to broadcast pictures, so we were the only channel in Baghdad. We placed the camera on the hotel where our office was located and transmitted the pictures of the US raids to the world ... In those days, Aljazeera logo appeared on CNN, as it was not present in Iraq, so it took pictures from us. So Aljazeera became on the scene of international events and became well-known.

Others see the channel's coverage of the war in Afghanistan as a breakthrough towards globalisation, as the former Director-General of Aljazeera Waddah Khanfar confirms. Khanfar asserts: 'In the early days of the Afghanistan war we moved to globalism, because we not only covered news or broadcast news to viewers, but also covered it to the whole world, and became a news source for other television and media institutions in the world' (Aljazeera.net, 2006). Agreeing with Khanfar and stressing his point, Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, in their book about Aljazeera, describe the channel before its coverage of the war on Afghanistan as 'the once-anonymous Al-Jazeera'. They continue: 'With its exclusive broadcast of the first video footage of Osama bin Laden, Al-Jazeera had scooped the world. As the world's eyes fixed on Afghanistan, Al-Jazeera scored again with exclusive footage of US strikes against Afghanistan' (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002, p.21).

The discussion over Aljazeera's coverage of the war in Afghanistan focused on two aspects. The first is the channel's broadcasting exclusivity from Afghanistan and the Taliban holdouts, and the second is the American position and reaction towards this broadcasting. Aljazeera's coverage of the war in Afghanistan drew the world's attention to the channel, when a lot of Western media coverage of the war relied on Aljazeera's news, information, and details; especially Al-Qaeda's and its leader Osama bin Laden's tape recordings which were exclusively broadcasted by Aljazeera. The channel had sold the first recording of bin Laden's speech for \$250,000 to one of the Western channels, 3 minutes after broadcasting it on Aljazeera (Abualrub, 2010, p. 87 – 88). El-Nawawy and Iskandar emphasise that at the beginning of the Afghanistan war, 'American audience received a daily dose of Al-Jazeera. In covering this crisis, CNN and other news stations that normally might have broken the news themselves used Al-Jazeera footage' (2002, p.22).

In the context of talking about Aljazeera's exclusivity during coverage of the war in Afghanistan, I look here specifically at what enabled the channel to stay alone in that field. Once again, after studying the channel's coverage in the Palestinian cause, the channel's bureau and its correspondent in the country of the event appear as crucial factors for its distinctiveness in coverage. 'Al Jazeera was already in Afghanistan before September 11,' Ehab Bessaiso, a researcher and former Palestinian minister, confirms. Tayseer Allouni, Director of Aljazeera bureau in Afghanistan, confirms,

during an interview (T.Allouni 2020, personal communication, 27 March), that the channel obtained the permission in 1999, after negotiations with Taliban, to open a bureau in Kabul. He mentions that the Taliban gave permission for two news channels to operate in Afghanistan, one Arabic and the second English-speaking. Aljazeera, at the time the only Arab news channel, took up the offer. While the other channel, CNN, declined due to its lack of interest in the region (Bessaiso, 2005, p.163). Allouni (2020) explains Aljazeera's interest in this region, which made it seek to be present there two years before obtaining approval:

This indicates the common sense of journalism at Aljazeera, and this is strategic thinking. Because their idea was based on the fact that Afghanistan is ruled by the Taliban movement, which is not internationally recognized, only 3 countries recognized it: Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, and had only 3 embassies, but the rest of the world and the United Nations did not recognize this government, so it will be a hotbed of problems. In addition to the fact that Arab Afghans started to gather in Afghanistan. One of the officials (at Aljazeera) told me: This is a powder keg, if it explodes one day; we are supposed to be there to get ahead of it.

Thus, Aljazeera's exclusivity of the coverage was an obvious result. Allouni was the only reporter in Afghanistan who had contact with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. With a beard and in the Afghan's outfit, Allouni approached 'both ordinary and official people in Afghanistan' (Bessaiso, 2005, p.165), and 'convinced Taliban officials that he had been a resident in Afghanistan for more than two years, which distinguished him from the other foreign reporters' (2005, p.164). So, he succeeded to stay there when the Taliban ordered foreigners to evacuate Afghanistan. Adding to the channel's distinction by Allouni, at this stage, is that he contradicted news was released by the US administration in some reports. Bessaiso mentions, for example, that on October 6, 2001, 'the Pentagon admitted the downing of one plane,' however 'Allouni reported the destruction of two US fighter planes by Taliban forces (...) He went to the site where the planes were shot down (...), filmed the ruins of the planes and filed the footage in his report' (2005, p.165). Allouni not only supported his reports with visual evidence but also used Qur'anic verses and Islamic stories, which he admitted that 'enhanced his journalistic mission' (p.165). The same details that facilitated his journalistic mission later led to his imprisonment. As a Syrian-born Spanish citizen, on September 26, 2005, a court in Madrid sentenced Allouni to seven years for 'collaborating with a terrorist organisation' (BBC, 2005). In his testimony, Allouni denied any collaboration with Bin

Laden's Al-Qaeda network and said that 'he was only doing his job as a journalist' (BBC, 2005).

With the factors mentioned above, the competition was more accessible this time compared to previous major global events; rather, there was no contender for Aljazeera in the coverage of the war on Afghanistan. Before the war in Afghanistan, 'the monopoly of live coverage, which CNN secured', Bessaiso says: 'helped the American administration maintain these aspects. However, during the war in Afghanistan, the situation was different' (2005, p.156). By 'these aspects' Bessaiso means what John Stanier and Miles Hudson (1999) mention in their *war and the Media: A Random Searchlight* as the aspects of the media reporting which enable the American administration to maintain its credibility in the eyes of international public opinion. These aspects are summarized by the following: convincing the world of the American administration's cause and its justice, maintaining the security of their plans, avoiding reporting what might affect their alliance with their allies, and avoiding showing anything that would adversely affect their citizens' support (1999, p.222). Aljazeera's coverage of the war in Afghanistan, a live coverage coming from an Arab channel far from US control, disrupted these principles.

At that point, Aljazeera defended its coverage of the war by giving its audience 'the chance to hear the other side of the story and to know more about the most 'wanted man' in the world', and that it was taking an approach of objectivity and neutrality, while the US administration saw this coverage quite differently (Bessaiso, 2005, p.154). The US accused Aljazeera of 'galvanising Arab radicalism' (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002, p.22), primarily when it provided bin Laden 'with the opportunity to state that the war in Afghanistan was "a religious war" and to call on Muslims through-out the world to join this "holy war"' (Bessaiso, 2005, p.154). The US believed that Aljazeera's coverage provided the Taliban with access to the public, precisely like what the Professor of Political Science Brigitte Nacos describes in her book *Terrorism and the Media* as 'providing terrorists their lifeblood or oxygen in the form of publicity' (Nacos, 1994, p.10).

As a reaction to Aljazeera's coverage and to further curb it, the American administration has asked Qatar to rein in the channel. US Secretary of State Colin Powell asked the

emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Khalifa al-Thani to 'exert influence on the Qatari-based channel, which can be received almost worldwide' (BBC, 2001). On November 12, 2001, the channel's bureau in Kabul was bombed. The US claimed that it was by mistake, while Aljazeera accused the US of targeting its office. Ibrahim Hilal, Aljazeera's chief editor of the Arabic language network, asserted to *The Guardian* that 'the attack was deliberate and long-planned,' and after the BBC had reopened its Kabul office, it was the time to exclude Aljazeera's office from the coverage, as he continued: 'I don't think they would do that while we were the only office in Kabul' (*The Guardian*, 2001).

Thus, the war continued, but the channel's coverage of the war in Afghanistan diminished, as another event appeared on the international and Arab scene, which is the war on Iraq.

### **3.5.5.3. IRAQ WAR - 2003**

Aiming at disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, ending Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and liberating the Iraqi people, the United States led an alliance and invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003. The invasion toppled Saddam Hussein. This may be the only goal achieved on the list of declared targets; the war began and ended while there was no evidence of weapons of mass destruction and no evidence of Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism.

The state of Arab television media at this stage was different from other events, as the role of Arab channels was instrumental in covering the war on Iraq. Marc Lynch in his *Voices of the New Arab Public*, discussing the situation of Iraq in the light of the Arab public sphere, says: 'The Arab media therefore itself became a central front of political conflict during and after the war' (2006, p.171). Lynch explains the difference from earlier coverage of events in the Middle East, stating that there was a struggle between stations for market share during the Iraq war, as 'al-Jazeera now faced potent competitors such as Al-Arabiya, as well as smaller but effective rivals such as Abu Dhabi TV and al-Manar' (2006, p.172). With such competition, Aljazeera's coverage was characterised by two aspects, in my opinion. The first is that Aljazeera was logistically prepared, as it was in its media debates and discussions as well. The second

aspect lies in the sceptical approach Aljazeera has followed in dealing with all news from the US and its allies in the war.

Media and political observers monitored that Aljazeera's coverage of the war on Iraq had started even in a stage leading up to the war, especially when United States administration started the preparations for war logistically, politically and in the media. Aljazeera had equipped its Bureau in Baghdad and fielded journalists and reporters to Iraq from North to South and started from the first moment broadcasting news and reports from Iraq about war expectations and humanitarian circumstances there before the war. Lynch confirms that 'In the month of March, as war drew near' Aljazeera programs 'covered virtually every possible aspect of the crisis' (2006, p.182). He also mentions that 'Even on the brink of the war, however, a variety of perspectives still appeared on al-Jazeera' (2006, p.183), which Miles addresses in the context of the channel's commentary on the war, and describes it as 'holistic: Ba'athists, neoconservatives, anti-war Europeans, Kurdish and Arab nationalists, there was an impressive display of diversity and so no one clear message' (2005, p.240). This particular note is indicative of the channel's high readiness, as its readiness exceeded the logistical side to reach coordination of relations and to widen the horizon of the topics of the debates regarding the Iraqi crisis.

'The Arab media did a very remarkable job', Nabeel Alsharif, a former Minister for Information and Communication Affairs in Jordan, said in *Jordan Times* comparing Arab media to the Western media, which was 'dependent upon the US defence and state departments' (Jordan Times, 2003). Arab media performance during the Iraq war period forced Aljazeera to outperform other Arab channels; Aljazeera chose to be more sceptical than any other channel. Lynch mentions this aspect of Aljazeera's coverage of the war, which appeared in 'its skeptical reporting on the case for war and its heavy coverage of the conflict's human impact' (2006, p.171). He mentions, for example, the channel's 'word choices of news presenters who used terms such as "invasion" rather than "liberation"' (Lynch, 2006, p.171), as the simplest methods of doubting, starting with scepticism about the case for the war, which was not for Aljazeera about liberation 'it was a colonial conflict' (Miles, 2005, p.242).

It did not stop at the level of choice of terms; Miles confirms that Aljazeera was cross-checking 'all the information the channel received, whether it came from Coalition Central Command or from the Iraqi Ministry of Information' (2005, p.243). Aljazeera revealed many contradictions in Western media agencies during the war on Iraq, such as pretending that there were no downed warplanes in the early days of the war. Aljazeera showed images forced the American and British spokesmen to admit those losses. Miles discusses this aspect, illustrating it with examples: 'While CNN was reporting that the town (Umm Qasr) had been secured, Al-Jazeera was still reporting fighting. The MoD (Ministry of Defence) announced that Umm Qasr was 'secure' three times over three days, before it fell' (2005, p.244). Another example Miles mentions was 'the rumour of the Shia uprising as if it were a fact', which Aljazeera proved to be untrue, as its correspondent in Basra reported that 'no uprising, no disturbances,' beside pictures supported by pictures of 'a deserted city centre and quiet streets' (2005, p.246).

In a move that had aroused an outcry against Aljazeera and in violation of Geneva Convention, the channel showed US prisoners of war images after the American and British forces stated that there were no prisoners of war and dead soldiers. Miles mentions this incident: 'When a marine commander in Qatar was asked about Iraqi's claims to have captured US troops he dismissed them as "Iraqi lies" ', he adds confirming that Aljazeera had learned of the incident 'not just before other news media, but before the Pentagon itself' (2005, p.248).

This ongoing confrontation between the channel and US and its allies was exacerbated during the Battle of Fallujah in 2004. Aljazeera was noted for its field presence in the city, where it was the only Arabic channel that broadcasted from inside Fallujah. Despite the high-risk task, Aljazeera reporter the Egyptian journalist Ahmad Mansour had reported the appalling events of the battle moment-to-moment. The images broadcast on the channel, from the heart of Fallujah, showed the world how much death the US had distributed to the city, and the use of white phosphorus (*Alkhaleej online*, 2014). Soon after Aljazeera office in Baghdad was shelled by the American forces, when a 'US A10' tank killer' (...) fired two missiles in their direction (Aljazeera's news crew were on the roof of the office)' (Miles, 2005, p.265), causing the death of Aljazeera's correspondent and producer Tareq Ayyoub.



#### **3.5.5.4. GAZA WAR – 2008/2009**

During a period of truce between Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas and Israel, Israel carried out a raid in the Gaza Strip that killed six Hamas members. In response, Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives in Gaza fired more than 130 rockets and mortar shells at areas in southern Israel. On December 27, 2008, Israel responded by attacking Gaza with what was known as Operation Cast Lead. The conflict ended on January 18, 2009, killing at least 1,417 Palestinians, including 926 civilians, 412 children and 111 women, and injuring 4,336 others, as well as ten Israeli soldiers and three civilians killed, and 400 others injured, mostly civilians.

The coverage of the Gaza war in the Arab media was not as easy as that of the second Palestinian Intifada. Although the conflict was between the Palestinian side and the Israeli side in both cases, the Palestinian side in the Intifada was inclusive of Palestinians of different political factions, while in the Gaza war, the Palestinian side was represented by Hamas, which the Arab political regimes' positions differed toward. This divide and disparity spread to the Arab media. Omar Ghazi, an Egyptian author and researcher, discussing the differences between Arab channels in covering the Gaza war said that this situation turned into a battleground of words between a pro-Hamas, another blames Hamas for the scourge of war the Palestinian people suffer from, and another accuses the Arab regimes, especially the Egyptian regime, of collaborating with Israel against the Palestinians (Ghazi, 2009). Aljazeera was sympathetic in its news coverage with Hamas, and blamed the Egyptian regime for the suffering experienced by the Palestinians in Gaza, as Egypt submitted to Israeli pressure by closing the Rafah crossing. The Rafah crossing was the only land crossing that allowed Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip to Egypt and from there to all countries of the world after Israel imposed a blockade on the Strip, closing all crossings to it, and preventing or rationing the entry of fuel, building materials, and many basic commodities.

Aljazeera had covered the war events around the clock and provided continuous monitoring of the developments on the ground. However, this intensive coverage did not distinguish the channel from other channels that were displaying the same images and scenes taking place within the Gaza Strip, most of which were bearing the logo of Ramattan Agency. This time, the distinctiveness of Aljazeera's coverage of the war featured in its confrontation with Al-Arabiya. The two channels were the largest and

most prominent among Arab satellite news channels, and each adopted a different position, described by some as a media-oriented for political purposes (Ammon News, 2009).

Aljazeera's media discourse during the Gaza war was characterised by its strong language and bias towards the Palestinian resistance. The channel described the dead Palestinians as martyrs, which Ghazi confirms its 'great impact on the hearts of the Arab masses, giving the impression that the channel speaks their language and senses their pain' (Ghazi, 2009). At the same time, Al-Arabiya did not use the word 'martyrs' in describing the victims of Israeli aggression.

Furthermore, while Aljazeera was distinguished from the others by the testimonies and interviews it conducted during its coverage of Shifa Hospital, the Central hospital in the Gaza Strip, as well as distress calls of the Palestinians, which showed the horror and brutality of the Israeli aggression, Al-Arabiya appeared more conservative than Aljazeera in transmitting pictures of the dead and wounded. 'The rule is not to transmit images that offend the viewer very strongly,' said Al-Arabiya news director Nakhla Elhajj, continued: 'We, as journalists, have a duty to see them so we can describe them, but we cannot force the viewer to see them' (Palestine Today Newspaper Archive, 2019, p.39).

During the war on Gaza, Aljazeera was blamed, especially in the Middle East, for hosting Israeli speakers. On a daily basis, Aljazeera gave the spokesperson of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Israel Defence Forces spokesman and Israel politicians the opportunity to present their views, which accused the Palestinian resistance of terrorism. Aljazeera justified its policy by affirming its principles regarding the respect for differing views, and the importance of showing the opinion and the other opinion, as its slogan says, to ensure balanced professional coverage. In this regard, Ghazi explains that despite the criticism of Aljazeera for hosting Israelis, it did not have a negative impact on the channel, especially since the nature of the questions that were addressed to the spokesperson of the Israeli army, for example, was greatly angering the Israeli guests (Ghazi, 2009).

On the other hand, the criticism Al-Arabiya had received was rougher than the blame on Aljazeera. Ghazi mentioned that when some consider that Al-Arabiya has acted as the enemy of the Palestinians, some have launched an online campaign, calling the channel 'the Hebrew' instead of Al-Arabiya, which means 'the Arabic' (Ghazi, 2009), to signify that the channel speaks for the Hebrew state. The accusations against Al-Arabiya extended to accusing it of direct involvement in assisting the Israeli army, justifying the Israeli army's operations and fabricating issues against the Palestinian resistance. This reaction toward Al-Arabiya's coverage led its crew, headed by its director, Abdul Rahman Alrashed, to conduct many press interviews to clear their name from the accusations against them.

In covering this war, Aljazeera was confronted not only with Al-Arabiya but also with some Arab regimes. Ghazi says that Aljazeera did not hesitate to devote a lot of space to host the editor of *Alquds Al-arabi* newspaper, Abdelbari Atwan, who frequently attacked Arab regimes, especially the Egyptian regime, which Egypt considered an organised campaign aimed at defaming its reputation (Ghazi, 2009).

What Aljazeera provided through its coverages of critical events satisfied the audience's needs that they missed on other channels. This makes getting acquainted with the historical context of Aljazeera's coverages that preceded the Arab revolutions an essential matter, as Aljazeera's reaching the stage of being a reliable source on which the Arab peoples depend in following up on their revolutions was the result of what they experienced from the channel in its previous coverage.

#### **3.5.5.5. ARAB REVOLUTIONS – 2010/2011**

With the slogan 'people want to bring down the regime' the Arab peoples went out in revolts that were based on peaceful protest movements in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria. Every revolution had an event that triggered it, although all revolutions generally resulted due to the Arab rulers clinging to rule in the absence of democracy, the spread of corruption and poor living conditions and the deterioration of freedoms and human rights. Starting in late 2011, some of them ended with the fall of the ruling regime, such as the fall of the regime of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia after 24 years of rule, the fall of the Hosni Mubarak regime in Egypt after 30 years of rule, the fall of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya after 42 years of rule, and the

fall of the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen after 34 years of rule. Some of them continued until now in a manner different from its beginnings, resulting in wars, such as the war in Syria, Yemen, and Libya.

Arab regimes lacking media freedom had cast a shadow over the coverage of Arab revolutions, which was known as the Arab Spring, in the Arab media. Although all Arab and international satellite channels covered the events of the Arab revolutions in newscasts and programs, the space devoted for transmitting the events of these revolutions, analysing them and analysing their dimensions was in varying degrees. That disparity was due to these channels' ideologies and dependencies, and the space of freedom they possess. Most of the time, the channels were late to start covering the revolutions, so they did not rush to broadcast the event at the moment until they made sure that they did not cover what might contradict their directions. In a study about Aljazeera's role in strengthening the status of Qatar in the Middle East and the world, researcher Shaima Alhawari describes the Arab media landscape during the Arab spring saying that satellite channels with ideological and sectarian trends; Sunni, Wahhabi, Shiite, have emerged, as well as political channels affiliated with either the fallen ruling regimes or the new regimes. Alhawari emphasises that, in most cases, the emergence of the significant number of satellite channels was accompanied by a weakness in delivering an objective media message, as hate speech of all kinds overwhelmed the Arab media scene, resulting in the emergence of uncreative chaos in the Arab region (Alhawari, 2018. p.7).

With the significant number of Arab satellite channels, the media voices multiplied in an unprecedented way compared to the situation during previous Arab and international events, which resulted in intense competition. As for Aljazeera, the challenges it faced during the revolutions made the competition more complicated than it was in covering previous events in its history. However, Aljazeera chose to adopt the continuous coverage during the revolutions, specifically in 2011, the first year of the revolutions, and it was a successful approach, due to its full compatibility with the circumstances of the revolutions accelerating in their events and successive stages. In a report entitled *Al-Jazeera: How Did A 15-Year-Old Channel Cover A Nation's Revolutions?* the researcher, Jihad Abu Shabab, indicates that 'during the period of the Arab revolutions, Al Jazeera showed all the experiences it had acquired during its nearly 15 years of life'

(Abu Shabab, 2011. p.3). Abu Shabab confirms that in its continuous coverage of the revolutions, Aljazeera benefited from its previous experiences, which gave its media staff professionalism in covering and dealing with exceptional events (2011. p.3).

The challenges that Aljazeera faced during the Arab Spring were, in my opinion, in two aspects: The first is the access to news and latest updates; the second is the channel's dealing with the news. While the strength of Aljazeera lies, in large part of its coverage, in its correspondents and their presence at the event, the issue was different in the period of the Arab revolutions. Realizing the importance of the correspondents in reporting the news and pictures, and in raising the level of knowledge about the events and its developments locally and globally, the authorities of the Arab regimes that the peoples demanded to bring down had restricted the work of Aljazeera's correspondents in many cases. Nevertheless, at this stage in its history, Aljazeera was able to overcome this challenge that governments put in front of it, as since its inception it gained Arab masses' trust, which made many of them rush to contribute in reporting the news to the channel.

For example, in the case of the Tunisian revolution, the offices of the channel in Tunisia had been closed years ago before the revolutions. When the demonstrations started, the channel changed its ordinary programs schedule to broadcast continuous coverage of the Tunisian revolution, starting to broadcast the news content and images as they came in online from Tunisia. The Tunisians watched the news of their revolution on Aljazeera, and the rebels raised slogans that praised Aljazeera for its role, while the national television was absent from the scene. The media specialist Aref Hijjawi, in a report discussing Aljazeera's coverage of the Arab spring, states: 'For Tunisians, Al-Jazeera was a mirror in which they saw themselves reflected. It helped them believe in the revolution their country had embarked on. It was also the closest media to their hearts and minds' (Hijjawi, 2011, p. 94).

The challenges Aljazeera faced were not limited to the challenge it faced in the places where the revolutions occurred. In its studios in Qatar, the channel faced a challenge, which may be more critical, lies in how it deals with revolutions. This challenge arose since the Arab spring was the first time that Aljazeera covered an event or conflict in which no foreign party is involved. That time neither Israel nor the United States was a

party to the conflict; the conflict in the Arab revolutions was between the citizens of one country, Tunisians and other Tunisians, Egyptians and other Egyptians, who disagreed on their state's approach. In this context, in particular, Alhawari asserts that Aljazeera media policy, talk shows and news coverage aroused the indignation of many Arab countries' governments that saw in the channel's new media policy a threat to their stability and perhaps their existence. Alhawari explains that Arab regimes' position on Aljazeera attributed to the fact that these regimes were reassured that their citizens hear and obey, but do not discuss, as governments were the only ones who seized the media space, broadcasting what they wanted to implant in people's minds in line with the regimes' vision. As a result, Aljazeera faced official Arab reactions, attacking it in various ways (Alhawari, 2018. p.20).

One of Aljazeera's most tense relations with countries was its relationship with Egypt, which 'was not devoid of tension', Alhawari says and continues explaining that the tension was due to the channel's coverage of the Egyptian internal situation, the regime's foreign and internal policies, issues of freedoms and torture in the police stations, the Copts issue, Egyptian relations with the United States of America and Israel, the issue of the Gaza Strip blockade and the closure of the Rafah crossing, and the role of Egypt during the war of Israel on the Gaza Strip at the end of 2011 (2018, p.22). In confirmation of the above, *Alquds Alarabi* newspaper studied media coverage of several channels, including Aljazeera, during the year 2005, examining the extent to which news channels contributed to the spark of the Arab Spring revolutions. This study found that Egypt was the country with the most coverage on Aljazeera in most subjects compared to other Arab Spring countries. Moreover, It was clear from the study that what Aljazeera was most concerned within its coverage of the Arab Spring countries, before the revolutions, was news topics related to human rights and democracy, which 'reflects its desire to bring about a change in the living conditions in those countries, a desire that is definitely contrary to the wishes of their political regimes' (*Alquds Alarabi*, 2013). Thus, over five years before the Egyptian Revolution the largest share of the news coverage on Aljazeera had been assigned to Egypt, the matter that caused displeasure among the Egyptian regime and the Egyptian media as well.

Aljazeera's Egypt bureau Chief Abdelfattah Fayed notes, during an interview (A.Fayed 2020, personal communication, 25 April), that the relation between Egypt and Aljazeera witnessed an improvement before the Revolution, specifically in 2010, despite the natural previous tension, based on the political tension between Qatar and Egypt. He explains that in the period before the Revolution relations were good, and President Mubarak made a Gulf tour in which he visited Qatar for the first time after a long period of estrangement. Fayed adds: 'There was no problem for Aljazeera to target Egypt, and there was no problem for Egypt to fear Aljazeera for anything, but the event was greater than everyone, and the coverage was professional' (A.Fayed, 2020). Emphasizing the calm and stability of the relationship before the Revolution, Fayed declares that he had held a meeting with the Assistant of secretary-general of the Egyptian ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) Ali Elddin Hilal, and it was the first official meeting with the channel, in which he ended the estrangement between Mubarak regime and the channel, and adds that he was arranging a meeting with the Secretary-General of NDP Safwat Alsharif. On the other hand, recalling the main reasons that sparked the Egyptian Revolution, Fayed (2020) explains that Aljazeera as a media outlet has no hand in these reasons:

Aljazeera did not rig the 2010 parliamentary elections, which were a major cause of the Revolution, as the elections were grossly and blatantly rigged. However, what did Aljazeera do? Aljazeera, and what I did and I am proud of, that I exposed this forgery. The pictures broadcast were exclusive photos from inside the polling stations of the committee's employees and security personnel filling out the voting cards for the ruling party and placing them in the boxes on behalf of the citizens. These photos certainly played a significant role. We detected the forgery, but was the forgery hidden if we did not reveal it? Everyone knows, the opposition all spoke about it.

Fayed (2020) continues, explaining another reason for the Revolution, believing that Aljazeera played its media role towards it, nothing more:

The other thing is, Aljazeera is not the one that raised the prices of goods and services and imposed taxes on people in a time of crisis. Aljazeera did not tell people to go and set fire to themselves on the sidewalk of Parliament in protest against the high prices, Aljazeera filmed these events and broadcast it, but we are not the ones who ignited it.

All the clarification reported by Fayed in refuting that Aljazeera was the cause of sparking the Revolution does not change the reality of the tension, which, according to

Hawari, 'had reached the point of explosion during the January 25 Revolution', as the channel's coverage of the Revolution's events reached the maximum level, which 'aroused the ire of the Egyptian regime, who felt that Al-Jazeera was sharing people with their revolution, interacting with them, and even inciting them more, which posed a threat to the system that was already in a difficult situation' (Alhawari, 2018. p.22).

Contrary to what Fayed emphasises, and in line with what Alhawari says, the description of the relation between Egypt and Aljazeera becomes clear by looking at Mahmoud Almammlouk's book, *The President's Cave: Mubarak's Last Confessions*. Almammlouk discusses the nature of the tense relations between Egypt and Qatar, which led to the formation of the Egyptian reaction to Aljazeera. Almammlouk explains that the relations between Cairo and Doha before the January Revolution were dominated by continuous tension with the Mubarak regime until it reached the point of freezing relations and visits, indicating that the main reason was the policy of competition that prevailed between the two political leaderships in both countries, as 'Qatar tried to play a role in regional issues that Cairo sponsors it, especially the Sudan and Palestine issues' (Almammlouk, 2014. p.62). Until the relation reached its worst stage in early 2009, after the Gaza war, as 'Sheikh Hamad, the Emir of Qatar at the time supported the Islamic Resistance Movement *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip, which had a tense relation with the Mubarak regime' (2014. p.62). Almammlouk adds another reason for the tension in relations, which is that 'Doha opened its doors to opponents of the regime, such as Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Sheikh Youssef Al-Qaradawi, and hosted them to attack Mubarak, his family, and his policies towards bequeathing power to his son Gamal', leading to the collapse of relations starting on January 25, when the channel was a strong supporter of the Egyptian Revolution, which broadcast live from the heart of Tahrir Square (2014. p.62). The matter that the Egyptian regime faced by several actions I discuss in the next chapter. Responding to that, Aljazeera frequently assured its audiences in Egypt and across the world that it 'will continue its in-depth and comprehensive reporting on the events unfolding in Egypt' (Aljazeera, 2011), which I will concentrate on in more detail in the forthcoming chapters.

### **3.6. CONCLUSION**

Between the Egyptian regime's action and Aljazeera's reaction, and vice versa, the researchers disagreed over the extent to which Aljazeera was able to make a change,



leading to a revolution. In this regard, Hijjawi says: 'A television station does not create a revolution, nor does it participate in it, despite what some researchers may think. At most, it is a panel on the highway telling the revolutionaries: You are on the right path' (Hijjawi, 2011, p.97). Hence, this research's fundamental question, which I discuss in the coming chapters, lies in studying how did Aljazeera carry out its media role, and has it went beyond this role by participating in the Revolution in one way or another?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **THE JOURNALISTIC PROCEDURES OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter studies the details of Aljazeera's 24-hour coverage of the eighteen days of the Egyptian Revolution in view of studying the logistical and the journalistic aspects of the coverage, while I study the news content and its themes in the following chapters. After highlighting the historical events relating to each stage of the coverage, I support the aspects I discuss in the chapter by the testimonies of Aljazeera's staff who gathered, produced, and presented this news coverage from both the field in Egypt and the channel's newsroom in Qatar, through interviews I conducted with them in the channel's headquarters in Doha, to obtain a closer picture of the case of the study.

In this chapter, I focus on the pillars of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, details of the measures and procedures taken by the channel to face the challenges imposed by the Egyptian authorities, the measures that enabled Aljazeera to continue covering the event non-stop. I also examine the channel's audio and visual content, the performance of the channel's broadcasters and the calls-in during the days of the Revolution as they were and still are controversial issues raised about the channel's coverage.

#### **4.2. THE JOURNALISTIC PROCEDURES OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE**

Since its first day, the intensity of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution shifted from a brief look at the demonstrations to an intense, open and continuous coverage over a period of 18 days. With the escalation of the protests, the channel worked to reach as many sources as possible to get news, and in light of these circumstances and coverage, the Egyptian authorities imposed several pressures on the media, specifically on Aljazeera. In this section, I track, historically and in view of the developments of events, the measures taken by the channel to overcome the pressures and continue the coverage. This historical tracking, supported by oral testimonies,

enhances the understanding of the channel's role during the Egyptian Revolution starting with the channel's decision of the continuous coverage, continuing its broadcast under cutting off of the internet and phone service, continuing the channel's work and the presence of its team in Tahrir Square despite the closure of its office in Cairo and preventing it from working in Egypt, its procedures after cutting off its signal on Nilesat, its documentation of the Battle of the Camel, up to discussing the channel's use of citizen journalism.

#### **4.2.1. THE CONTINUOUS COVERAGE DECISION**

After 30 years under President Hosni Mubarak's tight dictatorial regime, crowds of Egyptians responded to calls by non-partisan political forces, such as the April 6 Youth Movement, the Egyptian Movement for Change *Kefaya*, the Youth Movement for Justice and Freedom, the National Association for Change, and Muslim Brotherhood youth to demonstrate on the National Police Day, Tuesday, January 25, 2011, against the socio-political and economic situation in Egypt. The gathering was in Tahrir Square in Cairo, and demonstrations spread across Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia, Suez, and other Egyptian cities chanting 'Bread and Freedom' and 'The People Want to bring down the Regime.' To reach the decision to cover the events in Egypt with exceptional continuous coverage, Aljazeera went through details that are important to be addressed in order to understand the channel's approach.

At this time, Aljazeera was busy disclosing secret documents of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which the channel obtained exclusively. Aljazeera would not leave a treasure in the news world, such as these documents, which it published successively for four days, 23-26 January. Jamal Elshyyal, Correspondent and Producer at Aljazeera, explains, during an interview (J.Elshyyal 2020, personal communication, 22 March), that the disclosure of these documents was part of an agreement between Aljazeera and the Guardian newspaper. Aljazeera was committed to carrying out this coverage, which was considered a massive story, and it is not easy to stop it. Especially because, as Elshyyal (2020) indicates, what happened in Egypt in the beginning had happened previously, as there were previously large demonstrations, for example the April 6 Youth Movement was established with the Almahalla alkubra protests in 2008, but what was different in 2011 is that the Revolution lasted 18 days (J.Elshyyal, 2020).

Day after day, the channel revealed new documents of 'Palestine Papers' to increase the thriller, 'based on more than 1,600 confidential documents, including memos, e-mails, maps, minutes of meetings, draft agreements, strategy papers and PowerPoint presentations from 1999-2010' (Aljazeera Media Network, n.d.). *The Guardian* described the revelations from the Israel-Palestine peace process as 'the product of the biggest documentary leak in the history of the Middle East conflict, and the most comprehensive exposure of the inside story of a decade of failed negotiations' (Milne & Black, 2011). This exclusive coverage would have continued for longer than a few days if there were no demonstrations in Egypt.

The channel was late in broadcasting news of the January 25 demonstrations that 'activists wondered why Aljazeera was not covering that day,' says Montaser Marai, a Senior Producer in Aljazeera at the time. Marai continues, during an interview (M.Marai 2020, personal communication, 26 March), that the absence of Egypt's events on Aljazeera that day was not on purpose, as no one expected anything at all to happen on this day, and no one would have believed this would happen (M.Marai, 2020). Mostefa Souag, the Director-General of Aljazeera, the news director at the time of the Revolution, does not consider that Aljazeera was late. Souag, during an interview (M.Souag 2020, personal communication, 5 April), confirms that Aljazeera, like any channel that respects itself and respects its viewers, must ensure that the event it covers is an event worth covering, that is, it is important for the viewer, otherwise the coverage is not useful. Commenting on this delay, Mohamed Krichen, Principal Presenter in Aljazeera, illuminates a different aspect in explaining the delay during an interview (M.Krichen 2020, personal communication, 23 March):

As for Tunisia, Aljazeera was the first to monitor the beginnings of the Revolution, but it was a little late for Egypt, because Egypt is a big country and a country of great political, demographic and historical weight, so it is difficult to get involved from the beginning. Aljazeera has a double problem; if it hurries to cover angry popular movements and gives space to the protesters and figures to speak, it will be accused of pouring oil on the fire, and if it hesitates or has reservations a little or is late a little, it is accused that it failed these people and did not stand with them while it claims to stand with the people.

Thus, it took some time, or rather, it required signs that what was happening was worth paying attention to. For some of the channel's staff, the matter was noticeable, some of

them were in Egypt at the site of events, and some were at the channel's headquarters in Doha, but they needed some effort to convince the channel that something important was happening. Abdelfattah Fayed, Aljazeera Bureau Chief in Cairo, Egyptian and specialized in Egyptian affairs for many years, says, during an interview (A.Fayed 2020, personal communication, 25 April), that he began to realize the size of what was happening and its gravity on the first day, as 'the largest demonstration in Egypt, since the movement of Kefaya and other movements, included 300 to 400 people, surrounded by 3000 To 4,000 members of the security forces, while on January 25 the number of demonstrators was 50,000 to 100,000 people, that was a huge number'. Fayed (2020) recounts the situation and remembers the initiation of the coverage that day:

There were very large battles taking place for the first time in Lebanon, the political crisis was major, and turned into a military crisis. There were also Palestinian documents. And these were the main headlines at the time, we just managed to press and implore and try to convince the administration that there was a big event in Egypt, so news appeared in the newscast at seven o'clock, then we started to expand the news a little and began to pay attention. What gave the administration the feeling that there is something that the demonstrators announced that they would sit in the Square and started setting up tents and set up a radio in the Square.

At the channel's headquarters, Marai was following up with activists in the field, and he got messages that made him one of the first in the channel who tried to draw the administration's attention to what was happening in Egypt. He (2020) states that on the afternoon of January 25 he went to the newsroom administration and told them that he had received messages that the phone network was cut off in Egypt, and activists in some places were surrounded by the police, who prevented them from demonstrating, and there was difficulty in contacting. In the evening, the delay was rectified. Marai confirms that when it was nine o'clock at night, he returned to the administration again until they reached the conviction that what was happening was critical and the coverage should turn to the events of Egypt, he adds: 'I remember that day we did not complete the sports news bulletin, and we switched directly to covering Egypt' (M.Marai,2020).

Mohammad Ashfag states that on the day the Revolution started, he was in Tunisia among the largest coverage teams in the history of Aljazeera. Evening bulletins were supposed to be broadcast from Tunisia, and 65 journalists from Rabat, Nouakchott, Paris, Beirut, and Doha were working on this work. Ashfag indicates that calls from

Doha urging them to complete the work stopped, and they were asked to pack their bags and return, and as he says: 'Egypt has appropriated the screen of Aljazeera, and that will continue without interruption for weeks' (Aljazeera Media Network, 2016. p.370). The former broadcaster in Aljazeera, Ali Aldhafiri, in his book entitled *Between Aljazeera and the Revolution*, mentions the channel's delay in the coverage. He says that after the first two days of the Revolution 'Aljazeera officials realized that what is going on there is a big matter, and the protests and demonstrations are not like previous ones', as on Wednesday, January 26, 2011, the Egyptian state ruled the situation with an iron fist, which resulted in fatalities. Aldhafiri adds: 'because Egypt in terms of importance, geographical location and cultural and social influence is not the same as another country, Aljazeera rose exactly as the Square did, and its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution was not the same as another' (2012, p.152).

As events of demonstrations escalated rapidly within three days, Aljazeera dropped its regular schedule. It stopped running its debate programmes: Behind the News, In-depth, the Opposite Direction, Without Borders and Open Dialogue. The channel allocated an exceptional open coverage continued non-stop until the end of the Revolution on February 11, with the most significant share for the Egyptian Revolution and monitoring the popular movement from Tahrir Square. Aldhafiri states: 'Aljazeera had thrown all the other news out of its hand, aimed its cameras towards the Square' (2012. p.153). He describes this stage explaining that the channel suspended its programs, sports and economic bulletins, and extended the time of the short news bulletins to an hour, so the bulletin followed by another bulletin, and all the news was about the Egyptian Revolution (Aldhafiri, 2012. p.153). Ibrahim Hilal, a former news editor in Aljazeera, says that the channel has been known to cancel programs when major events occur that require continuous news coverage, which sometimes lasts for days or even weeks. This happened; he notes, in the September 2001 attacks, the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the Lebanon war in the summer of 2006, and the Israeli war on Gaza in December 2008 (Aljazeera Media Network, 2016. p.343). However, it is noticeable that the 'major events' that Aljazeera had previously covered in continuous news coverage were mostly wars. This indicates that by taking the decision to cover the Egyptian demonstrations intensively since the second day of the events, the channel placed the Revolution in the context of an event that reaches the importance of wars.

In the discussion over the open coverage during the interviews I conducted, the majority of the interviewees from Aljazeera staff agree with what Jamal Rayyan, a Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, states, during an interview (J.Rayyan 2020, personal communication, 2 April) that ‘the importance of Egypt compels you not only to cancel the talk shows but to broadcast only Egypt's news on the air’. I note that the tendency for continuous coverage stemmed from two aspects: one is a professional media aspect, and the other is a democratic political aspect. From a practical media perspective, Mohammed Dawood, Director of Quality and Editorial Standards at Aljazeera, explains, during an interview (M.Dawood 2020, personal communication, 31 March), the adoption of the continuous coverage approach:

Because news is a consumable commodity, and when the public asks for this commodity, it should be provided. A historical event like the revolutions that turned pages in the history of the region deserves to be covered, especially since its developments were around the clock and people glued to the screens watching what was going on. Covering the revolutions was not the first time in Aljazeera's experience with continuous news broadcasts, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Lebanon war in 2006, and the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2008 were all covered with continuous coverage, and attracted viewers.

Marai (2020) also believes that the momentum and intensity of the events required that Aljazeera stop the talk shows and focus the coverage more on the field, especially after some countries started interacting with Egypt, and movements and announcements began in some countries that demonstrations similar to Tunisia and Egypt would happen, so it was clear that the channel should show the viewers what matters to them, he confirms: ‘I think there was nothing at the time as important as what was happening in Egypt’ (M.Marai, 2020). The matter, as Souag (2020) points out, is that the event needs an editorial evaluation of the situation at the time, and has nothing to do with it being a political issue.

There are those who view coverage from a political perspective enthusiastic about the democratic transition. Ahmed Alsheikh, the Media Advisor in Aljazeera chairman’s office, says, during an interview (A.Alsheikh 2020, personal communication, 22 March):

What is the largest Arab country? Egypt. This answer is enough. If there is a change happening to a hundred million people, is it not worth covering in this way? It had to be 24 hours. This is a defining moment, a moment of change, and if other revolutions

occurred again in the Arab world with the same momentum and I was in the newsroom I will cover it for 24 hours and cancel the programs. This is the important news and event.

Like Alsheikh, a Senior Producer in Aljazeera Fatima Triki considers, during an interview (F.Triki 2020, personal communication, 25 March), that the change of Egypt was a major event, so political dialogues cannot be addressed on issues that are supposed to be less important at the moment than what was taking place.

All the views that justified the intense coverage with enthusiasm indicate that enthusiasm was also an important and undeniable part of the channel's decision to cover the Revolution that way, especially since it was the first time that the Arab world experienced such a situation. The relationship between Egypt and Qatar, which I discussed in the previous chapter, would also increase enthusiasm for changing the Egyptian regime, especially since the channel has always raised the same issues that Egyptians revolted to change, such as corruption, freedoms and social justice.

In an opposite opinion, Krichen believes that stopping programs was an exaggeration, he (M.Krichen, 2020) explains:

The world did not stop when the Egyptian, Syrian and Libyan revolutions erupted. There are events in Asia, Africa, and America. Aljazeera sometimes focuses so heavily on the event that it becomes as though what happens in the rest of the world is worthless. I think these may be some mistake we made. You can cover the event with a large dose, but do not make it the daily permanent main course on the table for a very long time.

Krishan's opinion confirms what I mentioned earlier about the diversity of the channel's staff's ideologies, which is reflected in the different points of view regarding the events, the approach, and intensity of its coverage. Krishan's view of the coverage as a 'mistake we made' confirms once again that the event and its compatibility with the channel's tendencies for change in the Arab world led to an enthusiastic decision.

Between the media process aspect and the democratic transition aspect, Elshyyal talks about Aljazeera's ongoing coverage in a context that no one else mentioned. He (J.Elshayyal, 2020) explains the importance of this coverage in that it resists a complete blackout on an event, and resists 30 years of deception and misinformation by the Egyptian regime and its official television which was showing an empty bridge, saying that nothing is happening. In his report on Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, Jihad Abu Shabab emphasizes that the Egyptian regime was holed up with



a vast media empire, which is the oldest in the Arab world, and under its banner dozens of TV channels and dozens of official newspapers, with tens of thousands of employees (2011. p.6). In *The last days of the Mubarak regime: 18 days*, Abdellatif Almanawi indicates that the regime's media workers at that stage admit that the private media managed the media climate in line with the trends of the existing regime, and a group of government leaders made many contacts with the Egyptian satellite channels, and with the producers and presenters of the programs. Almanawi confirms that there seemed to be a great deal of cooperation from these workers, and their response to the state at that point (2012. p.109).

While the Egyptian media dealt with the demonstrations as sit-ins that will be dispersed by the riot police on the same day (Bishara, 2016. p.398) and the Egyptian official television 'Al-Masriyya' was broadcasting quiet scenes of the streets of Cairo in which cameras were trained and focused on the calm waves of the Nile River, Aljazeera reported what was happening in the places of protests, by broadcasting the mass demonstrations across the country, and the scenes of dozens of dead and injured people lying in the streets. Aljazeera was the main media through which the Egyptians knew the news of the victims of the Egyptian city of Suez, which ignited the flame of the Revolution (Abu Shabab, 2011. p.6).

#### **4.2.2. CUTTING OFF THE INTERNET AND PHONE SERVICE**

Aljazeera's focused coverage on the events in Egypt, and the size of the channel's access to news, especially in areas that were out of sight of other media outlets, such as Suez Governorate, in which the protests achieved a significant impact on the general situation of the Revolution at its beginning, made the Egyptian authorities cut off the internet and landline telephone service from The channel's Cairo Bureau on January 26, even before such measures were generally taken for Egypt. Fayed explains that after cutting off all means of communication that day, it became impossible to communicate with the important figures in various institutions, who were news sources for the channel, such as newspaper editors, partisans, trade unionists, and Leaders of human rights organizations. So Fayed sent reporters to these figures to ask them to visit the

Bureau once or twice a day, in case they have information to provide to the channel, as the office had no means of communication (A.Fayed, 2020).

On Thursday, January 27, 2011, the Egyptian authorities blocked the social networks Twitter and Facebook, which the demonstrators used to organize protests, and the next day which was known as 'Anger Friday' it cut off the mobile phone services (Khalil, 2011, p.8). Fayed (2020) comments: 'When a regime imagines that when it cuts off the Internet, the people's voice will be silenced, it is a stupid system'. In this context and responding to my research on the factors that helped Aljazeera producing the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, Fayed continues that the regimes' failure to recognize the value of their people, the value of media, and the value of political transformations in the world and the region helped the Revolution to succeed and Aljazeera, confirming: 'This terrible official pressure on Aljazeera is one of the most important factors of its success' (A.Fayed, 2020).

In this context, with a more clarifying explanation, Azmi Bishara, Arab thinker and political philosopher, sees, during an interview (A.Bishara 2020, personal communication, 7 May), that the regime made a mistake by obscuring the Revolution, so the Egyptians relied on non-Egyptian Arab media, such as Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya, and others. And since Al-Arabiya was with the regime against the Revolution, and others were either defeatist or against the Revolution, as Bishara shows, there was no channel but Aljazeera. Bishara then confirms that young people, with their sympathy for the Revolution, wanted a media that will convey their voice to the world after the obscuring in the Egyptian media, so Aljazeera was. Abdelmoula states that large numbers of activists rushed to the channel's office in the country 'with materials covering protests in various squares. From the Cairo bureau, those materials find their way to the channel's headquarters in Doha where they get checked, processed and transmitted' (2012, p.256). At this stage, Aljazeera's reliance on citizen journalism began to expand, which I discuss in detail in a separate section later in this chapter, due to its importance in covering the Revolution.

At that point, Egyptian security believed in the conspiracy theory that unknown and mysterious forces were behind. Wael Ghoneim, in his book on the Revolution, explains that security considered his work contacts with Google were contacts with foreign entities, and they were firmly convinced that the Brotherhood was stirring

demonstrations from behind, and they never believed the idea of a naive, unpolitical and spontaneous youth revolution, according to Ghoneim's description (Ghoneim, 2012. p.228 - 232). Under the 'foreign entities' the accusations promoted by the regime included the Muslim Brotherhood, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Aljazeera. Almanawi (2012, p.109) says that the pillars of the regime believed that Aljazeera had a role in amplifying the events of January 26 and 27 were after it broadcast pictures and news from the January 25 demonstrations. Bishara (2020) refutes this scepticism regarding the channel's coverage, as he argues:

The conspiracy theories about Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution are funny, about that they had contacts or that they played a role behind the scenes...Whoever looks at the rush of reporters or youth who are not reporters, who joined Aljazeera crew during the Revolution, understands that the case is a case in which there is a great deal of spontaneity. A channel was in the right place at the right time because no one else was ready to cover.

Thus, the regime continued to accuse Aljazeera and to pursue measures that undermine its work.

#### **4.2.3. THE CLOSURE OF ALJAZEERA'S BUREAU**

'The point of no return was on 28, Friday of anger', Elshayyal (2020) comments on the channel's coverage of the most important day since the beginning of the demonstrations. He explains that being a TV channel, in terms of the image, when it broadcast scenes of huge numbers of people on Qasr El Nil Bridge, security cars resisted and pushed by people, and fire trucks run over people in Suez, it knew that 'it will continue to cover this news to the end, and there will be no more important news than it in the world' (J.Elshayyal, 2020).

Immediately following the coverage of this day, and with additional pressure on the channel, the Egyptian regime closed Aljazeera's office in Cairo, stopped its activities in Egypt, revoked its licences and withdrew press work ID cards granted to all its employees (Aldelingawi, 2011. p. 147). The office was located in Abdelmonem Riad Square, a central Cairo square, which helped Aljazeera to film scenes of confrontations between the police and protesters in the early days of the Revolution (Aljazeera Media Network, 2011). Fayed (2020) recounts what happened on Saturday, 29 January, 2011: 'The Minister of Information (Anas Alfikki) called me at the time, and informed me of

the order to close the office,' which Fayed did not implement, as there was no written decision in this regard. Fayed asserts that there were no orders to close other channels' offices except Aljazeera's office, he adds: 'He told me I command you, I told him well, send me an order.' Fayed mentions that he called the director General of Aljazeera Waddah Khanfar who replied: 'Just do your job, do not heed these empty threats, let the authorities please themselves' (Aljazeera Media Network, 2011. p.33). Then, a security force was sent, who withdrew the channel's staff press work permit cards, ordered them to leave the office, and closed the office, so they could no longer work from the office until Mubarak stepped down (A.Fayed, 2020).

Here, Aljazeera faced a significant challenge. It replied to the Egyptian authorities' decision by a statement said: 'Al Jazeera sees this as an act designed to stifle and repress the freedom of reporting by the network and its journalists,' and added: 'the closing of our bureau by the Egyptian government is aimed at censoring and silencing the voices of the Egyptian people' (Aljazeera.com. 2011). At this point, Aljazeera repeatedly reported this news, which would remind the viewer of the effort the channel was making to continue coverage. Moreover, Aljazeera's description of silencing the channel as silencing the Egyptian people is an issue that brings it closer to the Egyptian revolutionaries, as it shows its suffering with the regime just as the revolutionaries suffer. In this context, Aldhafiri asks: 'Will the channel comply with the decision and stop covering the most important event in the Arab world? Now imagine if this had happened!' (p.155). Aljazeera's determination not to obey, which Aldhafiri demonstrates, is confirmed by Marai (2020) in a discussion about the reasons how the channel was able to cover, as he asserts that how Aljazeera operates is based on the availability of more than one alternative plan at the same time.

What Fayed and Marai told me confirms that, following the closure of its office, Aljazeera defied the Egyptian authorities, as in the previous stage of the closure, the channel had contented itself with simpler measures than the action it would take after closing the office. Aljazeera relied on direct communication with its contacts, and social media activists to bypass the cutting of internet and phone services, but after the Egyptian authorities' action became specifically directed against Aljazeera, by withdrawing its licences, the channel moved to a higher stage of reaction and defiance to continue the coverage, which I discuss in the next section.

#### **4.2.4. ALJAZEERA'S TEAM IN TAHRIR SQUARE**

In accelerating arrangements, Aljazeera was seeking news while the Egyptian authorities were seeking to move the channel away from the Egyptian scene and street. Before closing the office, Marai explains that the channel was trying to obtain exclusive materials despite the restrictions on entering some places, some materials were brought to them by activists from several regions. However, it was difficult to deliver these materials to the channel's office to be broadcast via satellite, as is usually the case, and the internet service was sometimes bad, so the materials could not be sent over the internet. The only solution was to send the materials tapes from Egypt to Doha onto a plane, either with Aljazeera's staff or some of the people who were trusted by the channel, collaborators, fixers, etc., who were in the field. Marai (2020) indicates that the Egyptian regime was not aware of this. He adds that some materials were from activists videos posted on social media, Facebook or Twitter, and Aljazeera broadcast them after checking the sources. He also mentions that the channel opened many telephone lines, and they asked Egyptian people to communicate with them directly, especially because Egypt is large, and the demonstrations were in several cities and locations, as no media can be present everywhere, 'We used to rely on people in the field', he says (M.Marai, 2020).

From the aforementioned, Aljazeera spared no effort in obtaining the news, until the demonstrations became a full-fledged Revolution and the challenge faced by the channel became even greater when its bureau was closed. Thus, the most appropriate solution under this situation was 'sending people from Doha, and this is what happened to me', Marai (2020) says. Here, to continue its open coverage, Aljazeera violated the ban. Marai states that a discussion took place between him and Waddah Khanfar, the director of Aljazeera at the time, and Mohammed Dawood, director of news planning, about going to Egypt, either to go and bring some materials or to help in coverage there. Marai's main task was to deliver transmission devices and support the establishment of a secret point for broadcast (M.Marai, 2020). Since this step would not have been completed without the channel's management's decision, I refer here to what Fayed (2020) considers one of the factors for Aljazeera's ability to continue its coverage of the Revolution. He says that the administration Aljazeera had at that time was aware of the value of media work, and aware of the great political developments in the region that

may not occur except for every century, and that it was also willing to support its correspondents to the maximum extent possible (A.Fayed, 2020).

While the Arab viewers, and the Egyptian viewers in particular, were following events that he/she never imagined would witness, Marai was heading from Qatar to Egypt taking all precautions. Marai narrated to me the events of his journey and his arrival in Tahrir Square in details he had never told before. Nobody in Aljazeera ever knew that he was going to Cairo, except Khanfar and Dawood, for his safety and so that he would not be arrested (M.Marai, 2020). He took official family documents with him so that if they asked him in Egypt he would say that he had come to arrange a private family issue; thus they would not doubt that he was from Aljazeera (M.Marai, 2020).

Under the cautious security conditions in Egypt, and the strained relation between the channel and the Egyptian regime at the time, it was not an easy matter for an employee of Aljazeera to enter through Cairo International Airport, with transmission devices. Marai travelled with two people, unknown to the public and unknown to Aljazeera's staff in Cairo. He explains: 'The two who were with me came on a mission and returned safely, especially as we were careful not to endanger anyone's life. They stayed in Egypt for two or three days and then left' (M.Marai, 2020). In a discussion about the purpose of their coming with him, he says: 'I will say one piece of information, and for the first time we say that they were two women, two colleagues' (M.Marai, 2020). He explains that they helped him to enter the equipment to Egypt. There was no contact between them during the trip, as they had coordinated with each other about who would enter first, and who would follow, so that if someone was arrested, they would undertake the alternative plan to enter the largest possible number of devices (M.Marai, 2020).

Looking at Aljazeera's archive during that period, the large number of news materials broadcast by the channel since it started the continuous coverage of the Revolution is noticeable, which indicates that it did not stop looking for new ways to escape from the regime's grip on the event's reach to the audience's TV screens, even if it came to the level of carrying out secret missions. Marai (2020) recounts:

There was an arrangement with people in the field who had no relation with Aljazeera, the task was to get the three of us inside Tahrir Square. Thank God we managed that

night to enter after a long time, and we passed all the army barriers. We had a suspicion of the army, the army at that moment seemed to be with the Revolution and protecting the revolutionaries, but we, in Aljazeera, had no confidence that the army would do so. If you were stopped and it was known that you were a journalist, you could be arrested, or even disappeared.

Through my reading of the staff's testimonials, specifically those related to the experience of entering Egypt, and Tahrir Square, in particular, I would argue that the financial capability and the comprehensible planning were two basic pillars in carrying out this coverage as it was, as Marai's part of this secret mission was not the only measure that Aljazeera relied on. Marai (2020) mentions that he joined a group in Tahrir Square, which included the collaborator Fixers, Ahmad Yousef and Mohammad Alzaki, and the broadcast engineer in Aljazeera Mohammad Salha, who had previously came from Doha, and succeeded in operating broadcasting equipment from inside Tahrir Square.

The previous details show that the channel's funding allowed it to increase and diversify its sources, and the news directorate at the time was resourceful and far-sighted in placing decisions. Among the two factors to which I refer, Souag (2020) asserts that Aljazeera may have played the largest role in the media coverage of the Revolution since its coverage was largely continuous, and this was because of the capabilities available to the channel, and not because it planned it differently. He continues that perhaps if the other channels, such as BBC, CNN or others, had the same capabilities that Aljazeera had, they might have performed the same coverage, and their impact would be similar (M.Souag, 2020). Here, returning to the media scene at that stage, both global and Arab, what Souag says has no evidence, but on the contrary, there is an experience that contradicts it. For example, Al-Arabiya, which is funded by Saudi Arabia, has the same financial capabilities as Aljazeera, but its coverage approach at that stage was not as enthusiastic in support of the thought and demands of the Egyptian Revolution. Al-Arabiya did not have the same impact that Aljazeera had during the Revolution, as it was not a matter of controversy regarding covering the Revolution or participating in it, as was the controversy surrounding Aljazeera.

Contrary to Souag's point of view, Marai's experience confirms that capabilities, despite their importance, are not sufficient in producing news coverage, as the details of Marai's presence and work in covering the Revolution from the field prove that the

different planning carried out by Aljazeera had a key role in the continuation of coverage. Marai confirms that his caution did not end at any stage since his arrival in Egypt, as he was careful in all his steps later. Marai notes that he hid all his documents related to Aljazeera: 'I did not carry my Aljazeera ID, I brought it with me from Doha, but I hid it in Egypt. There was army inspection at the gates, you might be stopped in the Square and asked about your identity, I was asked once or twice, and I had my Jordanian identity, identifying myself as a Jordanian citizen only' (M.Marai, 2020). He also explains that his stay in Cairo was not like the rest of the journalists, at Ramses Hilton, but rather was in a simple, unknown hotel, adding that he was careful that no one knew where he had been. So, sometimes he was staying in Tahrir Square, and sometimes he was hiding in some places within the Square, as he expected that if he got out of the Square, he might not be able to return or might be arrested (M.Marai, 2020). Marai (2020) recalls an incident with Aljazeera team:

One day, we went out (the Square) to go to where we were staying. I refused to go out with Abdelfattah Fayed. I told him it was better for everyone to walk alone. Indeed, he and Ahmad Yousef were arrested in front of me. If I hadn't done that, the coverage could have simply stopped. I was careful that no one knew where I exactly was going, where I put the cameras and where I hid the transmission devices, so that coverage did not stop, we did not have many cameras. And what if one of us was arrested? I was practically the only journalist from Aljazeera inside Tahrir Square.

As a matter of precaution, Marai (2020) indicates that in later days when they needed someone to help them with the montage, the channel sent someone from Jordan; they expected that if they sent someone from Doha, the Egyptian authorities would track him down, as whoever comes from Doha might be Aljazeera journalist, especially after it continued the coverage despite the closure of its office.

#### **4.2.5. CUTTING OFF ALJAZEERA'S BROADCAST SIGNAL ON NILESAT**

Because of the 'diversification of its methods, which made it difficult to blockade' (M.Dawood 2020, personal communication, 31 March), says Dawood, soon after banning Aljazeera from operating in Egypt, the Egyptian Satellite Company (Nilesat) cut off the channel's broadcast signal. Krichen (2020) comments explaining that when Mubarak regime felt, in the end, that things were almost out of control, it took a strict hostile stance against the channel, and believed that Aljazeera was an enemy, not a channel that followed and broadcast what was happening. There was a wave of anger



and widespread criticism of the channel in the Egyptian ruling regime, among its military and political parts (M.Krichen 2020, personal communication, 23 March). At this stage, Aljazeera asserted repeatedly that several institutions were supporting the channel in its struggle with the Egyptian authorities, such as the International Media Broadcasting Authority, the International Committee to Protect Journalists and the Norwegian Journalists. Here, the channel confirms that it has become part of the events of the Revolution, as it came into conflict with the Egyptian regime, while receiving supports from others.

In addition to cutting its signal on Nilesat, the channel's frequencies were disrupted on other broadcast satellites in the Middle East; Arabsat and Hotbird. Jordan Media City also informed Aljazeera that 'it faced pressure from Nilesat to drop the channel from its package' (Reuters, 2011). Souag (M.Souag 2020, personal communication, 5 April) confirms that jamming its signal is something Aljazeera is accustomed to in previous cases. He adds that during the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, the jamming was large, continuous and was from more than one place and explains that later, when Aljazeera hired a foreign company to figure out the source of the jamming, it appeared to be from Egyptian military and security barracks (M.Souag, 2020).

In explaining Egypt's escalating measures against the channel, Bishara, in his book about the Revolution, says that Aljazeera had a prominent role in disrupting the official Egyptian TVs' propaganda which was based on not broadcasting the demonstrations, hosting figures who denounced the demonstrations as chaos, and accused the revolutionaries of being agents of foreign forces or Islamic groups, or anarchists (Bishara, 2016. p.472). Thus, while Aljazeera was broadcast the largest amount of videos of demonstrations throughout Egypt, the Egyptian media was in denial of the Revolution. As a result, Aljazeera was considered as an active contributor supporting the protestors' resilience to continue their demonstrations and achieve their demands, to the extent that the Egyptian media accused the channel, after the end of the Revolution, of having had a role in the Revolution, or what Egyptian media called it 'chaos.' In an article in *Al-Ahram Gate* newspaper, Egyptian journalist Ahmed Moussa (2020) says: 'With the chaos of 2011 that struck the Arab world, that channel focused on implementing the plan of the terrorist Brotherhood group in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria and Libya'.

Here, this time it was not only Aljazeera that circumvented the jamming, but even people circumvented to enable the Egyptians to watch the channel. Abdelmoula emphasizes that during that time 'social media networks such as Facebook and YouTube were distributing selections of the channel's materials that were inaccessible to Egyptian viewers via satellite television' (2012, p.256). With quick action, Souag (2020) says they were ready to move to other satellites so that the broadcast would not stop. The next day Aljazeera announced new frequencies on three satellite including Nilesat, Hotbird and Arabsat. Continuing to defy the Egyptian authorities, Aljazeera allowed all channels to transmit its broadcast during the Revolution so that the Egyptians can watch it, in case the authorities cut their broadcast in Egypt again. This open invitation received acceptance from many channels; the *Foreign Policy* confirms that 'at least ten other satellite broadcasters in the region began replacing their own programming with Al Jazeera's feed, foiling the Egyptian regime's efforts to prevent its citizens from watching the channel that has become its chief nemesis' (Foreign Policy, 2011). On the eleventh day of the Revolution on the mobile news bar, Aljazeera thanked the Lebanese channels *OTV, Alhiwar, Alkarama, Suhail, Aden, Palestine Today, the Truth, NBN, Alaqsa, Alquds, Aljadeed and Almustakillah TV, Asia TV, NBC, Alhurriyyah, Ustool Alhureyya, and the Jordanian channels Diretna and Zweina Baladna*, to broadcast Aljazeera's coverage of the events in Egypt, what seemed like a defiance of the Egyptian regime, confirming that the channel was the one who leads and moves Arab public opinion.

#### **4.2.6. THE CAMEL BATTLE**

The famous Battle of the Camel took place and settled the comparison further, placing the last nail in the regime's coffin, while increasing Aljazeera's popularity and credibility. Aljazeera was the only channel broadcasting this event, as Fayed (2020) confirms. 'That day was unforgettable', he says. On Wednesday, February 2, 2011, the regime's thugs riding camels, mules, and horses and waving swords, sticks and whips attacked the protesters in Tahrir Square, to force them to vacate the area. Among the attackers were dangerous criminals who were released from prisons to sabotage and attack the demonstrators with stones, sticks, knives, and bombs. The night before the incident, Mubarak addressed the Egyptians with an emotional speech in which he turned people's sympathy, by saying that he was born on the land of Egypt, fought for it

and would die and be buried there. People started interacting with him, many people left and the media as well, and nobody expected anything to happen. Fayed (2020) explains:

Rather we (Aljazeera) stayed and filmed, this made a turnaround; the Egyptians in their homes watched the scenes and started coming to the Square...The whole time our cameras were on, that is our advantage. Others were not present, they may cover a little and then leave, but who has the ability and endurance to stay 24 hours and organize the rotation of the team! This incident was at ten in the morning, no one was present, and no one was expected to be present...They (other media) thought that it is foolish to turn the camera on at 6, 7, 8 or 10 in the morning. This is our advantage, this is not genius, but the genius is that to keep the camera on for 24 hours.

Aljazeera did not stop monitoring the field from its cameras that were trained on the Square. Aldhafiri believes that Aljazeera's live coverage protected civilians in the Square from being killed because it made the regime unable to commit many crimes before the eyes of the whole world (Aldhafiri, 2012. p.157). In confirmation of Aldhafiri's testimony, Abu Shabab says that in the Battle of the Camel Aljazeera was the platform from which revolutionaries made their appeals in light of official media obfuscation on the event (Abu Shabab, 2011, p.6). Looking at the archive, Aljazeera's presenter asked the activist Khalid Albeheiri from Tahrir Square on the date of the camel incident: 'How does media news come to you?' He replied: 'Through your channel, Aljazeera, of course! The other channels do not exist now, only Aljazeera exists' (Harvest Bulletin, February 2, 2011).

From the testimonies of Aljazeera's staff, it appears that broadcasting the scenes of the Battle of the Camel and being the only channel that filmed the incident, was an achievement that did not depend only on the fact that the camera was on at the time of the accident. The effort to bring the event to the screen was not easy. Marai (2020) says: 'it was a terrifying moment', that while filming the clash in Tahrir Square that day there was a hit-and-run between demonstrators and thugs. He ran away between buildings with protesters when a group of thugs attacked, until he reached a closed area besieged by thugs. He (M.Marai, 2020) recounts:

I took the tape off the camera and put it inside my clothes. When they caught me I told them the camera is blank. I was holding the Thuraya phone<sup>2</sup> in contact with Doha with Majid Khadr, the head of the correspondents' department, they heard me screaming, I was

---

<sup>2</sup> A satellite phone or satphone is a type of mobile phone that connects to other phones or the telephone network by radio through orbiting satellites instead of terrestrial cell sites, as cellphones do.

reporting the news first-hand. I told the thugs: I am a Jordanian journalist. I am with you, not with them. I am not with the demonstrators, I just cover the news.

To deliver the video material, he was filming at the time of the clash, Marai claimed that he, like the rest of the journalists, was staying at the Ramses Hilton hotel, until the thugs let him leave, without knowing he was from Aljazeera (M.Marai, 2020). He headed to the hotel where Aljazeera English staff resided. He (2020) adds that he went up to one of the floors, where a group of journalists from Aljazeera English gathered, most of whom did not know him. He strongly requested that they broadcast the tape to Doha (M.Marai, 2020). That time, the thugs were in front of the hotel preparing to go up to the room where the camera was filming, as the hotel is overlooking the Square, and they knew that Aljazeera was in this room (M.Marai, 2020). There was a great fuss, so the journalists decided to leave the room and the camera broadcast live. Marai asked Ayman Mohieldin from Aljazeera English to send the material to Doha. He (2020) confirms: 'I left the room, and I do not have a room in the hotel, everyone left to their rooms and let the camera broadcast live in the room.' For about two hours, He hid in the hotel until he contacted one of Aljazeera office staff, an Egyptian, to bring him a battery that he needs for the transmission device in the Square, and to be able to leave the hotel with him and return to the Square, because the way back was full of thugs, so he needed a trusted Egyptian who knows the area to reach Tahrir Square through a different path (M.Marai, 2020).

About the challenges the team faced in the Square, Marai (2020) mentions that keeping the team's personal safety was basic to maintain the continuation of coverage, and that was the most difficult part of their mission. He (2020) asserts: 'Imagine if I were arrested or lost the camera or the transmission device, what would we do?!' Challenges include feeling cold, hunger and extreme exhaustion, going to the bathroom, sleeping quietly and peacefully, and fear of snipers as he confirms that they were seeing the sniping green laser points on the Semiramis Hotel to the left of the Square. He (2020) recalls:

One night we slept at Tahrir Field Hospital, I did not know whether the ones next to me were dead or alive. We had no blankets, we slept on the floor, I woke up and found the broadcast engineer, Mohamed Salha, shivering heavily while he was sleeping. I gave him the light blanket that was with me. Behind me was a young man screaming, all night, foaming at the mouth, he had epilepsy, and they could not contact his family to bring him his medicine. I couldn't sleep that night, and the cold was severe. The day after the Battle

of the Camel I woke up, I found people on the ground injured, I sat crying, there was no one to help people, the field hospital was not enough for the numbers, it was hysterical.

The viewer may not be aware of what the channel was facing from the Egyptian regime to cover the Revolution, but Aljazeera was taking advantage of any occasion to remind the viewers of these obstacles. On the other hand, the revolutionaries witnessed the challenges experienced by the channel team in the Square. There was a reciprocal relationship between Aljazeera and the revolutionaries in the Egyptian Revolution. Fayed (2020) asserts: 'Aljazeera has protected the Revolution, of course. The revolutionaries themselves said these words', in return, he says, in *This is Aljazeera*, that 'it was the people in Tahrir who protected Aljazeera crew from the thugs of the National Party who stalked us for days, hoping to destroy our cameras and our spirit' (Aljazeera Media Network, 2011. p.33).

Elshayyal (2020) recalls two contradictory scenes in this context. He recounts that after Friday of anger, the regime's thugs began to circulate in the streets, and he was in Suez when he saw a minibus roaming around with a sign saying: 'Whoever speaks to Aljazeera, we will cut his tongue.' The second scene was while he was in Alexandria after the Battle of the Camel incident, Elshayyal says he saw a sign on a car saying: 'If you seek the truth, watch Aljazeera,' and Aljazeera's new frequencies were written on it (J.Elshayyal, 2020).

The contradiction of the two scenes indicates the influence of the channel in the events. While the regime supporters feared what the channel broadcast and its impact, so they made threats to intimidate people from dealing with it, the Egyptians on the opposite side of the regime were encouraging each other to deal with it, and support it in its broadcast, believing in its influence. Marai (2020) confirms:

It is the people who raised Aljazeera's prestige. People can know who tells the truth and who lies. Aljazeera is close to the people, the people are the centre of its attention, and we look like the people in the street. We are part of these people. Aljazeera's professionalism and credibility provided it with a platform to move in. When we got to the Square, people accepted us. Many people refused to have certain channels in the Square. While Aljazeera, even if people disagree with it, they would respect it and allow it to be in the Square.

As a result, the revolutionaries took Aljazeera as a source of the Revolution's news in all Egyptian cities; the protesters in Tahrir Square were watching Aljazeera on screens

in the heart of the square, 'ignoring the 300 local TV stations,' as Elshayyal (2020) mentions. Marai (2020) says that after the protesters put up the two huge screens, they were sitting on the ground to watch the bulletins, and when he was pointing the camera at them, they were seeing themselves on the channel's screen, so they knew it was Aljazeera's camera, so they were clapping and chanting (M.Marai, 2020). He adds that it was the first time that protesters knew he was from Aljazeera, although some of them knew that before because they were protecting and guiding him, as he says: 'I remember feeling very cold, and I had no clothes; I did not bring anything from Doha with me. The protesters brought me two coats. I keep one of them until now' (M.Marai, 2020).

The issue of the revolutionaries' dependence on Aljazeera was the clearest indication of the relationship between the Egyptians and the channel at the time. Perhaps this is what made many debates about whether Aljazeera had protected the Revolution and contributed to the fall of the regime. As Mongi Mabrouki says, Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution has created great controversy, as while some saw that it embraced the Revolution through the special continuous coverage that it devoted to the Revolution, others accused it of creating the Revolution and exaggerating its events, not only covering it (Mabrouki, 2016. p.120).

On the discussion over the saying that Aljazeera ignited the Revolution in Egypt, the channel's staff rejected this idea. About this, Fawzi Bushra, Senior Producer at Aljazeera, says during an interview (F.Bushra 2020, personal communication, 9 May):

No channel or media institution can bring down regimes. There is much evidence; in the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States of America and its Western camp, very huge media institutions, radio and newspapers, very great propaganda, were recruited for it, but it did not overthrow the regime in the Soviet Union. It fell due to reasons related to it rather than a fall resulting from external influence...Aljazeera did a great thing by allowing people to see what is happening in the arenas of the Revolution, as it was the means by which the Arab world was able to witness the fall of these regimes. Not because it incited ... All that Aljazeera did was that it was a witness broadcasting what is happening on the ground.

Despite the staff's rejection of saying that Aljazeera had sparked the Revolution, I see in their responses what proves that the channel played a role. For example, what Bushra says regarding 'allowing people to see what is happening in the arenas of the Revolution' demonstrates the channel's role, especially if we consider its method of

providing news content to viewers, which is more evident in the next chapters of the study, as I discuss the channel's approach in news, reports and political commentary it provided on events.

#### **4.2.7. NEWS SOURCES AND UTILIZING THE CITIZEN JOURNALISM**

Looking at the archives of Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, it seemed clear that the channel's ability to access news in all places of events, taking into account Egypt's population and geographical size, the diversity of these places and its large numbers, was due to the use of a significant number of correspondents. Abdelmoula mentions that Aljazeera's bureau in Cairo was 'one of the network's largest bureaus in the region', confirming: 'Al Jazeera was the largest international broadcaster to cover the Egyptian Revolution' (2012. p.254). Whereas Fayed (2020) says that the channel's correspondents were only three: Samir Omar in Cairo was the only correspondent employed by Aljazeera, the rest were collaborators, Dina in Suez, and Mustafa Kafafi. He (2020) emphasizes:

Aljazeera does not have the huge number as people imagine from the size of the coverage it did, but it is the quality, the quality of the employees, the quality of the work that shows Aljazeera. One piece of news may make a very big difference compared to coverage by an army of reporters in another channel. And that's what we did.

Based on my study of the archive, which shows the wide range and the large amount of news material, I think that the 'army' that Fayed talks about Aljazeera basically had it. Aljazeera, during its coverage of the Revolution, did not just get news from the correspondents who were already working with its office in Egypt, but rather reinforced them with staff from the channel's headquarters in Qatar, which I addressed earlier in this chapter. Aljazeera also had opened the door for the Egyptian citizen to be a journalist and a news source, which Bushra (2020) considers one of the factors behind the channel's success in coverage:

What we could not reach with Aljazeera's camera, we could reach it through social media, especially with the citizen's journalism, because the citizen is the maker of news, the maker of the Revolution and the blogger of the facts of the Revolution. The conditions provided Aljazeera with a state of flow of information and images, from citizens, in a way enabled it to remain present with a screen that did not close its eyelid during the 24 hours. It did not leave movement nor silence without observing it. This was

what available for it, and I imagine it was available for others as well if they wanted to cover. The others were not present because they did not want to be present in this scene.

In confirmation of the above, Souag (2020) says that Aljazeera was not affected much by being prevented from working at that time, because it had cooperative journalists, and there were also people cooperating with Aljazeera, not officially working with it, but they were always ready to provide videos and news to it. Souag explains that Aljazeera's role at that time was checking the news and the videos so as not to broadcast fabricated videos (M.Souag, 2020). Marai explains that the verification of the videos was done through dealing with 'reliable sources and known to the channel', as well as checking whether the places and dates on which the demonstrations appeared are correct, and if there is reason to suspect that the accent of people in the videos is incorrect (M.Marai, 2020).

Despite the steps taken by Aljazeera to verify the authenticity of the videos it obtained from citizens, it faced criticism, especially from the regime's supporters, who used to claim to adhere to traditional media and consider relying on digital and social media as sources to obtain news unacceptable. While the term new media contrasts with traditional media, as the new media no longer has a controlling elite and is available to all members of society to use and benefit from it as long as they can use its tools, Aljazeera was not a side in this conflict between traditional and new. At the time the new media was a source of concern for the official Arab media, particularly in the period of the Arab revolutions; Aljazeera contained it and used its tools for its benefit, including the digital platforms and citizen journalism.

Looking at the shift towards digital media, Robert Murdoch assured that media companies expecting their prosperous past to protect them from the electronic approach will soon disappear (Dar Ghouth, 2006). The matter that Aljazeera paid attention to and understood early, so it applied a strategy to absorb the digital media and took steps towards it that no other Arab news channel took. Marai (2020) confirms this, and states that the channel has focused on citizen journalism, blogging and online journalism in particular, since their early appearance. Marai points out that the channel's interest in the citizen journalists in the Arab world was due to the fact that they provided an alternative voice to the official media and were able, through mobile phone cameras or small cameras, to express themselves, their voices and what is happening around them



(M.Marai, 2020). Marai recounts that Aljazeera provided free training to a large group of citizen journalists, aiming to enable people to express themselves. Many cameras have been distributed in large parts of the Arab world, phone-like cameras that can film and send materials (M.Marai, 2020). He asserts: 'The training was through Aljazeera Media Institute in Doha, we worked a lot on empowering the citizen journalist. In 2006, two years after the launch of Facebook, we produced the documentary film *Bloggers* because we started to see that this phenomenon is remarkable' (M.Marai, 2020). In the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera reaped the fruits of the support it provided to the citizen journalist, as it succeeded in building a wide network of relations with blogging activists and citizen journalists, which the channel benefited from when the Revolution began.

Since there are different opinions about the definition of citizen journalism, it becomes clear that there is a controversy about the acceptance of this genre, especially since, as Professor Melissa Wall says, citizen journalists are still positioned as 'reluctantly accepted guests at the doors of traditional journalism, often gaining entry only by invitation' (Wall, 2019. p.5). In her book *Citizen Journalism: Practices, Propaganda, Pedagogy*, Wall defines citizen journalism consistently with Aljazeera's thought, which adopted this genre and benefited from it, as follows: 'the production of original media content by amateurs and other in-betweeners that aims to contribute to the building of community and sometimes to social change' (2019. p.4). Wall adds what shows the importance of citizen journalism, particularly in the Arab region:

Citizen journalism in different regions of the world, including those countries with a lack of information freedom under oppressive governments, has taken root in different soil. Consider the ways citizen journalism in non-Western countries has challenged authoritarian rule, sometimes becoming an identity used to represent resistance to the powers that be in ways that could prove dangerous for those who are so labeled. This is well illustrated with the citizen journalism produced during the Arab Spring (Wall, 2019. p.5).

Whether relying on the citizen as a journalist is professionally acceptable or a mistake that must be criticized, the strength of its influence cannot be denied. This strength is what Aljazeera realized early on from other Arab channels, and it is also what made these citizens rush to contact Aljazeera, specifically because they realized that it would welcome their material and be a platform for them. In evidence for this, Rayyan (2020) says: 'Mubarak fell when we opened the phone line.' He explains that in the late days

of the Revolution, broadcasts from Egypt were cut off, so director Khanfar decided to put a caption saying that the broadcast was cut off from the source, and every Egyptian who has a phone is a reporter for Aljazeera (J.Rayyan, 2020).

### **4.3. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OVER THE OBJECTIVITY OF ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE**

In the debate about whether Aljazeera was a media outlet covering the event of the Revolution, or a political actor inciting it, the measures I discuss in the previous section seem more supportive of considering Aljazeera a channel that only covered the event, while in this section I address the issues that put the channel's objectivity into question by those who see that it was a political player participated in the event at that point.

#### **4.3.1. ALJAZEERA'S CAMERAS ON TAHRIR SQUARE**

Tahrir Square is the largest square in Cairo, and it is considered one of the few squares in Cairo with unique good planning, as a large number of the main streets and squares of the capital branch off it in the form of a beam, which made it the ideal place for the demonstrators to crowd after their marches coming from the branched streets end into it.



*Image 2 & 3: Tahrir Square Area (muhtwa.com)*



The Square played a pivotal role in the early days of the Revolution, as the main struggle on January 25 was for demonstrators seeking to gather in it, and the security forces attempting to repel them, causing the forces to act violently. The Square also

witnessed the Camels incident between regime supporters and revolutionaries, which I addressed in the previous section.

Thus, the demonstrators made the square their headquarters, and the regime, realizing the importance and centrality of the place, sought to evacuate it in any way, even if it was unprecedented brutality and barbarism. Therefore, despite the fact that the demonstrations of the Revolution were not only in Tahrir Square, and the demonstrations were not limited to the capital governorate, but also included all the governorates of Egypt, Tahrir Square was like a thermometer for the events and developments of the Revolution, which made the news agencies interested in aiming their cameras at this place more than others. On this point, Elshayyal confirms that Aljazeera's camera had been there since January 26, while other news agencies placed their cameras on buildings around the square after the early days of the Revolution (J.Elshayyal, 2020).

Through my interviews with the channel's staff and my readings, I found that Aljazeera not only had one camera in the Square, but more. As it had a camera trained on the people below placed on the roof of one of the buildings surrounding the square, like most channels, and another camera closer to the crowds in the Square. Elshayyal (2020) says that in 26th, he and his colleague searched around in the buildings overlooking Tahrir Square until a person allowed them to use his roof to put the camera.

As for the other camera, it was, as Marai (2020) says: 'The only camera inside Tahrir Square.' He indicates that in choosing its place, they search for the place that enabled them to get the best wide picture of the Square, and to show the podium that activists had set up, as well as to control their safety and ease of movement. Marai (2020) explains:

I was, from my place above the 'Star of Liberation' store, directing the camera on the podium, towards the speakers to capture the entire profile, but I was directing it more on the crowds' interaction, especially since after the day of the Camels incident we learned to see the broader picture, so that we can monitor if thugs or security forces entered from the entrances to the Square. Practically, our camera was the only camera inside Tahrir Square among the demonstrators, often under their protection. We did not go to buildings nor did we move away from the demonstrators.

And while Khanfar believes that Aljazeera's camera was 'a crucial tool to protect the protesters in Tahrir Square in Egypt' (Miladi, 2016. p.84), and Marai (2020) sees that it was 'a light so that there is no darkness in Tahrir Square, as in the darkness there may be death, violations and killing people', some questions the image of the Square that Aljazeera broadcast, claiming that the channel positioned its cameras in a way that allow them to make judgments regarding the scale of the protests contradicted those of the regime. Luna Alshibl, a presenter who resigned from Aljazeera in 2011, says on a TV program that someone she trusted told her that he was looking from the balcony of a hotel overlooking the Square when he looked at the TV screen in his room and found that Aljazeera says in urgent news that there are millions of demonstrators and that the army is withdrawing, while they were, as he told her, two thousand, three thousand, or no more than ten thousand at the most, surrounded by the army (Alshibl, 2011). Aljazeera haters and supporters of the Egyptian regime agreed with this scepticism, while the other side received it mockingly, and with a brief response replies: 'the picture is clear. It is not a question of a photographing angle' (Alsheikh, 2020).

The response to questioning the channel's exaggeration in its news about the intensity of the demonstrations has taken two approaches, practical experience and reasoning. Regarding the estimation of numbers of demonstrators, Marai (2020) indicates from his personal practical experience in the Square that the numbers were issued by the activists, and the staff were trying to estimate how many people could be on per square meter, he asserts: 'Sometimes the Square was completely full, more than 5 people per square meter, so one could not walk through the gathering, sometimes people fainted due to crowds and stampede' (M.Marai, 2020).

By reasoning, Krichen says that if the channel had exaggerated the intensity of the demonstrations in the Square, Mubarak would not have gone in the end, confirming that Mubarak did not step down because of Aljazeera, but rather because people forced him to do so, and the military, as a result of the density of people and the number of victims who died in the Egyptian Revolution (M.Krichen, 2020).

Between what some claim, what people with actual experience convey, what others conclude with logic, and what viewers saw on Aljazeera throughout the days of the Revolution, images remain the most powerful tool that supports the position of the

channel versus those who question the image of Tahrir Square broadcast by the channel, especially since they do not have a stronger tool to prove their claims.

#### **4.3.2. ALJAZEERA'S PROMOS**

In discussing commercial advertising breaks on one side and promotional breaks on the other hand in Aljazeera, it is important to note that the length of the time of ads is short in Aljazeera comparing to other channels. In his book about Aljazeera, Hugh Miles (2005, p.2) notes regarding the ads on the channel that:

If you watch Al-Jazeera for more than a few minutes, you will notice one of the principal differences between it and other twenty-four-hour news networks: how few advertisements there are. It is possible to watch Al-Jazeera for an hour and not see any at all. When they do appear, they are brief and often conspicuously cheap. Al-Jazeera has only about forty to forty-five minutes of advertising each day, compared with about three hundred minutes of daily commercial advertising on CNN (Cable News Network).

That limited time of commercial breaks had shrunk during the Revolution period, and was not a target for the channel, as Dawood (2020) says. In clarifying the nature of the ads in the channel, Alsheikh (2020) explains:

Advertising on Aljazeera is a problem. The largest market for advertising in the Arab world, as we know, is in Saudi Arabia, then Egypt, as well, is a big market, and these two countries had, from the beginning, hostile positions to Aljazeera, so Aljazeera was deprived of the advertising market in both countries. But, thank God, the country that sponsors Aljazeera has the money. In the end, this is an advantage, because if the channel takes into account the advertisement it may come under commercial pressure.

During the Egyptian Revolution ads were replaced by scenes of the protesters' demands at the demonstrations, Tahrir square, the banners, and video clips of series of photos, such as the photo of a child participating in one of the demonstrations sitting on an army tank, and a protester pointing his finger in the face of a policeman wearing a gas mask. Director of Creativity in Aljazeera Ramzan Alnoaimi describes these promos as 'timeless promos that caught the attention of all Arab viewers', explaining that during the coverage of Arab revolutions these types of promos were 'unfamiliar in news channels. Aljazeera has brought it to life and used it as a support tool for the outstanding coverage' (Aljazeera Media Network, 2011. p. 165).

These promos, which were filled with images with remarkable meanings, such as the screaming faces of the revolutionaries, the huge numbers of protesters against the security forces, all showing the resilience of the revolutionaries in the face of the regime, were accompanied by enthusiastic mood music and famous Arabic songs about homeland and revolution against corruption, injustice, and dictatorship. It was the first time I heard a song on an Arabic news channel, which created a mixed impression; I expect to watch the news, nothing but news. Watching songs that provoke emotions was one of the most critical observations that raised questions in my mind regarding the channel's bias. Triki (2020) responds to my note: 'Where is the journalistic error in this?! Why not use it?' She points out that she may have created something in this regard, as she used music and songs in her reports to serve the content within the context. She adds: 'It may be seen as an innovation or a deviation from protocols, but I see it as content like a word like a picture, music is also a tool for expressing something, so it is not wrong to use it' (F.Triki, 2020).

Contrary to the opinion of Triki, many of those I interviewed see that the use of songs was an exaggeration (M.Krichen, 2020), and a mistake that was not supposed to happen on a channel like Aljazeera (K.Benguenna, 2020). Despite these recognitions, they justify what I call a slip that the psychological and the general situation during the period of the revolutions caused 'emotional frenzy', which was affecting the media professionals at that time (K.Benguenna, 2020). The enthusiasm, which I referred to earlier, constituted an undeniably important element in the shaping of Aljazeera's coverage during the revolutions, and in particular in the Egyptian Revolution, as it was at the beginning of that stage, and it gained the largest share of enthusiasm. Marai (2020) adds that the situation at that time was very exceptional, as he says:

There may be an emotional bias, but all this emotional bias or sympathy was with peoples who came out for their dignity, freedom and human rights, and I think it is a legitimate and conscious bias that did not affect the coverage of Aljazeera, and did not affect the presence of the two viewpoints. If you looked at the content of the bulletins, there were always two views, the coverage was objective and balanced, but the spectacle of the crowds in the squares overwhelmed everything, the loudest voice was the voice of the peoples, not the voice of the regimes that suppressed these people.

These songs in light of the state of the Revolution would affect Arab viewers, who mostly hoped to obtain their rights and get rid of dictatorial regimes, so these songs were produced to touch their hearts and aroused sympathy that they already buried in

their interior. Therefore, in the midst of events, looking at the issue from the professional point of view was not the subject of a question and discussion until after a while.

Unprecedentedly, Aljazeera used parts of famous Arabic songs of Egyptian singers in the promos that I discuss in this section, praising the uprising during its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. Those exclusive unconventional promos created mixed reactions and emotions; as an Arabic viewer, the photos in the promos arouse sympathy for people of Egypt under injustice, while the lyrics of the songs arouse honour, glory, and national sentiments. One of the most important of these songs was Umm Kulthum's song *I am the People* that says:

'I am the people,  
Know no impossible,  
I accept no substitute for immortality.'

And Mohamed Abdel Wahhab's *Prayer of the East* that says:

'His land did not know the restriction,  
and had never put its forehead down only to its creator,  
How the usurper walks on its earth fills the horizon wounds and groaning.'

And Sheikh Imam song, known as *Voice of the People*, that says:

'Oh Egypt, wake up and be strong.'

In a more assertive concept than previous responses to the use of songs, Bishara (2020) considers that when the channel broadcast songs like Umm Kulthum's and Abdelwahhab's songs it performs an act of mobilization, moving to campaigning, and waiving the task of objective journalism, as it is not the job of the professional journalism to carry out campaigns. Alsheikh (2020) uses the same term to describe the channel's use of songs, 'campaigning':

I think some issues should not have happened. When did you go wrong? If you start launching so-called campaigning; campaigning is destructive for you and the others. It is true that you cover and side with the people, but not as a campaign in the bulletins, in the promos, in a song like these songs, this is not right...the news image must be preserved.



The broadcast of these promos did not carry news content, as they consist of selected images that highlight meanings that support the Revolution and the revolutionaries, accompanied by either enthusiastic music that conveys feelings of victory and steadfastness, or songs that are associated in the mind of the Arab viewer with the revolution against injustice. This makes these promos completely outside the context of the news or providing knowledge, and confirms that they are significant signs that show the channel's lack of impartiality in the Egyptian Revolution, and even increase the questions of whether the channel was covering the event or participating in it, since they frankly indicate that Aljazeera had mobilized in favour of the Revolution and the overthrow of the Egyptian regime.

Aljazeera did not repeat the use of songs during subsequent revolutions, as it did in its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution. It was the first and last time, as it was an exceptional style driven by the enthusiasm of the Revolution, this enthusiasm that the channel's administration did not succeed in hiding, or perhaps did not want to hide.

#### **4.3.3. ALJAZEERA'S PRESENTERS PERFORMANCE**

In analysing the performance of Aljazeera's presenters during the period of the eighteen days of the Egyptian Revolution, I find that Aljazeera's presenters used an angry revolutionary language, their facial expressions remained tense, and their performance was emotional.

Dawood (2020) acknowledges that some might have drifted behind his/her feelings, 'but certainly, the channel was not behind determining the attitude'. He indicates that intense discussions about the coverage were taking place in the editorial meetings, due to differing opinions on these details (M.Dawood, 2020). Benguenna (2020) also emphasizes that the broadcasters' attitude is due to their individual behaviour, and not according to a specific agenda imposed by the channel. She says that there are those who are committed to professionalism, and there are those whose emotions may lead to extreme intensity, since the broadcasters are human, not machines, and they belong to intellectual, ideological, religious, political currents. Therefore, the professional presenter is the one who succeeds in not showing his affiliations (K.Benguenna, 2020).

Based on my study of the coverage archive, Binguenna's response matches my observations, as it appears to me that specific presenters were more intense in their attitude than others. For example, on the third day of the Revolution, the channel hosted the chief editor of Al-Ahram Economic magazine Anwar Alhawari from Cairo. There was no doubt from his talk that he supported the regime, as he answered when the presenter asked him about the regime's response to the Egyptian street: 'people speak, and the regime enables people to practice expression within the limits of the Constitution and the Law' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). The presenter Ghada Oweis interrupted him with a loud and firm tone and reminded him that she was asking about the response of the regime. After that, his answer came louder, losing control over his calmness: 'I will tell you about the regime's response. The regime did not close its ears one day. It was the regime who created this democratic framework that enabled people to go out into the street, and enabled people to raise their voices' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). The presenter interrupted him to end the dialogue. This dialogue with the presenter Oweis showed the weakness of one of the regime's supporters in answering convincingly and demonstrated his inability to control his calmness; especially that Oweis's attitude resembles questioning. Aljazeera was able to repeat Alhawari's situation by hosting other supporters of the Egyptian regime, and would not hesitate to do so, as such news stories make the channel more controversial; hot subjects under discussion increase the number of viewers.

On the other hand, Aljazeera, as a channel that supported the Revolution and called it 'people's Revolution,' hosted those whose opinions agree with its points of view to express its position and keep it clear to the audience. Following the aforementioned interview, the channel hosted a Professor of Political Science, former independent deputy of the Egyptian People's Assembly, Jamal Zahran. The presenter Oweis asked him to respond to what Alhawari said. He replied that 'Alhawari is part of the ruling regime and defends it because he defends his survival, since he has a fundamental interest in the continuation of this regime' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). Zahran's answer was within a larger area of talk than the space given to Hawari. That observation indicates that personalities, who stood at the people's side in their Revolution, were more comfortable and able to answer and explain their thoughts extensively, unlike the regime's supporters who were under pressure from escalating the tension through the presenter's questions paint ones into a corner and interrupting.

Alsheikh comments on Oweis's attitude that this is her nature and 'she has to deal with this issue, as this happens many times' (A.Alsheikh, 2020). In a different opinion, Rayyan believes that Oweis's attitude indicates her skill and that she is good at this, and this is what the presenter's attitude should be in conducting tough interviews (J.Rayyan, 2020). He says that his experience while working on the BBC taught him that the first question for the guest must be provocative, to put him in the defence mode, and continues to subject him to questions to obtain information, 'and this is what she does' (J.Rayyan, 2020).

In a dialogue similar to Oweis's with Alhawari, and on the fifth day of the Revolution, Aljazeera hosted Haitham Altuhami, a colonel at the Security Directorate of Cairo. Altuhami started his call-in, mentioning that Aljazeera's coverage of events should 'be a little optimistic because the subject is not dark, as shown by Aljazeera,' confirming that the police did not participate in the riots. The presenter Fayrouz Ziani interrupted him and asked in a provocative tone stressing her words: 'The situation is still burning; it still really needs all the police and security patrols and all the crews of the Ministry of Interior, why did you evacuate the scene?' (Harvest Bulletin, January 29, 2011). Then the presenter surrounded him with another question: 'The president said he gave orders not to shoot protesters, and the police are accused of killing many Egyptians these days. Who do you think killed the Egyptians if the police did not do so?' Stammered, he replied: 'Sorry I did not hear, would you repeat your question, please' (Harvest Bulletin, January 29, 2011). This dialogue as the previous one showed the weak answers of the regime's supporters, which are contrary to the reality on the ground the Egyptian citizen is aware of, especially the Egyptian protesters in the streets. It also showed the regime's supporters' inability to defend their opinion convincingly.

In addressing a viewpoint opposing that of the security forces defenders, on the next day, the sixth day of the Revolution, Aljazeera hosted Colonel Omar Afifi, a retired Egyptian police officer lives in Washington. The presenter asked him about the legality of the way the security forces deal with the demonstrations. Afifi answered: 'It is absolutely not permissible to deal in such a violent form with the demonstrators and Egyptian society. Because the role of the police is protecting demonstrations, not to break up demonstrations in such a violent form' (Harvest Bulletin, January 30, 2011). Afifi added in a critical and unprecedented statement, contrary to what was said on the

previous day by Colonel Althami, who defended the security forces: 'If your cameras are being directed in Cairo, you will see people occupying the buildings with two types of weapons. The first is a telescopic sniper weapon to identify the person and snipe him from the top, and the second weapon is a laser shock that leads to temporary paralysis of the people to be arrested. This explains the situation of the deployment of security forces again' (Harvest Bulletin, January 30, 2011). Such a detailed response indicates that between two opposing political sides, the one supporting the Egyptians' Revolution against the regime's supporter gets more space of opportunity to reach the audience. In doing so, Aljazeera cleverly balanced between the parties to the event, appearing as a neutral channel providing opportunities to all parties involved in the event, but in fact giving more space to the party with whom it stands, thereby distancing itself from criticizing its professionalism, while at the same time strengthening the position of those with whom it agrees.

In his book about his experience as a presenter in the channel, Aldhafiri states a lot in the context of Aljazeera's presenters' attitude, in what proves their bias for the Revolution against the regime. Aldhafiri narrates an example from an interview he conducted during the Revolution with Muhammad Salim Alawwa, following the formation of a committee that called itself 'the Committee of the Wise' aiming for dialogue with Omar Suleiman. Aldhafiri mentioned that was cruel and sharp in interviewing Alawwa in a manner that he had never used before throughout his career (2012, p.156). Aldhafiri explains the reason for his attitude that the name the committee gave to itself provoked him, as did the role that this committee tried to play and the idea of dialogue with Suleiman, which the rebels rejected in the field. On the other hand, Aldhafiri states that on the last day of the Revolution, after Mubarak stepped down, he went on air and the joy was visible on his face, as were all his colleagues who presented the news before and after him that day (2012, p.160). Aldhafiri's joy and his colleagues' indicate that Aljazeera went beyond reporting the news to expressing its sympathy with one of the parties to the event.

Whether this attitude was based on the presenters' individual behaviour or it was an approach Aljazeera implicitly followed when the dialogues were with those whose views differed from the channel's viewpoint, the general situation prevailing in the channel during the Egyptian Revolution created harmony between the individual

presenters' positions and the decision of the editorial board. Krichen explains that usually if biased attitude appears by the presenter, he/she sometimes receives remarks from the newsroom director that this attitude is not a method adopted by the channel (M.Krichen, 2020). However, what happened during the Egyptian Revolution was different, as Krichen says that it is highly unlikely that there were notes on the attitude in the interviews of that period. He explains that this was due to the general mood which was filled with this trend that resulted in exaggerations and irregularities occurred in terms of professionalism, confirming: 'We could have been quieter, more careful...perhaps we were very enthusiastic in standing by the Arab revolutions, perhaps we were more enthusiastic than the professional journalism required' (M.Krichen, 2020). This enthusiasm that Krichen describes can be understood by looking at the values that Aljazeera has defended since its inception, such as freedom, justice, and democracy. Since the Egyptian Revolution represented the largest peaceful Arab popular movement advocating these values, the enthusiasm of the presenters, and the channel's staff in general, stemmed from their belief and advocacy of these values, in addition to the fact that they are all Arabs whose countries suffer from the absence of these values, so the Revolution was a victory for their media message, and the beginning of getting rid of the tyrannical Arab regimes.

The emotional excitement, which was evident in the presenters' performance, must have had an emotional impact on the Egyptian viewer who was eager to change the situation in Egypt, resentful of the regime and saw the regime's supporters being confronted in this way. This state of effect is discussed by Professor Kristyn Gorton in her book *Media Audiences: television, meaning and emotion* under the term 'contagious emotions' and 'catchiness' of emotions (2009, p.102), explaining that emotions are contagious when we catch the emotions of others and respond to an event like them, even though we do not actually experience what they are experiencing (2009, p.81). In the same case, the enthusiastic performance of the presenters, who are motivated in favour of the Revolution and the revolutionaries and angry towards the regime and its supporters, may be reflected as a contagion to the viewers that invite them to have confidence and courage to confront the regime on reality.

#### **4.3.4. THE PHONE-INS**

In its open coverage of the Revolution, Aljazeera relied on call-ins with a wide range of personalities, including politicians, legal, human rights specialists, journalists and media professionals and activists, calling from various Egyptian cities, especially from Tahrir Square in Cairo, to convey a realistic, accurate picture of the course of the Revolution and the movements of youth and political activists in it. It also hosted specialists in the political affairs from the United States of America and the United Kingdom to comment on the Egyptian events from the Egyptian expatriates' point of view and the Western view of the events, especially the American position. In addition, it received phone in from specialists regarding the constitution, when the discussion was about the protesters' demands for constitutional amendments, and economic experts when the talk was about the impact on the Egyptian economic situation as a result of the events. These phone calls confirm that Aljazeera was keen to address the event in all its aspects, which shows its role in satisfying viewers' needs for knowledge, making it the reliable source for information.

In this context, Aljazeera was criticized for repeatedly receiving phone ins from the same participants who always support the channel's point of view, which served the channel's directions, as Mohsen Alkanani mentions in his book on Aljazeera Media dialogues techniques (Alkanani, 2012, p.208). Fayed responds to this viewpoint by confirming that the majority of the guests in the phone calls initiated the calls, even those on the side of the regime wanted to defend it, especially since during the eighteen days they did not expect that Mubarak would give up power (A.Fayed, 2020).

Besides the previous point of view, it drew my attention during my study of the archive that among the political parties and the Egyptian opposition forces, the Muslim Brotherhood got the lion's share of appearing on the channel through phone-ins and breaking news. Aljazeera did not show its position towards the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, not even a hint. Still, it allowed them to appear on TV, while no other channel gave them such an opportunity. In the early days of the Revolution, and within the discussion of the political forces' positions regarding the protests, Aljazeera reviewed the Brotherhood's position, while the other discussed positions were ones of members of parties, which showed the unity of the Brotherhood, compared to other parties. Through this, Aljazeera allowed the Brotherhood leaders to appear on TV such as

Essam Elerian, Mohamed Morsi, and Abdelmoneim Aboufotouh, which made them closer to the public than previously and contributed to strengthening their political presence in the post-Revolution phase. Responding to this point of view, specifically regarding Mohamed Morsi's call upon his escape from prison on January 30, 2011, the sixth day of the Revolution, Fayed clarifies that Morsi wanted his voice to reach through Aljazeera to secure himself. He adds that people don't realize this, which made it a questionable matter (A.Fayed, 2020). On the accusations that the channel sided with the Brotherhood and broadcast more news about them than others, Alsheikh justifies that 'the Muslim Brotherhood at the time was a strong and active party in the Egyptian Revolution, so they had to appear on the screen like the rest of the other parties' (A.Alsheikh, 2020).

Through the phone-ins during the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera ensured the continuation of the flow of information, especially when it was broadcasting the events live from the heart of Tahrir Square and making phone-ins with the protesters, asking them about their situation and demands. That created a general feeling among the Egyptian public who supported the Revolution that Aljazeera adopted their point of view and supported the Revolution, as the eyewitnesses whom Aljazeera relied on in its news coverage were citizens and activists who are closer to the public than the political and media elites and decision-makers who appeared on other satellite channels to analyse and comment on the events. This contributed to convincing the viewers of the news and news analysis Aljazeera was broadcasting about the Revolution.

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I explained the measures taken by Aljazeera during the eighteen days of the Revolution, which enabled the channel to access the news despite the obstacles. The channel's handling of challenges showed the importance of Aljazeera's role in satisfying the needs of the audience, which in my opinion has established the trust in the channel among Arab viewers since its inception. This chapter precedes chapters that delve into the analysis of news content, discourse, and themes.

Based on the previous discussion on Aljazeera's live coverage's details and procedures, I believe that the measures taken by the Egyptian authorities against the channel during the Revolution were directed in two methods that I would call prevention and treatment.

In their pursuit of prevention, the authorities tried to keep the channel away from the Egyptian scene by closing its office, withdrawing its work licences, and cutting the internet and phone service before that. In another direction, in their quest for treatment, the authorities tried to prevent the Egyptian viewer from watching the channel by cutting off its signal on the Egyptian satellite, and demonize the channel, accusing it of inciting the Revolution.

As the demonstrations continued and the crowds were increasing in Tahrir Square, the regime's media continued ignoring them and obfuscating the regime's supporters' violations against the demonstrators, which caused the official Egyptian media to lose the revolutionaries' trust, especially since this media considered the revolutionaries saboteurs. As an example showing this, during the Revolution days, the official Egyptian television placed a constant slogan at the top left of the screen saying: 'Preserve Egypt', (see *image 4* below), as if the revolutionaries and Revolution would waste and sabotage Egypt. The same channel used to host Egyptian figures who supported the regime against the demonstrators and called to prevent them from demonstrating, even if by force and violence, on many occasions. In a phone-in with Ibrahim Hassan, football manager in Zamalek, one of the two most famous football clubs in Egypt, he said that the protesters in Tahrir Square must be surrounded by barriers, 'so that no one can enter or exit, nor enter food, drink, and medicine to them until they give up and leave' (*Egyptian State TV*, 2011). In another phone call, on the same channel, Egyptian actress Samah Anwar said that she finds no problem if the protesters were set on fire, and stressed: 'No problem, let them burn' (*Egyptian State TV*, 2011).



*Image 4: Egyptian State TV, 3 February 2011*



Here, Aljazeera efforts succeeded to continue coverage facing the Egyptian authorities' actions against it, and succeeded in broadcasting all that the regime's media overlooked facing the official Egyptian media coverage. Thus, the comparison between the two sides, Aljazeera and the Egyptian regime and its media, became clear and easy in the Arab viewer's mind, and the Egyptian in particular. As a result, the Egyptian regime increased Aljazeera's popularity, in contrast to what they were seeking. The Egyptian authorities' measures against the channel put it in the position of a victim. This made Aljazeera gain sympathy from the Arab peoples, and generated more hatred for the Egyptian regime. Moreover, the channel's ability to repeatedly overcome what we might call the regime's injustice, in what resembles 'victory', made it, in the eyes of the Arab peoples, the Egyptian people, and the rebels, in particular, represent the force that was able to stand in the face of injustice.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ALJAZEERA'S HARVEST BULLETIN DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

After the detailed view, covered in the previous chapter, on the steps followed by Aljazeera to carry out its live and continuous coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, I start studying news content from this chapter to the end of the search. This sequence, considering the journalistic procedures for media coverage down to content analysis, aims to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the media process at a critical historical stage.

This chapter focuses on Aljazeera's *Harvest Bulletin*, the flagship evening news programme on Aljazeera, during the eighteen days of the Egyptian Revolution. Through examining the themes and visual content of the bulletin, this chapter provides answers to the research questions; regarding the channel's role in raising Arab's political awareness of the Egyptian Revolution's circumstances and events, and addressing in particular the impact of the channel on the Revolution's events, by the channel's intense focus and repetition of certain news stories and images. The focus of the study in this chapter is the dominating themes in the main news bulletin in the channel, the clarification of which helps in understanding the role that Aljazeera played in the Revolution. Between covering the event and participating in it, these themes highlight the parts in which the channel provided information and news to the viewer and the other parts that carried encouragement, warning, or instruction. Thus, to make the points of my argument clearer, I analyse statements from the Harvest Bulletin by discourse analysis to deduce the indications and impact.

News analysis in this research is based on the archival material I had requested of Harvest Bulletins for the period between 25/01/2011 to 11/02/2011, supported by interviews I conducted with the channel's staff in Qatar to provide better understanding and interpretations in light of the social and historical context, to produce a comprehensive analysis of Aljazeera's role in the period under study. The analysis was

performed in several stages, as I divided the archival content of the Bulletin into three sections: the news reports, which I analyse in Chapter Six, the political experts' commentary, which I discuss in Chapter Seven, and the bulletin content with the exception of the first two sections, which I focus on in this chapter.

## **5.2. HARVEST BULLETIN'S THEMES**

The importance of the Harvest Bulletin is that it is 'the most important and most-watched evening news time', as the Principal Presenter Mohamed Krichen describes it during an interview (M. Krichen 2020, personal communication, 23 March). It is also, as the Principal Presenter Khadija Benguenna says, during an interview (K.Benguenna 2020, personal communication, 24 March) 'well-prepared in terms of production and is produced by an important team'. In describing its importance for the channel, the Principal Presenter Jamal Rayyan confirms, during an interview (J. Rayyan 2020, personal communication, 2 April), that it is 'number one in the station, through which they send very important messages and serve many political goals'.

Aljazeera airs its one-hour main evening bulletin Harvest Bulletin, *Alhassad* in Arabic, regularly at 20:00 GMT, 23:00 Mecca time. It includes the outcome of the day events, the news reports broadcast during the day, live on the scene reports from a range of locations by Aljazeera's correspondents, and political analysis of the events by guests in the studio. The bulletin is presented by two principal presenters, female and male, who are significant market presenters with decades of experience: Jamal Rayyan, Mohamed Krichen, Khadija Benguenna, Ghada Owais, Laila Alshaikhli, Hasan Jammol, Fayroz Zayyani, Ali Aldhafairi, Eman Ayyad. This style of news presenting described by the researcher Muhammad Saeed Al-Rihani (2015, p.23) in his book *The Authenticity of the Arab Media Slogan Through Building the News Image*, as a form of 'democratic presentation' of news in which a social gender is not limited to appearance and presentation, but rather shares with the other half of society all the tasks on the screen during the bulletin. Al-Rihani adds that the joint presentation of televised news bulletins is more than an 'aesthetic pleasure' or a 'passing fashion' in news presentation, as it is a form of journalistic cooperation between the channel's staff to succeed in an arduous task that requires a lot of focus on guest phones in and a lot of boldness on questioning and lots of experience in improvising situations (2015, p.56).

On the first day of the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera was busy uncovering the secret documents of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The hour of the Harvest Bulletin continued with the secret documents while only six minutes were spent with the protests in Egypt. The brief look at Egypt's news appeared even in the presenter's Eman Ayyad statement when she said: 'Before going into the file (the file of negotiation documents), we are going through what is going on in Egypt' (Harvest Bulletin, January 25, 2011). Mostefa Souag, the Director General of Aljazeera, the News Director at the time of the Revolution, clarifies, during an interview (M. Souag 2020, personal communication, 5 April), the channel's editorial policy in this regard: 'We want to understand the nature of this event, in order to cover it at the required level, and this level is gradual according to the scale of the revolutionary movement in Egypt or outside Egypt'.

However, from the next day, and as the coverage became intense and continuous, the topics of the bulletin were limited to the Egyptian Revolution, which I analysed based on thematic analysis under the following themes: demonstrating the power of the Revolution; raising awareness about the demands of the Revolution and the mistakes of the regime; the seriousness of the situation in Egypt; the relationship of the demonstrators with the army; promoting the symbolism of Tahrir Square; identifying the enemies of the Revolution and the Egyptian people. Since these sections focus on the dominant themes and the news stories Aljazeera raised in the Harvest Bulletin during its coverage of the Revolution's events, this chapter shows the channel's approach towards the Revolution and its demands, the regime and its supporters.

### **5.2.1. DEMONSTRATING THE POWER OF THE REVOLUTION**

In an article in the *Georgia Straight* entitled *Al-Jazeera Played a Major Role in the Egyptian Revolution and the Downfall of Mubarak*, Charlie Smith indicates that 'Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Tunisian revolution emboldened Egyptians to come out into the streets to protest Mubarak's regime' (Smith, 2011). This confirms that Aljazeera's role in the Arab world is cumulative, as the channel's coverage that preceded the Arab revolutions contributed to enhancing confidence in it among Arab viewers, because it satisfied the audience's need for information and the values of freedom, democracy and justice, especially when it was the only one, before the emergence of competing Arab

channels in the same field. In the Tunisian revolution, the Arab viewer knew where to find the news based on his trust in Aljazeera, so the channel was able to influence and encourage. This observation accords with what I noticed through following the news in conjunction with the events. Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution contributed to its momentum, as it focused on the elements that demonstrate the power of the Revolution, such as the spread and intensity of demonstrations, its inclusiveness of all Egyptians, regardless of their religions, ages, genders, professions and regions, its organization, and the courage and steadfastness of the demonstrators. All these elements would enhance the steadfastness of the rebels and encourage Egyptians to demonstrate. Ahmed Alsheikh, the Media Advisor in Aljazeera chairman's office, comments, during an interview (A. Alsheikh 2020, personal communication, 22 March):

Aljazeera is definitely a catalyst, but the Egyptian people had demands, and these demands had implications before the Revolution. The media helps; it encourages people to go out to demonstrate. But for the Revolution to stop completely without the presence of Aljazeera, this is not true.

Here, the effectiveness of Aljazeera's role in the Revolution appears alongside the Egyptian situation that caused the Revolution, especially when the Egyptian channels, at the time, presented an image opposite to that presented by Aljazeera, as it showed the weakness of the Revolution and its demise, so Aljazeera was the platform that showed the strength of the Revolution. The channel's broadcast of the Revolution's events in this intensive and ongoing form contributed to the promotion of a distinctive image to the Egyptian and Arab viewer, of the spread and intensity of demonstrations in Tahrir Square and the other Egyptian squares, and the growth of demonstrations in the millions after the channel's continuous coverage of the events of the Revolution.

In order to maintain the image of the intensity of the Revolution's events, Aljazeera relied most of the time on split screen in half during phone ins or speeches. Aljazeera used this technique even during times when Tahrir Square was quiet and there were no new events. The screen was divided into two halves, half of the broadcast of the statement or the speech, and the other half broadcast demonstrations, whether live or re-broadcast scenes of previous protests and video recordings of clashes and confrontations between security forces and protesters (see *image 5* below). This would

convey to the viewer that the Revolution is in a state of constant ferment, and there is no calm in it, which increases enthusiasm. Furthermore, keeping the image of the demonstrations present in front of the viewer makes him/her always link statements or speeches with the current situation, so he/she gets a complete picture of the events. This reflects the role of Aljazeera in satisfying the viewers' need to get the full picture of the events. But it also, in my opinion, goes beyond the channel's keenness to provide information and news to viewers, since it appears as a deep endeavour by the channel to remind viewers and revolutionaries that the Revolution must continue, and the situation should not calm down until the revolutionaries achieve their demands. This would expand the role of Aljazeera in the Egyptian Revolution, as the channel moved from being a mere news provider to an active and influential factor, reminding and warning the viewers and the revolutionaries through repetition and maintaining an atmosphere of enthusiasm and tension.



*Image 5: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011*

Since the first day of the Revolution, despite the lack of clarity regarding the intensity of the protests in the Egyptian street, Aljazeera broadcast scenes showing the spread of crowds of demonstrators. The channel also asserted, through the comments of its presenters and the reports of its correspondents that the demonstrations were massive and distinctive, at the time when the Egyptian channels broadcast images of quiet, empty streets, which would convince people that these demonstrations can change the country's situation, and encourage them to participate. There have been many phrases in the bulletin, such as:

'This is the biggest demonstration in the streets of Cairo for decades' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 25, 2011).

Words like 'the biggest' and 'for decades' are completely contradictory to the image that the Egyptian channels tried to deliver to the audience, to show that the demonstrations did not reach to the level of a revolution. On the impact of showing the strength and intensity of the demonstrations on the Egyptians viewers specifically, Souag (2020) says:

I think that the media coverage, whether carried out by Aljazeera or by another channel, contributes to informing people of what is happening, and thus may lead to moving some people who do not move. The person sitting at home says: 'Why am I heading to disturbances in the country in which hundreds of people are present or thousands of people and it ends the day after tomorrow!' When he sees the media coverage he sees large crowds continuing to attend, camping, bringing their food and drink to the place and not leaving it, determined with its slogans and positions, this may push him to participate, until he heads to the same place, or he starts another gathering in another place, or he participates in a march in certain streets. This is a case for granted.

As indicated by Souag's words, the role played by Aljazeera in showing what he described as 'large crowds continuing to attend', 'determined with its slogans and positions' may have resulted in 'moving some people who do not move', or push people 'to participate'. Thus, Aljazeera, in carrying out its media role, and specifically in satisfying the public's need for knowledge, contributed to the revolutionary movement.

Aljazeera helped give the Revolution's events a human face and made them closer to the viewer. With mentioning every new development and update, even if it is minor, the channel satisfied the audience's need to know more. Simon Cottle discusses the importance of the personal stories during the January 25th Revolution:

Mass uprising on the streets of Egypt now appeared less distanced, less humanly remote. Visceral scenes and emotional testimonies elicited on the street brought home to watching millions something of the protestors' everyday despair and democratic aspirations as well as their extraordinary courage in confronting, by non-violent means, repressive state violence (2011, p.648).

The importance of what Aljazeera did in the context of bringing events closer to the public, and humanizing the Revolution, which Cottle refers to, is that the Egyptian

channels were in a state of denial of what was happening in the Egyptian street, and other Arab news channels were unable to reach the popular revolutionary reality in Egypt at the time with the same closeness that Aljazeera reached, what I addressed in detail in Chapter Four. This made the viewer sympathize with the Revolution and feel that it was his revolution, even if he/she did not participate in it. It also encourages what Cottle described as 'democratic aspirations', and increases the acceptance of the approach of revolutions in the Arab region.

In another aspect that showed the strength of the Revolution, Aljazeera has repeatedly emphasized the unity of the people in the Revolution, and that it was an all-inclusive Revolution for all Egyptians despite the differences in religion, age, gender, and profession in terms such as: 'The remarkable thing is that the young people were not the only component of the protest body, but the age groups differed, and the social groups varied' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 27, 2011). This phrase was accompanied by a scene that confirms the spirit of diversity that characterized the protests, as an old woman cries, saying to the youth: 'Egypt needs you'. Demonstrating the unity of the people in the Revolution would show that it is not limited to a group of the people, which encourages Egyptians to participate in it, and assures others; the Arab peoples and the international community, that it is a popular revolution with popular demands, not motivated by one party or group.

The news of Aljazeera, which dealt with the areas of Egypt, its cities and neighbourhoods accurately and with details, made the Egyptian viewer, who knows these places very well, aware of events and receptive to the idea of going down the street and participate in the protests. It also delivered to the protestors in the field, who follow the channel's news, a detailed picture of the surrounding developments, which would increase the possibility of organising and coordinating protest movements in different regions. Many statements from the Harvest Bulletin mentioned that the protests spread across Egypt and its cities such as:

'Dozens of activists in Cairo, Suez, Ismailia, Mansoura and Alexandria were arrested' (Harvest Bulletin, January 25, 2011).

'From east of Egypt, where Sheikh Zuwaid is to the east of Cairo, where Nasr City which witnessed many sub-demonstrations. From east to the south where Alharam street in Giza governorate, there was also a movement of hundreds of demonstrators



who toured Faisal and Alharam Street in southern Egypt' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011).

The news, which provided a summary of the places of demonstrations on the channel during the Revolution, seemed like a map due to the intensity of the accurate description of the areas, their streets, and neighbourhoods. This accurate description would show the channel's access to news, which increases the viewers' confidence in the news they receive through it.

As for the Arab viewers, this accurate description of places and movements made them closer to the Revolution as if it was their revolution, not only the Egyptian citizens' Revolution. For example, at the beginning of the Harvest bulletin in the seventh day of the Revolution, the presenters mentioned the names of places of demonstrations, one by one instead of saying 'in many parts of Cairo'. Besides mentioning the areas in detail, in the seventh day of the Revolution, the presenter remarkably repeated the protestors' demand to drop President Mubarak instead of mentioning it once:

Thousands of Egyptians from other regions continue to join the masses now in Tahrir Square, and in Mansoura thousands of demonstrators continue their protests demanding the drop of Mubarak. In Fayoum and Menoufia, thousands of Egyptians demonstrated demanding the drop of Mubarak. Several demonstrators also moved in the neighbourhoods of Shubra, Giza, Alduqi, Maadi in Cairo, Mahalla and Beni Sweif southern Cairo, demanding the departure of Hosni Mubarak (Harvest Bulletin, January 31, 2011).

This focus on the descriptions that showed the large scale of the demonstrations would enhance the image of the strength of the Revolution for the viewers and thus realize that they are not just demonstrations, but a revolution that will create change.

In the same context of demonstrating the strength of the Revolution, Aljazeera, in addition to showing the spread and intensity of demonstrations and its inclusiveness of all Egyptians, emphasized that the demonstrations were organised. Although those demonstrations were non-partisan, but they were not moving randomly. This would worry the regime, and enhance the Revolution's acceptance among the Egyptians in general, since it indicates that the protestors are unrestricted by partisan political considerations and differences, as the following examples from the Bulletin show:

'Thousands are on the streets crossing the silence...most of them are not politicised and have not been pushed by a party or a movement to get out' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 27, 2011).

'The invitation, which received a response from the non-politicized spectrum of Egyptian society, went out to the streets for the first time to express its discontent with the general situation' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011).

In this context, Aljazeera stressed that these protests are the 'people's Revolution', as the presenters repeated their questions about whether these demonstrations were framed by a specific political, union or partisan party. These questions aimed at confirming the information, not disclosing it. The confirmation of the correspondents in the early days of the protests appeared in the following phrases:

'No political movement or political party in Egypt can claim that it stands behind this demonstration' (Harvest Bulletin, January 25, 2011).

'This demonstration was completely spontaneous, led by its main strength, the youth who were not accustomed to protesting in the streets of Cairo' (Harvest Bulletin, January 25, 2011).

In addition to the aforementioned, Aljazeera reinforced the idea of the courage of the revolutionaries. Many phrases demonstrated this courage:

'A demonstration in which thousands of Egyptians broke the fear barrier' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 25, 2011).

The phrase 'broke the fear barrier' indicates that fear of the regime had prevailed in Egyptian society previously, and the Revolution succeeded in changing this situation. In a news story that also affirmed courage in the Revolution, we saw a woman protesting and shouting and other women behind her (see *image 6* below). That scene, if viewed from an Arab oriental perspective, points to the extent of the courage of the Egyptian protestors during the Revolution, as females participation in demonstrations in Arab countries is few, sometimes almost rare, compared to the participation of males, which changed during the Egyptian Revolution contrary to what was known previously, and Aljazeera repeatedly focused on this aspect (see *image 7* below). This scene was followed by another of a woman saying: 'I am surprised by the people I belong to; I had a state of desperation that these people do not say no' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, 2011).

Hence, as I indicated earlier, according to what was explained by Aljazeera staff, although the channel was not the main reason for these people to break their silence, it was a factor that drove them to demonstrate alongside other radical factors in the Egyptian situation.



*Image 6: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011*



*Image 7: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011*

Throughout the 18 days of the Revolution, Aljazeera focused on the continuing of the protests and not surrendering. Despite the circumstances that might impede the rebellion, Aljazeera went beyond covering the news to what seems to be encouraging and urging steadfastness. Aljazeera continued to confirm by repeating the word 'steadfast', talking about the week of steadfastness and viewing scenes of the revolutionaries' chants, which called for steadfastness as they shouted 'O youth steadfast' on others. The channel's correspondents pointed out that the security reinforcements did not prevent demonstrators from gathering in different areas in Cairo

and several governorates in Egypt, as expressions appeared in this context encouraging on steadfastness and challenging circumstances:

'Despite the tight grip of the security authorities, the circle of hope has widened among the demonstrators' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011).

'The throats seem to be flowing with chants demanding the departure of President Mubarak and his regime on cold winter days' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, February 6, 2011).

'The crowds did not reduce because of shifting to Sunday, the first working day since the protests began, as there are those who go to work and return to the demonstrations' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, February 6, 2011).

Phrases such as 'tight grip' and 'the machine of oppression' were affective phrases used by Aljazeera to describe the extent of the pressures facing the revolutionaries. On the other hand, phrases such as 'circle of hope', 'broke the fear barrier' and 'steadfastness' were emotional phrases used in describing the revolutionary movement. These descriptions clearly show which side Aljazeera was on in the struggle between the rebels and the regime, and how the channel used clear emotional descriptions to catch the viewers' attention and induce their emotions to support the Revolution, which is seen by those who agree with the Revolution as normal news coverage, while the supporters of the regime see it as biasing the Revolution.

All the aforementioned elements showed the magnitude of the demonstrations, the diversity of the demonstrators, their organization, unity, and courage, which the Egyptians saw on Aljazeera, while the official Egyptian channels and other channels aligned with the Egyptian regime showed the opposite, and considered that what was happening in Egypt did not rise to the point of revolution, but regular demonstrations or even riots.

### **5.2.2. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE DEMANDS OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE MISTAKES OF THE REGIME**

Aljazeera sought to create a state of general political awareness in the Arab world.

Montaser Marai, a Senior Producer in Aljazeera at the time of the Revolution, confirms, during an interview (M. Marai 2020, personal communication, 26 March):

People were not aware of the corruption and human rights violations that were happening around them, so what Aljazeera did is that it provided the Arab human being, in particular, the right to obtain information withheld from him by the regimes or the authority. A person's awareness of information about his situation enabled him to question and monitor authority. Human awareness of this information and knowledge of it enabled him to form his convictions and opinions, which may, at some point, lead him to the existence of corruption in the regimes and the oppression and violations of human rights that made man move against these regimes.

The state of awareness described by Marai touches upon the issues of the Arab citizens such as tyranny, absence of freedom and social and economic justice, as well as the daily problems of poverty, ignorance, unemployment and social problems resulting from the corrupt political practices of the Arab regimes and the absence of real human and economic development projects. In his article discussing what he calls Aljazeera's 'Influence without Power', Mohammed Eloifi, a Political Researcher, indicates that the channel 'has played a central role in liberalizing the Arab media discourse. Its pre-eminence in the nascent Arab public sphere has put an end to media control by Arab regimes' and it 'managed to revolutionize the Arab and even international media scape by giving rise to a new 'Arab voice' (2005, p. 66). In a similar opinion, while rejecting the claim that Aljazeera incited the Revolution, Benguenna (2020) says:

But perhaps Aljazeera by shedding light on these revolutions and peoples' uprisings contributed to the delivery of messages. Aljazeera also contributed to building awareness, this awareness accumulated over the years. We must admit that before Aljazeera, the Arab viewer used to live the details of his day watching the national bulletin at eight in the evening, which mentions news of the president and the governor. Whereas now, through dialogues, programs, newscasts, guests, and discussions, the Arab viewer knows what he has and what he is up to. Aljazeera contributed to building this critical thinking of the Arab citizen. This accumulation of awareness, maturity, and awareness of what is going on around him made him in one of the stages reached the stage of demanding his rights through these uprisings and revolutions.

Although Aljazeera was not the direct cause of the outbreak of the Revolution, what Benguenna says confirms that the channel, by building a cumulative awareness of Arab human rights, had an undeniable role in the Revolution and its continuation. Aljazeera continued to raise awareness during the days of the Revolution, as it never stopped mentioning the demands of the Revolution over and over during its coverage, in the background behind the presenters (see *image 8 & 9* below), in images appeared on which the demonstrators showed banners bearing these demands, and through the

phones in of the activists, until the list of demands became clear and well-established in the public mind:

'They stated their demands, the departure of Mubarak, the formation of a national coalition government, the dissolution of the parliament, the call for parliamentary elections and then-presidential elections, all in the custody of the armed forces' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 29, 2011).



*Image 8: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 29 January 2011*



*Image 9: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 30 January 2011*

As the channel stated the demands of the Revolution, it had occasionally referred to the errors and flaws of the regime, through its news reports, and the questions addressed to

the guests by phone ins, especially since the channel realizes the political orientation of its guests, so when the presenters ask questions, they realize what answers they will get. In an interview with Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Dr Essam Alerian, he said: 'I expect that with the policy of closing doors, rigging elections and depriving students of forming their federations freely, all this will accumulate and then explode' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). Aljazeera hosted experts to address the Egyptian regime's faults in-depth and detail, more than just to broadcast chants in the Egyptian street about those faults. For example, one of the guests addressed this topic at the beginning of the Revolution comprehensively and highlighted the regime's faults in various aspects of life in Egypt. The economist at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies Ahmed Alnajjar said on the third day of the Revolution: 'It is a fact that in Egypt there has been an economic collapse in the past 30 years... The economic growth rate fell dramatically, with huge debts, during the Mubarak era. The unemployment rate in Egypt prevented huge numbers of citizens from earning their living in dignity' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). This is in terms of the economy, but in freedoms, the question asked by the presenter about what could be the situation in Egypt, left Alnajjar a space to respond saying: 'The people who have been defeated in terms of freedoms, the massive killings last year in police stations, unemployment and other things. If the non-response continues, the situation will continue to be worse and worse' (Harvest Bulletin, January 27, 2011). The presenter was not satisfied with this, but asked: 'worse! How?' Thus, the space for the phone ins that were given to the supporters of the Revolution against the regime was greater, and the presenter would ask questions that open the horizons for broader answers that deepen the flaws of the regime in the viewer's mind.

The intensity of the talk about the demands of the revolutionaries, on the one hand, and the mistakes of the regime, on the other hand, were among what sparked the controversy over the channel's role in fuelling the Revolution. In response, Krichen (2020) refuses the claim that Aljazeera was behind the Arab revolutions and that it was the one that brought people to the street. He says: 'This is an exaggeration, no people are going out to the streets because they watch a certain TV channel,' asserting that people go out to the streets as a result of certain accumulations, and as a result of a bad relationship with the authorities economically, socially and politically. However, Krichen (2020) clarifies in this context:

Those who went out on the street are, in one way or another, the sons of Aljazeera. What does this mean? There is a complex relationship for people to go out to the street and revolt against their regimes, but the values that people yearned for are freedom of opinion, respect for the opposition, these are people in which Aljazeera raised this set of values, because it was widespread, especially as it started and continued for years away from social media sites... We were playing alone; there were no other channels or social media sites. Aljazeera was also broadcasting Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports and news of arrests and torture, thus accumulating among the Arab viewers a great awareness of the importance of political freedoms and contempt for repression.

What Krichen says confirms what I argue that Aljazeera's satisfaction of the needs of Arab viewers, whether the cognitive needs and values related needs, in the pre-revolution period and during the Revolution, made an impact on the viewer's awareness of the information the channel provided about the Revolution and the regime. I consider the impact of Aljazeera on the Egyptian Revolution to be profound, as it was not immediate but cumulative, and it was not the main cause of the Revolution but rather one of its causes, because the people revolted as a result of their awareness, which Aljazeera was one of its means.

### **5.2.3. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION IN EGYPT**

Aljazeera revealed the seriousness of the situation in Egypt at all levels affected by the protests. It did not only use the term 'agitated situation', which was repeated more than once by the reporters in describing the situation. The first aspect Aljazeera highlighted was the economic situation. It showed the latest developments in the economic situation through news reports rich in numbers and financial details in a way that summarized the case in the economic field for the specialists, and showed the deterioration of the situation and the concerns it posed to the public on the other hand. This indicates that Aljazeera was keen to clarify that the situation was becoming worse than it was before the Revolution, especially since the bad economic situation was one of the causes of the Revolution.

Aljazeera also hosted economists to speak more profoundly to confirm and enhance the information provided in the news reports. Early on, Aljazeera addressed this aspect; in an economic news report, on the third day of the Revolution, the following was



reported: 'Protests in the Egyptian street affected the stock exchange in Cairo. The shares of listed companies have suffered losses that they have not experienced since 2008', 'If the alarm bells start ringing in Egypt, too much money will run out', 'Indicators show a state of anxiety, panic, and uncertainty in the arena of the economy and the streets of Egypt', 'which means further deterioration in purchasing power and rising prices' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 27, 2011). Words like 'alarm bells', 'anxiety' and 'panic', especially in the early days of the Revolution, accompanied by images that show the extent of poverty that Egypt has reached (see *image 10 & 11* below) would draw the viewer's attention to realize just how serious the situation was. This information would remind the Egyptian viewer of the country's economic situation, which directly affected the viewer's life, and increased his/her desire to change the regime that brought the country to this situation and controlled the sources and financial status of Egypt.



*Image 10: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011*



*Image 11: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011*

Concerning public life and precisely the security situation, Director of the channel's office in Cairo Abdel Fattah Fayed's words during the bulletin explained what was happening, such as:

'The spread of looting and robbery in many sites...due to the absence of a security existence' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

'Dozens of police stations are burning, and the prisoners are released' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

'Another fire just came up, and we were told that it is in a fertiliser factory in Alexandria, experts are warning of the movement of fire into depots of high-explosive acidic materials, the continuation of such a fire may lead to huge disasters' (Harvest Bulletin, January 29, 2011).

The descriptions used by Fayed were powerful in showing the enormity of the dangers that emerged in Egypt. Phrases like 'huge disasters' would enhance fears among viewers, so they feel that the risks are approaching them, especially since it was used immediately when the situation flare up on 'Friday of Rage', and thus the discontent with the regime would be more, as it was the cause of that chaos. Aljazeera addressed the violations and attacks on protesters in details:

'The numbers of arrested, dead and injured persons cannot be counted. Eyewitnesses in the hospitals confirmed that the numbers are vast, and some of the injured are in serious condition' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

The words used by Aljazeera in this context showed the extent of the brutality of the regime, which indicated that the conflict between the revolutionaries and the regime reached a stage after which it cannot return to the previous era, which would encourage the revolutionaries to the idea of neither retreat nor surrender, as the Revolution must continue until its demands are met.

Characterization of the seriousness of the situation in light of the attacks on demonstrators reached its peak on the camel incident, on the ninth day of the Revolution. Immediately after that incident, Aljazeera focused on the phone ins of those in the heart of the event, in Tahrir Square. By giving a large space for the phone ins to describe the situation in detail, phone in such as that of a member of the Union of Arab doctors, a volunteer doctor in the field hospital, showed the severity of the scene on the ground: 'Injuries are all cutaneous wounds with sharp instruments, bruising in the bones and fractures, hand and leg lacerations. There are cases we cannot handle. There are

cases of death and three concussions in the brain' (Harvest Bulletin, February 2, 2011). The phone in of journalist Amr Tawfiq: 'The clashes have been going on for many hours, five to six hours. There is throwing bricks and Molotov bombs. There are many women and children in the field, and protesters fear a massacre. There is shooting' (Harvest Bulletin, February 2, 2011), and many other live testimonies. Thus, the detailed picture provided by Aljazeera about the event put the viewer in the atmosphere of the panic which the incident created in the Square, while no other channel presented it, especially since Aljazeera was the only channel that was present in the Square at the time, as I explained in the previous chapter. That atmosphere of panic confirmed to the viewer the extent to which the regime's injustice reached, which would leave no room for forgiveness for the regime in the audience's mind.

Aljazeera's addressing of the seriousness of the situation in all its aspects was one of the reasons why some people accused it of inciting the Revolution. Fatima Triki, Senior Producer at Aljazeera, responds, during an interview (F. Triki 2020, personal communication, 25 March), to this claim in light of the channel's coverage of the camel battle:

If Aljazeera were not there, hundreds of people would have been killed in Tahrir Square and no one would know about them... Of course, it (the Egyptian Revolution) was the least long period among the revolutions, the Egyptian regime showed bloody, we do not forget that there were 800 dead victims in this short period before Mubarak stepped down, but of course the media coverage constituted protection. It was intense coverage? Yes, because Egypt is important, Egypt is a key country strategically in the Arab world. All that Aljazeera did is that it left the camera in front of the people. What was happening was a big thing; it was not a passing matter. But have we covered too much? In my opinion, no. Because it was a big event.

In the context of the discussion about the size and nature of Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution, Triki's words confirm that the channel's coverage had a role in protecting the Revolution, especially as it was the only channel that witnessed the camel battle. Here, I see that understanding the importance of Aljazeera's role in covering this event is based on understanding the importance of the event in the course of the events of the Revolution and its escalation, and in Mubarak's position in power.

Through its guests in phone ins, Aljazeera sought to predict what would happen to the situation. It asked them what they expected, whether the situation would continue or

worsen. For example, in a phone in with Colonel Omar Afifi, an expert on Egyptian internal security as he is a retired police officer, the presenter asked him if he expected an 'escalation, perhaps bloodbaths', he answered: 'There will be Blood baths in the next 48 hours' (Harvest bulletin, January 30, 2011). On the same day, the sixth of the Revolution, the presenter asked Lo'ay Deeb, Head of the state network for Rights and Development: 'Is this a fact that Egypt is coming to a new bloody chapter?' (Harvest bulletin, January 30, 2011). His answer was affirmative. Aljazeera's use of words such as 'bloody' and 'bloodbaths' in the presenters' questions about anticipating the next, directed the guests in the phone ins to answer using the same vocabulary, indicating the seriousness and severity of the situation.

From another perspective, Aljazeera's emphasis on the seriousness of the situation in Egypt by reporting scenes of violence, poverty, and chaos and intensive testimonies with confused voice tone raised the tension and instability, which would raise the international community's sympathy, and as a result, strengthen the protestors' position against the regime's position.

#### **5.2.4. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WITH THE ARMY**

In the Egyptian Revolution, there was a pro-revolutionary party and an opposing party, and between them, the army appeared as an entity independent of the regime hated by the public. Although the army was not an enemy of the Revolution or the Egyptian people, the nature of its appearance in events was complex. It was not a clear relationship between the revolutionaries and the army, but slightly disturbing, it seemed to those who follow Aljazeera as a cautious relationship, which was what Aljazeera succeeded in explaining to the viewer, especially the Egyptian viewer.

In the first scene of the army's relationship with the rebels, Aljazeera showed the army as the protector of the people, with the scenes of the demonstrators chanting joyfully as the army spread out the streets. 'They welcomed the army and chant: 'The People and the Army form one hand.' When the army entered the demonstrators chanted with national slogans and flags, some demonstrators climbed tanks to greet the officers and hug them,' (Harvest Bulletin, 2011), said Abdel Fattah Fayed. On the same day, Aljazeera's correspondent Samir Omar said: 'Now the sound of gunshots has been

silenced, and only the sound of the tanks that were greeted with the cheers of demonstrators in Tahrir Square and Abdel Mon'em Riad Square is heard.' At this stage; the first stage of the army's intervention in the Revolution, Aljazeera reported scenes of the revolutionaries' joy at the army's intervention. Aljazeera's role did not go beyond the transmission of these scenes and the expression of the Egyptians' joy, a role that changed in the next stage.

In a stage that followed the previous stage, after which was called 'Friday of anger', Aljazeera began to address the army's relationship with the revolutionaries as if it was calling protesters to be cautious. A report said: 'Some squares that have been cleared of police and security services have spread the armed forces; a kind of harmony prevails between protesters and members of the army, which will henceforth be under test' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 28, 2011). 'Under test' is the description of the army's role that Aljazeera emphasized in several contexts during that stage of the Revolution. Here, Aljazeera went beyond its role in transmitting scenes and events to directing advice, since it decided what the revolutionaries should do, which indicates that it was concerned about the fate of the Revolution.

#### **5.2.5. PROMOTING THE SYMBOLISM OF TAHRIR SQUARE**

The presence of the image of Tahrir Square permanently during the Revolution on Aljazeera screen influenced the masses towards supporting the Revolution. The image of Tahrir square filled with the masses and the revolutionaries broadcast by the channel permanently led to make Tahrir Square an icon and symbol in the awareness of the Egyptian viewer, and even non-Egyptian, and made it a symbol of the Egyptian Revolution. Aljazeera's focus on the image of Tahrir Square caused allegations that it was showing the numbers of people gathered in the square greater than it actually was, which I discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

This symbolism was created not only by the live broadcasting of the scene of the Square day and night but by the phrases Aljazeera used to describe the Square, which showed that it was a fundamental element of the Revolution. Phrases emerged, such as:

'In the square, life has many aspects. Here, Muslims and Christians united together in a rare scene of national unity... The Square looks like a gigantic painting with a lot of detailed scenes' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, February 6, 2011).

Words such as 'unity' and descriptions such as 'rare scene' indicated to the viewer that the gathering in Tahrir Square was a great event that the channel addressed with admiration.

Aljazeera's description of the image of Tahrir Square, and the demonstrators' gatherings in it, carried a lot of enthusiasm, which showed the channel's pride in this image, as if the Revolution was the channel's revolution and not just the Egyptians' Revolution.

#### **5.2.6. IDENTIFYING THE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE**

The Egyptian Revolution's primary demand was 'the people want to drop the regime,' a slogan revealed that the first enemy of the people is the regime. However, Aljazeera highlighted the other enemies of Egyptian people in detail, as if it was reminding the Egyptians about them or warn them.

By talking about the rebels' rejection of the regime, the Head of this regime, the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, comes first. Since the first day of the Egyptian protests, addressing Mubarak in Aljazeera's news content ranged between three central angles. The first angle was reminding the viewers that the president did not respond to the demonstrations; the channel repeatedly used warning expressions to assert that Mubarak did not care about his people's demands. Moreover, when he responded to some amendments, Aljazeera continued to affirm that those changes are useless, in terms such as:

'With the protests entering its fourth day, the Egyptian president and his government remain silent in the face of the evolving situation' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

'The President's solutions were perceived by the opposition as plastic surgery to remove the regime's sag, but it led to certain death' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 30, 2011).

The analysis and descriptions provided by Aljazeera on Mubarak's solutions would thwart any idea of looking at these reforms positively. Hence, Aljazeera did not address Mubarak's responses to the revolutionaries as mere news to be broadcast to the viewers,

but rather it intervened by warning the revolutionaries not to be tempted into accepting these solutions.

In the second angle in addressing Mubarak, Aljazeera repeatedly recalled the period of Mubarak's rule and the corruption that prevailed, especially by mentioning Mubarak's wealth. The term 'lasts 30 years' was frequently repeated about the time of Mubarak's reign, such as: 'The Egyptian state has been declining and descending for almost three decades'. Two news reports were broadcast the same day, and the introduction of the two stories had the same idea with sarcasm. The first report began: 'For 30 years, the Egyptian president Mubarak has no vice. Mubarak is paying attention to the situation, so General Omar Suleiman was appointed to the vacant post'. And the second: 'The interests of the people required appointing a vice president 30 years ago... Mubarak did not pay attention until the street was boiling in an unprecedented way and the choices in front of the regime receded' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 29, 2011).

The third angle in addressing Mubarak focused on the president's departure as the first step for all reforms, which was a result of the first and second angles; his lack of seriousness in responding to the Egyptian street's demands and his long history of corruption led people to insist on his departure as the first demand for all reforms. Aljazeera affirmed through its reports and the phones in of its guests that there was no waiver of this requirement:

'Everyone knows that the basic demand is Mubarak's departure, he goes first, and then the reforms come' (Harvest Bulletin: Esra'a Abdel Fattah, January 31, 2011).

'Yesterday, the president said that he wants to provide security and stability in political life. Today, he sends us thugs and police officers in civilian uniform to slay us and throw fire-glass at us. He was deceiving the Egyptian people' (Harvest Bulletin: A citizen in Tahrir Square, February 2, 2011).

'This disgraceful scene will not happen in any country, that the head of a state uses a group of thugs to take revenge on the people' (Harvest Bulletin: Political activist Nawara Najm, February 2, 2011).

Here, Aljazeera's focus on Mubarak and refuting his attempts at reform was based on the channel's sympathy for the Revolution and its tense relation with Mubarak and his regime, which I consider a transgression of its media mission in reporting the event. The channel did not hesitate to use the descriptions that confirmed its rejection of

Mubarak, which was not surprising. The relationship between Mubarak and Aljazeera was never good before the Revolution, as I explained earlier in the Historical Context chapter.

In the context of identifying the enemies of the Revolution, all enemies come after Mubarak as a result of his presence. The regime in general, forming an umbrella under which other enemies of the Egyptian people were hiding, was the most vulnerable to checking. From the first day of the Revolution, the channel's correspondent in Cairo, in a report about the protestors' choosing Tahrir Square to gather in, said it is a 'historical inspiration for what was witnessed in the Square in 1972 of demonstrations calling for the liberation of the national territory from the Israeli occupation', (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 25, 2011), as if this comparison put the ruling regime and the Israeli occupation in the same hand, while the latter is considered in the Arab culture as the enemy of the Arabs. Many phrases reinforced a bad image of the regime, such as: 'The White House said there is still a chance for the Egyptian regime to stay. Well, let us say this is wrong. The right thing now that there is no Egyptian regime any more on the earth; this regime has completely ended' (Harvest Bulletin: Ahmad Alkilani, January 28, 2011).

This enemy, the regime, began to become evident to the people after what was called 'Friday of anger' the fourth day of the Revolution, as its characters began to appear more specific in the content of Aljazeera. Omar Suleiman, appointed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as his vice after the escalation of the protests, became under the microscope of Aljazeera. In the first report after the appointment, the reporter said: 'Finally, the country has a vice president, but the Egyptian street does not see the head of the intelligence service as the expected fireman. The demonstrators condemned the matter. Ordering Ahmed Shafiq to form a new government does not change a lot' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 29, 2011).

On the same day, the presenter Fayrouz Ziani commented on the decision to appoint Suleiman as vice president: 'The action, which is considered by the protestors disappointing and does not amount, according to Egyptian activists, to the minimum demands of the people.' In a second report on the same day, the report showed a long scene of Omar Suleiman shaking hands with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon



Peres, talking to him and smiling (see *image 12* below). This scene was an alert to those who did not know and as a reminder to those who knew, among Egyptian viewers, that Suleiman had strong relations with Israel, which is not accepted by the Egyptian public and Arab people in general. This aspect of Omar Suleiman's character had been repeatedly confirmed by Aljazeera through its guests' phones in, for example, retired Colonel Omar Afifi said: 'I hope that this Zionist Mubarakist plan will be countered by architect Omar Suleiman, who stays in Tel Aviv more than in Cairo' (Harvest Bulletin, January 29, 2011). Aljazeera's assertion of its rejection of Omar Suleiman was not limited to what was mentioned in the reports and phones in the Harvest bulletin, as there was a great focus on this issue in the political commentary of the thinker Azmi Bishara, which I address in more detail in Chapter Seven.



*Image 12: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 29 January 2011*

The third enemy of the Revolution, which was the closest and the most prominent enemy of the people: the security forces of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior. Aljazeera repeatedly asserted the security forces' attacks on demonstrators and the confiscation of their right to demonstrate and express. These attacks were illustrated by the comments of the presenters, the reports, and the phone ins of journalists and activists from all over Egypt, besides scenes of demonstrators being arrested, scenes of crowds of demonstrators fleeing the security forces, and scenes of security forces vehicles firing gas bombs at protesters. One of the scenes, which were re-broadcast frequently, was the scene of the security forces' vehicle spraying water on the demonstrators to disperse

them while a protester stood in front of the vehicle and the troops continue pushing water. The repetition of these scenes went beyond the issue of reporting the event, as the events were reported at the time it took place, while the repetition indicates the channel's desire to remind the viewers and emphasize the emotions that these scenes caused.

In this regard, Aljazeera correspondent in Cairo, Sameer Omar, confirmed on the first day of the Revolution that although 'the demonstration sites have witnessed a firm commitment' by the protesters not to bypass and maintain peaceful demonstrations, security forces have arrested dozens. Moreover, I find phrases such as: 'The patience of the security forces is running out' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 25, 2011), in a sign that they did not continue to stand on the neutrality and began to address the demonstration.

In addressing the security forces, Aljazeera's discourse ranged from covering the news to warning the revolutionaries about these forces. For example, the channel's correspondent, after mentioning that many demonstrators set fire to government sites and National Party's headquarters, said that sources informed that those who did so are members of the security forces, to stick the charge to the demonstrators, and to give the Ministry of the Interior a justification to shoot and disperse them by force. Aljazeera correspondent in Cairo confirmed that those arrested had been identified as 'security members belonging to the security services of the Ministry of the Interior'. In an alert to the viewer, Aljazeera reported that the security authorities contributed to the prisoners' release in the light of the security situation, to provoke riots between demonstrators in the atmosphere of the Revolution so that it would cease to be peaceful and there would be justification for its disperse, even by force. To confirm the authenticity of this information, Aljazeera hosted by a phone in with the lawyer Islam Lotfi, a member of the popular Protection committees, and asked him: 'another testimony by you! Who are doing the riots?' He answered: 'Prisons were opened, and all criminals and dangerous prisoners were released. Message from the police for the majority of Egyptians, who are still sitting in homes, that they have a choice; either freedom with fear or security with tyranny and oppression' (Harvest bulletin, 2011).

The fourth enemy of the Revolution was the National Democratic Party, whose name was not fully mentioned by Aljazeera as it was called in official documents and as it was written on its building. As Aljazeera never mentioned the word 'democratic' in its references to the party, instead it used to say 'ruling', confirming that it was the ruling party in Egypt. Since its initial response to the Revolution, the party was addressed by Aljazeera in a manner sceptical about the reliability of the party's political discourse directed at the Egyptian people. The first news story addressing the National Party included part of the party's Secretary-General Safwat Alsharif's statement saying that 'the demands of the people are above our heads'. To be followed by the reporter's comments, who seems to alert the viewer so as not to be fooled by the words of Alsharif. The reporter said: 'The Ruling National Party has recognised the difficulty of the situation which the angry demonstrations set forward, that is why it has chosen to calm and has opted for appeasement in an attempt to contain the wrath of the protesters' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 28, 2011).

On the same day, Friday, the so-called 'Friday of anger', and in the same context of questioning all that was issued by the National Party, a statement by the Muslim Brotherhood appeared in the breaking news followed by a statement by the National Party. While the Brotherhood's statement appeared as: 'The Muslim Brotherhood says that Friday will be a day of rage and warn of the explosion of the situation in the country', The National Party's statement appeared as follows: 'The National Party in Egypt calls for a 'peaceful Friday prayer in order not to endanger the security of worshippers' tomorrow' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011). Putting the phrase 'peaceful and not-endangering the security of worshippers' between quotation marks suggested to the viewer that they were unusual phrases, doubtful and should not be taken into consideration as the Brotherhood's statement. Thus, Aljazeera took every opportunity to confirm that the National Party and the regime are two sides of one coin, to warn the viewer not to trust the party and not to be deceived by the party's statements.

The emergence of businessmen as the enemies of the people began on the most important day after the beginning of the Revolution, the fourth day and the first Friday, by highlighting the protestors in Suez burning ceramic exhibits owned by Mohammed Abu Alenein, a prominent member of the policy committee of the National Party. They

also burned a car exhibit owned by businessman Ibrahim Faraj. Talking about these incidents reinforced the idea of enmity among the public, particularly the demonstrators, and the businessmen, and those who were close to the National Party or were members in it.

Aljazeera's correspondent in Suez, Dina Samak, pointed out that the demonstrators who spoke to Aljazeera did not find any problem with the youths breaking the exhibition of the businessman Faraj accusing him of 'trading drugs and having strong relations with the ruling National Party and the reason for attacking his shops is his bad reputation in the city' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011). Here, by conveying the views of some protesters, Aljazeera promoted what harms the reputation of these businessmen, in a way that the viewer received as correct information. Once again, Aljazeera confirmed undoubtedly the enmity of businessmen to the Revolution, when it mentioned that these businessmen were the source of financing and directing the thugs, especially the thugs who attacked demonstrators in Tahrir Square at the camel incident. This indicates that Aljazeera did not cover the event only, but rather relied on the opinions of groups of protesters and their stances, until these opinions became as if they were facts circulating among the Egyptian public, especially in the absence of media outlets representing the other opinion objectively.

The bodies that Aljazeera addressed as being enemies of the Revolution were not limited to those in Egypt. Aljazeera discussed the position of the United States of America from the Egyptian protests with great interest, although it did not address it as an explicit enemy like the bodies I mentioned earlier, but it discussed it with scepticism and caution and did not assume goodwill.

Aljazeera discussed and analysed the White House statements and the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton statements with details, especially with the lack of clarity of the US position. The comments of Aljazeera's correspondent in Washington, Fadi Mansour, addressed the White House spokesman Robert Gibbs's remarks using the word 'seems' a lot, which indicated Aljazeera's attempt to draw a predictable picture of the situation, despite the lack of clarity:

'The White House seems to be expressing a higher level of concern now...and there seems to be a crisis cell in the White House watching the American ambassador in

Cairo...They seem to be worried in the White House from the delay of the Egyptian regime' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

The most critical points on which Aljazeera focused over the 18 days regarding the position of the United States of America is the lack of a consistent position. Aljazeera repeatedly reminded people through its questions to its guests that the American position changed, as it had not been a precise and strict position since the beginning of the protests. For example, the presenter asked the guest, Dr Mustafa Alfiqi, head of the Arab, Foreign and National Security Affairs of the Egyptian Shura Council, about the American position, the guest replied: 'There is a shift in the American position from yesterday to today, yesterday's bid was that the Egyptian administration is strong and capable of passing the situation, today the bid on the Egyptian people who can decide their fate as they want' (Harvest Bulletin, 2011). Such information about American politics would raise the protesters' confidence to continue without fear of the regime.

In talking about who is with and who is against the Revolution, Aljazeera focused on the most crucial point in the American position; that the White House is concerned about its interests in the Middle East, and therefore it is worried about the fate of the Egyptian regime and presents solutions to President Mubarak to resolve the situation, so that it doesn't get worse. Egypt's position in the Middle East, as a significant ally of the United States of America after Israel, and the Peace treaty with Israel, made America fear that the situation in Egypt is out of control and it may lose a significant ally in the region. That is why its position was the position of an ally or a friend who advises reform. The point that Aljazeera repeatedly highlighted to keep the audience aware that America only cared about its interest.

In an incident in which Aljazeera focused more than any other news channel, the United States of America appeared to be involved in killing Egyptians, when a diplomatic vehicle ran over about 20 demonstrators. The US embassy had issued a statement saying that the cars were stolen, and then three American diplomatic vehicles were found next to the Ministry of Interior with remnants of blood and signs of body friction. Aljazeera highlighted this incident in detail, especially in the phone in of the Secretary-General of the Freedom Committee at the Bar Association, Jamal Taj, who narrated the incident when the presenter asked a question that carried an answer: 'You are obviously

hinting at a suspicion of a relationship between the Ministry of the Interior and the Embassy, who can now reveal the mystery?' The guest replied: 'Something is going on between the US Embassy and the State Security Service' (Harvest Bulletin, 2011).

Recognising that the White House was watching it to follow up on the latest developments in the Egyptian street, Aljazeera has tried to convey messages to the American administration about what it should do if it wants to remain acceptable to Arab societies. For example, Aljazeera correspondent in Washington, Fadi Mansour, in the fourth day of the Revolution, said: 'Because of what happened and the scenes that have become embarrassing (pointing to the violations of the Egyptian government against the protesters), this administration must justify its positions, that's why it says we support the Egyptian people and their choices' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011). In the same context, Aljazeera correspondent in Washington, Wajd Waqfi said in the sixth day of the Revolution: 'The American credibility is now at stake' (Harvest Bulletin, January 30, 2011).

Mindful of every detail indicating any interference in the Revolution, Aljazeera addressed Israel as another enemy the Egyptians must be wary of its intentions. In emphasising the enmity of Israel to the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera warned through its guests that weapons were coming from the Israeli entity aboard two planes loaded with advanced modern weapons to be used to snip the leaders of demonstrations, not political symbols, in an attempt to neutralize them; the youth and activists. Colonel Omar Afifi, the retired Egyptian police officer in Washington, confirmed this information through his phone in on Aljazeera. Aljazeera discussed this information in detail when no other Arab channel did so. It hosted the Head of the International Network for Rights and Development, Lo'ay Deeb, to ask him about this information, who in his turn confirmed it in more significant details:

We have our sources in the decision-making centres, we were surprised by the arrival of the aircraft yesterday at 4:22 am, 4:45 am and 5:53 am to Cairo airport coming from Cyprus after it stopped its journey from Israel and dropped equipment for the Ministry of the Interior. We have sources at Cairo airport, and we know very well that these planes were carrying weapons (Harvest Bulletin, 2011).

Thus, Aljazeera in this part satisfied the viewer's need for knowledge, especially with the lack of information from other media outlets.

One enemy remains, whose position on the Revolution becomes clearer when looking at how Aljazeera highlighted it, is the Egyptian media, specifically Egyptian State Television. Through Aljazeera's coverage, many statements, and evidence addressed the Egyptian Television as an enemy of the Revolution. Evidence of this can be found in the political activist Nowara Najm's response when Aljazeera's presenter asked her about the news content of the Egyptian television, she answered: 'Actually, no one in the world listens to government television, government TV will be judged by history and people for its crimes against their profession, and no one even cites it, as the regime has paid people to beat demonstrators, it paid people to control television' (Harvest Bulletin, February 2, 2011).

In an emphasis on the futility of relying on Egyptian television for news, appeared the following phrases:

'They did not wait for government or private media to deliver their voices; instead, they relied on new media that they know well how to use' (Harvest Bulletin: Report, January 27, 2011).

'Egyptian television is still announcing that Egypt Air flights coming from abroad continue throughout the night, this is another aspect of the media provided by the official media in an attempt to show things as if they were normally going' (Harvest Bulletin, January 28, 2011).

Here it is noticeable that Aljazeera does not only describe to viewers the coverage of the Egyptian media, but also confirms that the revolutionaries have understood the nature of the coverage of their country's media, so they did not rely on it for news.

In the fourth day of the Revolution, which witnessed the most significant demonstrations since the beginning of the Revolution, the official Egyptian Television repeatedly broadcast the scene of Cairo on the side of the Nile River, showing that the city appeared to be quiet. Emphasizing that the official Egyptian television was deceiving viewers, Aljazeera rebroadcast those scenes from the Egyptian TV broadcast to show that the Egyptian official media was seeking to ignore the Revolution (see *image 13* below).



Image 13: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011

To alert the viewers that the official Egyptian media was working in the service of the president and his regime and not in the service of the people as it is supposed to, Aljazeera mentioned repeatedly on the mobile news bar that ‘The Egyptian Minister of Information asked the radio and television staff to demonstrate in support of the president’ (Harvest Bulletin, February 2, 2011). It was obvious that the official Egyptian media was not a source of news regarding the Revolution, as its primary task and responsibility turned from being a media tool to become a weapon under the regime's control. In *Foreign Policy*, Hugh Miles writes about Aljazeera's effect comparing the coverage of Aljazeera and Egyptian TV:

While Al Jazeera was showing hundreds of thousands of people calling for the end of the regime, Egyptian TV showed humdrum scenes of traffic quietly passing by; when Al Jazeera reported hundreds of people queuing for bread and petrol, Egyptian TV showed happy shoppers with full fridges using footage filmed at an unknown time in the past (Miles, 2011).

Out of sympathy for the Revolution, Aljazeera's coverage often exceeded reporting the event, which appeared in all the themes of the Harvest bulletin that I discuss. Aljazeera's interference in the Revolution appeared in the theme of identifying the enemies of the Revolution; through the channel's keenness to make Egyptian viewers, in particular, aware of those who did not want the Revolution to succeed at all levels (Miles, 2011).



### 5.3. HARVEST BULLETIN'S VISUAL CONTENT

Aljazeera's significant role in coverage of critical events in the Middle East changes the Arab television into a visually rich landscape, through strengthening the concept of image's supremacy as a mean of political communication. The channel was as concerned with its visual content as it was with linguistic and rhetorical content, especially during the Egyptian Revolution. So, it diversified its visual strategies to deliver its news to the audience of all kinds and interests. As the channel focused on delivering certain political messages through the themes of the Harvest bulletin, the volume of political messages that it provided using visual content during the eighteen days of the Revolution was huge. In one of the books among the literature that discuss mainly the image's power as a political tool, *Image politics in the Middle East: The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle*, Lina Khatib (2013) argues that 'Politics in the Middle East is now seen. The image has claimed a central place in the processes through which political dynamics are communicated and experienced in the region'. Khatib calls it 'endless process of images battling...struggle over presence, over visibility' (2013, p1), emphasising that the political power in authoritarian states is to have control on the visual production, the matter that drew my attention to Aljazeera's images in confrontation with these states due to its competitiveness in possessing the tools to be seen and to deliver messages.

From the third day of 2011 Egyptian Revolution, January 27, 2011, Aljazeera started to use images and scenes of protesters in the bulletins' openings displaying the large numbers of protestors and the sound of their loud shouts with an emotive, martial and revolutionary musical background (see *image 14* below). Thus, the channel broadcast the demonstrations to the viewers, with all its visual and audio details, which would moved the psychological state of the Egyptian viewer, from just a viewer watching the events to a person taking to the street, either in a desire to participate in the Revolution or curious to make sure of what he/she watched on TV.



*Image 14: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011*

Aljazeera's focus on image's prominence was reflected in 11th February 2011, the last day of the Egyptian Revolution. The channel aired the scene of Tahrir square full of crowds, without any voice commentary for fourteen minutes, the viewers were in front of the screen showed the crowds celebrating and chanting after the announcement of Mubarak stepping down. In the bulletins on the same day, Aljazeera rebroadcast the recorded video of General Omar Suleiman, Vice President of Egypt, announcing the president's resignation, simultaneously with the scene of Tahrir square and crowds' voices were audible.

Photos of the demonstrations remained in front of Aljazeera's audience during the extensive coverage. Since Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution exceeded the coverage of any other channel, the momentum of availability of images exceeded what was shown on any other channel. In the news bulletins openings and background images behind the presenters, there were many images of clashes between police and demonstrators (see *image 15* below), people carrying banners with slogans of their claims of reform and change, and other slogans showed the protesters' hatred of President Mubarak.



*Image 15: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 28 January 2011*

The clear major theme in the background images behind the presenters was showing the massive numbers of protesters and their primary demand: *The people demand the fall of the regime*, in what clarified it for the viewers that the protesters will not give up their demand, and that Egypt's situation will not return as it was. Here, the channel explicitly showed its opposition to the regime. Benguenna (2020) comments that Aljazeera was never with the Egyptian regime, but was with the truth, and it was biased towards the people, but within the professional standards. She asserts that with millions of protesters every Friday, covering the event did not mean that the channel was biased towards the revolutionaries; Aljazeera was covering what was happening in the streets (K.Benguenna, 2020). Whether Aljazeera was covering the event or siding with the Revolution, Alsheikh (2020) explains the channel's vision in this context:

It was an Arab revolution. Were its demands legitimate and honest? The demands of all Arab revolutions were freedom, dignity, independence, and the right to expression. Do we disagree that these issues are the rights of all people wherever they are! So, to be with the revolution is a foregone conclusion. You should be with the revolution against injustice, obscurity, and the absence of democracy. Otherwise, why do you exist?! If you were not with people under these circumstances that make a difference, when will you be with people?

What Alsheikh says clearly states the position and thought of the channel, and the opinions of the channel's staff whom I interviewed agreed with this thought. Regardless of the fact that this thought is consistent with the thought of the State of Qatar in order to achieve its political agenda, it has shaped the image of Aljazeera over the years as the People's Channel, which was reinforced in the minds of viewers at the stage of the Arab revolutions.

Aljazeera repeated the scenes of the demonstrations during its open coverage time after time; to the extent these scenes became memorable (see *image 16, 17 & 18* below).



Image 16: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011



Image 17: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011



Image 18: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011

It continued airing scenes of the protests even after the Egyptian government shut down the channel's office; it broadcast user-generated videos displaying the clashes between

protesters and security forces (see *image 19* below). Aljazeera, by accepting the use of these videos despite its lack of professionalism, made this matter acceptable in the Arab media, so other channels imitated Aljazeera in using these videos. Mostly, these unprofessional videos were shaking affected by protesters rush to run from security forces; however, they were powerful to deliver the real situation to the audience. Aljazeera increased those videos effect by rebroadcasting them frequently. One of these videos showed the security forces shooting a young man in Alexandria. The broadcast of this video was accompanied by the presenter Krichen's commentary, who explained, in a nervous voice, that the young man was walking towards the security forces topless in defiance of them, and when he was about to retreat and leave, they shot him. Krichen continued that this scene even struck who captured it with horror and screaming because the young man was not a threat to the security forces.



*Image 19: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 27 January 2011*

The use of visual strategies such as user-generated videos invite viewers to feel the channel's sympathy with the Egyptian street protests on the one hand, and on the other hand, assured the activists in the Revolution, who filmed these materials and posting them on social media sites, of the channel's support to them in their cause. Moreover, the channel gave these videos more credibility; as once these videos were broadcast on Aljazeera, they became reliable, and especially since Aljazeera has always made clear that they use specific criteria to ensure the authenticity of these materials. Aljazeera was a pioneer in using videos filmed by Egyptian citizens in the events of the Revolution and thus took a new approach in the traditional television media related to its interest in digital media and the citizen journalism, which I shed more light on earlier in Chapter Four.

Aljazeera's news reports during the Revolution, which I focus on in the next chapter, were rich with scenes featuring police brutality, protesters were arrested while others were running, and security forces vehicles were shooting protesters. Archival footages dominated the reports, especially the ones that shed light on Egypt's political, economic and liberties situation during Mubarak's presidency. Aljazeera aired a news report on the third day of the Revolution, January 27, 2011, addressing the government's failure in facing increasing poverty levels, showed scenes of slums, and a poor man digging through a dumpster. On 8th February, the fifteenth day of the Revolution, the channel aired a significant report about security authorities' infringing human rights by committing acts of violence and torture. Before broadcasting the report, presenter Benguenna said that it is about 'the reality of police state in Egypt', but she should have mentioned that it contains distressing scenes. The first of those scenes was Khaled Saeed's disfigured corpse photo, which spread throughout social media and revealed that he was beaten to death by Egyptian security forces. Several poignant scenes of torture followed Saeed's story, where a man was slapped in the face continuously by State Security man, and a woman was crying, tortured and hung upside down.

Aljazeera diversified its information delivery tools, taking into account the differences between people and their interests. Besides the richness of visual content with the live scenes of the demonstration and the archival scenes of poverty and torture that provoke more frustration against the Egyptian regime, some viewers care about information that convinces them more than they are affected by the images. Aljazeera presented specific issues in written bullet points when it focused on (see *image 20, 21 & 22* below). News stories that were rich in details were on focus, such as the developments of events, the political parties in Egypt (January 31, 2011), the protesters' demands, The history of President Mubarak's rule (January 30, 2011), the history of the ruling National Democratic Party (February 5, 2011), committee of Egyptian constitution amendment, the Egyptian-American scientist Ahmed Zewail's initiative to end the crisis (February 6, 2011), the Egyptian journalist Mohammed Hassanein Heikal's suggestions for the crisis exit process (February 6, 2011), and personalities appeared during the Revolution, such as Wael Ghoneim (February 6, 2011), Mohamed El-Baradei, and Mohamed Morsi. Aljazeera simplified these stories to the audience by displaying information written in lists and points. This effort to help the audience to understand the news indicates the significance of that data from Aljazeera's perspective.



Image 20: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 30 January 2011



Image 21: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 31 January 2011



Image 22: Harvest Bulletin, Aljazeera, 31 January 2011

Aljazeera simplistic presentation of the complicated news helped clarify news stories that may contain confusion, providing briefings on issues of upcoming importance to Egypt, and providing historical and biographical information. Although other news



channels use very similar strategies to simplify information, Aljazeera was the first to use these strategies among Arab news channels, especially during the Egyptian Revolution, the most prolific in producing graphic content and the fastest in keeping pace with events.

#### **5.4. CONCLUSION**

Through the two aspects I studied to examine Aljazeera's Harvest Bulletin, its themes and visual content, I noticed that Aljazeera used them for the benefit of the Revolution. By utilising available tools and technologies, Aljazeera attempted to satisfy the audiences' needs to get news at a time when the official Egyptian media were ignoring and denying the Revolution. It also sought to satisfy the audience to be kept abreast of the latest developments and to understand the complicated events and political information. Thus, Aljazeera indirectly contributed to the Revolution by encouraging the Egyptians to continue their revolution, making them aware of the issues that the Egyptian and Arab media ignored, and alerting them of those who are against the Revolution.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ALJAZEERA'S NEWS REPORTS DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I began analysing the news content, starting with discussing the themes of Aljazeera's main bulletin and its visual content, in an attempt to provide an adequate picture of the channel's approach to covering the Egyptian Revolution during the eighteen days, followed by researching other news items, such as the reports I analyse in this chapter, and the political commentary I address in the next chapter.

This chapter studies Aljazeera's style of news reports, particularly its in-house reports, which have become known among Arab media researchers as 'Bushra and Triki reports' (A.Alsheikh, 2020). I chose to analyse six reports that broadcast during the period under study in a separate chapter since they cannot be analysed in the same manner as the correspondent reports, which I researched through the Harvest news bulletin analysis in Chapter Five. The importance of discussing and understanding these reports lies in the fact that Aljazeera's thought, which was implicitly and indirectly included in the Harvest bulletin's themes, appears in these reports explicitly and frankly in texts that clarify the channel's thought and opinion.

These reports continue to be controversial until now, they raise the debate on Aljazeera's coverage of the uprising; as some consider that it exceeded the limits of the professional objective news coverage, to interfere in the events of the Revolution (Galander, 2013), while others praise it and consider that it entrenches liberal political values (Talk with the Chief, 2011). Aljazeera was distinguished by the style of these reports, as no Arab satellite news channel had ever used this style in its reports. This style is considered by some media professionals as commendable audacity, and others consider it a departure from the editorial standards (M.Krichen, 2020).

The difference in these reports lies in specific and clear elements that differ from other channels' in-house news reports. Thus, it is important to study Aljazeera's editorial standards and quality control document to compare what is stipulated and what is

actually applied in producing these reports, regarding their length, literary language, repetition of broadcast, and the space for the plurality of views in the report. These reports present one view, which is the opinion of the author of the report and the channel, and this is a fundamental aspect of their style, which requires understanding the historical context of the event covered by each report and analysing the themes it raises. It is also necessary to highlight the emotional impact of each report, by reading the explicit messages included in them and directed to viewers in general, and the revolutionaries in particular.

In light of the channel's editorial standards and quality control document, and through thematic and ethnographic analysis, this chapter highlights the discussion on the role of Aljazeera's coverage during the Revolution through its reports, which occupies an important part of its coverage. This discussion is supported by the channel's staff testimonies I obtained through interviewing them in Aljazeera's headquarters in Doha. The in-depth open-ended interviews deepen the understanding of Aljazeera's staff's position on these reports, and their perception of their features.

## **6.2. ALJAZEERA'S EDITORIAL STANDARDS FOR NEWS REPORTS**

Aljazeera defines the TV news report as the backbone of the bulletin, in its Network's editorial standards and quality control document. The channel's definition of the news report does not distinguish between its forms, which leads to a gap in understanding one of the most important means used by the channel in delivering its messages. News channels usually create news reports based on their institutional thinking about events, but the style of reporting I address in this chapter differs in basic aspects from the reports that the channel described in its editorial standards document, which I will discuss before delving into the analysis of the targeted reports in this research.

By studying these reports, I noticed that the channel called them news reports despite being overwhelmed by literary writing elements, which requires distinguishing them from other reports. With a view similar to mine in this regard, the researcher and academic Fayeza Shaheen explains that the name of the news report is mainly derived from its linguistic style, which is a news reporting style that directly displays news facts, therefore it is supposed to be free of literary language and linguistic aesthetics (Shaheen, 2019. p.394). Thus, distinguishing between the two styles becomes

fundamental in the case of the analytical study of the literary report, as the difference is not limited to its literary language, but also in its length, rebroadcasting times, and its limitation to one point of view.

### **6.2.1. THE REPORTS' LENGTH**

As for Aljazeera's editorial standards and quality control document, the report, whether it is a field report or in-house report, carries an idea with a depth of news 'that is treated in a period of not less than one and a half and not more than three minutes, the average remains two minutes' (Aljazeera Media Network). This length was not taken into account in the reports I focus on in this research. 'The first feature you will notice in these reports is their unusual length', says Fawzi Bushra, the Senior Producer at Aljazeera and one of the journalists I study their reports in this chapter. Firmly discussing the length of news reports, Bushra responds, during an interview (F.Bushra 2020, personal communication, 9 May), to those he called 'media gatekeepers', whom he says believe in the quantitative aspect of writing news reports, that they consider the reports as merely time blocks, which leads to dealing with very complex issues superficially. He likened this method of television production to 'producing fast foods', which he does not agree with and affirms: 'it is not my way', as he believes that there is no rigid template for the news (F.Bushra, 2020). Here, it appears that Aljazeera, despite the standards it states, does not hesitate to ignore them if necessary, which is what happened in the Egyptian Revolution out of the channel's enthusiasm to support the Revolution.

Fatima Triki, the Senior Producer at Aljazeera and the journalist I study her reports in this chapter, refuses, during an interview (F.Triki 2020, personal communication, 25 March), to use the word 'standards' in the debate over the length of news reports, and prefers to use the term 'approved rules', with the assertion that it is not 'holy rules'. Bushra and Triki's response to this issue shows the extent of freedom that Aljazeera gives to its journalists for the sake of creativity, as well as demonstrating that the thinking of its journalists is consistent with the channel's approach to deviating from the usual and prevailing in the Arab media. Here Bushra explains that the pioneering and dazzling experience of Aljazeera was not just relating to the technical side, that is, its ability to directly transmit the event with a network of correspondents covering the globe, but rather in what this channel created in terms of dealing with the news,

especially political news, which is different from the norms of the Arab media, which did not rid of state control (F.Bushra, 2020). According to Triki, the standards that must be preserved in this context are the accuracy, the honesty in reporting the news, writing in the context of the image, and the objectivity, but not the impartiality in the abstract sense. 'I preserve these standards', she asserts and continues: 'I ask those who criticize to mention if I have ever used a forged image, or have said inaccurate information' (F.Triki, 2020).

Alongside Bushra and Triki's point of view, the Director of Quality and Editorial Standards at Aljazeera Mohammed Dawood's opinion was, perhaps, more firmly. 'Why not?!' he replies, during an interview (M.Dawood 2020, personal communication, 31 March), and clarifies that it is subject to the mood of viewers and the importance of the event, not to rigid templates in a heavily active and wide space such as the media. Here, the reports I discuss in this chapter are distinguished from what Dawood called 'rigid templates', such as those prevalent in the official Arab media, which are characterized by providing direct answers to the five Ws and do not go further than that of the information related to the news. Dawood continues and wonders: 'So, what gives Western channels the right to create new forms such as the Walk & Talk report, for example, and prevents Aljazeera from creating new forms of press coverage and news stories?!' (M.Dawood, 2020).

### **6.2.2. THE REPORTS' STYLE AND LANGUAGE**

Through studying their style and language, I notice that these reports are closer to being considered as very short documentaries based on literary texts, rather than considering them as ordinary news reports. The literary language depends on using the aesthetics of language, like metaphors, Qur'anic phrases, Arab poetry phrases to deepen the meanings in the text, which affect the Arab viewers' emotions, who have deep ties to religion and Arabic literature, instead of using simple direct declarative sentences. In my view, this literary language can have a great impact on the public and their attitudes towards the Revolution and its details. In line with my opinion, the researcher Raya Al Kharusi concluded, in her study of the language of some of Aljazeera programs, that the use of 'religion as a linguistic component typically has a strong impact on Arab audiences, since religious sources such as the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) are widely believed and followed by the people' (Al Kharusi, 2016. p.133). Triki

(2020) acknowledges the importance of the difference the channel has made through these reports' language:

There is an important thing; what Aljazeera did that it changed. You must know your audience, not only that the channel knows its audience politically, this matter has to do with ethnology and anthropology, the Arab audience is not the western audience, the word affects the Arab audience, speech is an important thing for them. Why Aljazeera has made a change? Because it laid down new rules, temple guards may not like it. You are making a news story, not news.

What Triki says here is straightforward and true regarding the Arab audience, who are generally influenced by rhetoric and emotional speeches. Emotion plays an important role in Arab choices and behaviour. You can only recite a poem or come up with a historical event, and eyes fill with tears. This is confirmed by what the Professor of Political Discourse at the Sorbonne University Mohamed Hunaid (2020) refers to in his article *The Arabs are Emotional Peoples* about the emotional classification of Arab peoples as an entry point for reading the social transformations that the region has known. Hunaid (2020) states that it cannot be overlooked that the spark of the Arab Spring was an emotional spark and could only be so, as the psychological or emotional component was the main reason behind the changes and interactions that the region is experiencing today on various levels. Thus, 'speeches of emotional charging, psychological mobilization, the rhetoric of nationalism, pan-Arabism, reactionary and imperialist warfare address a whole stage of psychological domestication of societies' (Hunaid, 2020). Emphasizing, Journalist Hala Al-Nasser argues that no human being is led by his passion like the Arab person, because since his birth he has been raised to use his heart more than his mind. Al-Nasser explains: 'the Arab person cannot be patient in using his mind without his passion, no matter what he claims to be' (Al-Nasser, 2017). She asserts that if a simple review of the decisions of some Arab politicians in the modern era is made, we will find that they are based on their emotional motives (Al-Nasser, 2017). In the same context, the writer and politician Shehada Abu Bakr describes emotion as 'a first step towards the Arab mind' (Abu Bakr, 2014). Abu Bakr states that the Arab, by nature, and according to his social environment, and the customs and traditions that fall within it, is classified as having intense emotion. 'Therefore, the path to his mind must begin with his emotion, as a means of preparing him to respond and be influenced by what he hears and sees', thus, the more the other party, such as media outlet, is creative in eliciting emotions, the more it succeeds in

inducing the Arab to it, his idea, his decision, and what he wants (Abu Bakr, 2014). This makes the Arab viewer accept Aljazeera's reports, which I discuss here, as although their duration is longer than the usual news reports, their smooth narration of ideas and their literary language different from the reporting language attract viewers to the 'news story' and not to the news. This is what makes these reports, in my opinion, one of the most important tools of Aljazeera in approving its approach and view on the issues and events covered in the reports.

In this regard, Mostefa Souag, the Director-General of Aljazeera, the news director at the time of the Revolution, notes, during an interview (M.Souag 2020, personal communication, 5 April), that the professional Arabic language that the senior journalists, who wrote these reports, possess enables them to write texts rich in expressions and metaphors to the extent that they appear as literary texts and not informative news texts, 'which makes them appear as though they support the Revolution, incite it, or praise it, while they do not' (M.Souag, 2020). Contrary to what Souag argues, I think that having the skill of writing in professional Arabic should not lead to the use of aesthetic linguistic tools, metaphors, and expressions that make the text of the report a literary text, rather than news report. The news language is supposed to be firm and straightforward so as not to confuse the viewer about the intended meanings of the news report. Thus, for example, it must be clear to the viewer whether the text encourages revolution or is neutral.

As Souag (2020) says, the writers of these reports are not just journalists writing for the photo, but rather, with their deep political culture, they are masters of the Arabic language. It is this mastery of language that makes them write in a prose-like style and using the aesthetics of language, rather than simple direct declarative sentences (M.Souag, 2020). Explaining this writing style, Bushra says that writing for television is not intended to be a creative work, as it is not a novel, poetry, or story, nor any other genre of literary writing, since it is related to reality in persons, facts, time, and place. However, he clarifies; journalistic writing requires that it be in the form of a narration that carries an artistic value beyond the news (F.Bushra, 2020).

The importance of the literary language's impact on the viewer lies in that it indirectly carries Aljazeera's opinion, as it delivers the message and information chosen by the

channel while the viewer does not feel in the midst of the metaphorical expressions and literary language that there is an orientation explicitly imposed by the channel on the viewer. The Senior Presenter Mohamed Krichen agrees, during an interview (M.Krichen 2020, personal communication, 23 March), that these reports carry the direction of Aljazeera and that they are almost like a very short documentary, and he adds:

They are editorials or political commentary...It is a different and uncharacteristic style. Some like it and enjoy it, some dislike it and consider it a kind of journalistic exaggeration. It is a political commentary rather than a political report. Preserving the different, opposing or Revolutionary flavour of Aljazeera. This is the flavour that comes out of these reports.

What Krichen calls flavour, Triki describes it as the 'spirit' that distinguishes her reports and makes people accept them. According to Triki, this spirit resulted from the fact that the language of these reports differs from others, and that it speaks with the voice of people and about them, professionally (F.Triki, 2020).

### **6.2.3. THE REPORTS' OBJECTIVITY**

The difference in the style of these reports is not limited to its length and language aspects. Aljazeera contradicted its editorial standards regarding neutrality, which is based on the principle that the reporter should not drop his opinion on his report, and should avoid judgment and expressing sympathy or disgust. For the sake of its report goals, which are mentioned in the editorial standards document, to 'establish the credibility of the account of what happened', and 'answer the viewer's questions about the event', Aljazeera bypassed some of its editorial standards, which I point out here, and will be detailed later in this chapter by studying each report separately.

In the context of limitation of opinion in these reports to one opinion, I agree with Abdelmoula's description of these reports' style, as he calls them 'opinion-news reports'. He explains that the structure of these reports 'has nothing to do with framing techniques or hidden bias', and confirms that they 'show unqualified support for the protest movements while criticizing governments unreservedly' (Abdelmoula, 2012. p.280). Souag (2020) disagrees with this point of view altogether. He stresses that professional journalism is a reflection of reality, and in response to the saying that they are 'opinion reports' he argues:

Aljazeera has no say in these matters. So to be honest, we did not take a clear or covert attitude towards what was going on, but the professional media who suffered from the authorities' repression of the media felt that these revolutions gave them a new outlet to express freely about what was happening without fear or apprehension. The issue went beyond the issue of personal opinion to the issue of the professional attitude towards a movement that might liberate the Arab media from the repression it is experiencing.

Here, Souag's words confirm what I discussed earlier that enthusiasm was one of the factors that led to producing the coverage of the Egyptian Revolution on Aljazeera in this way. The enthusiasm for the freedoms that the channel had previously advocated, it reaped its fruits in the Revolution stage by liberating the Arab media from oppression. In the same direction, discussing the professional attitude, Bushra (2020) says that the most important duty of a journalist is to have a critical attitude towards the news. He clarifies that what he means by the critical stance is that the journalist's vision which he/she produces enables him to tell the story as a speech expressing a position:

Because every news has a discourse hidden under it, and the news is in its essence a conflict of discourses that are hidden behind the images. A journalist succeeds in his profession as much as he succeeds in removing those masks and seeing things for what they are.

Triki (2020) also agrees that the journalist should have his opinion and position, and confirms that the most important journalists in the world used to devote themselves to issues, and they had an opinion. On her attitude regarding expressing her opinion in her reports, Triki says that she stands with the victim, noting that 'Aljazeera's slogan is that it is with the human' (F.Triki, 2020).

Here the issue of opinion in the report becomes complicated since the writer's personal opinion is mixed with the revolutionary situation, as appears from Souag's view. On the other hand, the writer's opinion is mixed with that of the channel, as Triki mentions. The complexity lies in the fact that this mixing deepens the constant question of whether the media is reporting and covering the news, or whether it expresses the channel's institutional ideology. It appears from this discussion that because the ideology of Aljazeera, which is based on being biased toward the people, corresponded with the demands of the Revolution, these reports appeared in this spirit and language defending the Revolution and against the regime. Confirming, Bushra says: 'News



images are mostly not created innocently. Rather, they are created as a visual narrative intended to shape public opinion through news' (F.Bushra, 2020). Bushra's point of view seems clearer in justifying the fact that the literary report presents one opinion. Bushra states that news is not created innocently, which means that news is not produced without an ideology, as it conveys the news from the channel's point of view in order to form a public opinion and a reaction in a specific direction, which is consistent with what I argue in this research.

The audience receives these reports' messages easily, as Shahin indicates that when the viewers listen to the literary report, they understand the writer's intention and his position towards the event easily. Shaheen explains that the aim of these reports is very clear because of the unity of their ideas and their narrative line, without the existence of other opinions that contradict the author's opinion (2019, p.409). The goal of these reports becomes clearer at the end; as the writer concludes his/her report with a sentence that summarizes the goal and the message from the whole report. However, shaping public opinion cannot be achieved immediately after a news report. But entrenching the opinion presented in these reports in the minds of viewers may be achieved by broadcasting them repeatedly, which I argue that Aljazeera has actually done.

#### **6.2.4 THE REPETITION OF REPORTS**

Besides the unusual length of these reports and literary language, the number of these reports' rebroadcasting times is noticeable. Aljazeera's editorial standards and quality control document states that the maximum rebroadcasting times of the in-house report is five times, taking into account the average number of the bulletins between the main bulletins (this morning, mid-point, and the harvest). It is also mentioned that an exception from this limit of rebroadcasting can be made for the news reports which depend on exclusive pictures that the channel get and produce inside the newsroom to ensure a higher number of viewings. But what I notice through my study of the archive is that Aljazeera excluded from this limit of rebroadcasting some reports, which I analyse in this chapter, even though they are in-house reports and depend visually on archival videos, and poor quality videos were taken by protesters and posted on social media.

Basically, the intensity of repetition would ensure that the report reaches the largest number of viewers, but in the case of these reports, the matter goes beyond the issue of broad access, to entrenching the content of the report in the minds, including the opinion it contains, and the emotions it raises. About repetition, Alkhattinah and Alnawaisa (2011) say in their book *Social Psychology* that the repetition method is a preferred way to convince the audience of the correctness of what the channels narrate (p.290), and this is what the channels do in marketing advertisements, as the advertisement does not convince the consumer from the first time, but rather with repeating the message on our minds, we are convinced of the advertised product. During the period of the Egyptian Revolution, the public in the Arab world used to watch television for long hours to follow the news. The viewer sees the report differently for the first time than when he/she sees it for the second or third time, not because the report changes, but because, as I see it, it is a deep and complex report, which gives it the ability to affect somewhat differently each time it is broadcast, as if it is revealing to the viewer more content in every-time. Because the language of these reports is literary, as it is not the usual language in the reports, some literary expressions first attract the viewer's attention, then he/she is influenced by expressions that show the injustice that people are subjected to, as well as the expressions that evoke the courageous spirit of resistance and revolution. Then, every time the viewer sees the same report he/she pays attention to more catchy literary expressions, while at the same time deepening his/her emotions affected by sympathy for the oppressed and confirming his/her desire for revolution.

Another feature in which these reports differ from other popular news reports is that the reports' writers do not appear at the end of the report in front of the camera. Viewers have never seen Triki or Bushra. Triki (2020) comments:

The most important thing that Aljazeera has made, which is one of the few in the world, is that it has journalists who do not appear on the screen and have much more influence than those who appear on the screen. This indicates that the content is high, especially since television is a visual means, so this matter is credit for it, and it gives an indication of how high is its content, and that the awareness of our peoples is not as what we think.

In my analysis of these reports, their language, style and themes, I focus on the emotions they provoke. The role of emotions in news media framing effects is significant when considering political topics, mainly when covering events that are

traditionally accompanied by a high level of emotive language in the press and this is hot public debates (Ramasubramanian, 2010). Emotional language is used to enhance powers of persuasion; according to a research article published by Rocklage et al: 'the intent to persuade shifts individuals' language toward greater emotionality, does so relatively spontaneously, and occurs even when emotion may be detrimental to persuasion' (Rocklage et al, 2018. p.758). Thus, what shows the importance of these reports as one of Aljazeera's tools in spreading and promoting its political messages is that each of the elements I have discussed that distinguish these reports from others is capable of creating an emotional impact on the viewer. Which magnifies their impact when they gather in a long report, with literary language rich in linguistic expressions and aesthetics, presents single opinion, and is repeated in excess of the usual throughout the day.

By examining the differences that characterize these reports, it becomes clear to what extent Aljazeera has changed and innovated in the news formats. The fact that this difference from the usual news reports lies in basic elements makes it, in my opinion, a fundamental change in the way the news is presented. Understanding this issue enables us to realize how Aljazeera's neglecting of journalistic editorial standards, and showing its support for the demonstrators and the Revolution appears through its news report.

### **6.3. NEWS REPORTS ANALYSIS**

In this section, I analyse four reports written by Fawzi Bushra, and one written by Fatima Triki. Besides analysing these reports, I have analysed one report, written by Mazen Ibrahim, which although I do not consider to be among the group that I discuss in this chapter, studying it makes the difference clear between the style of the usual report and the other style. And to make that difference even clearer, I start with Ibrahim's report. Triki and Bushra's reports followed in order by date.

Since these reports express Aljazeera's viewpoint of the Revolution, it is important to read and analyse them through thematic and ethnographic analysis, with a view to highlighting the emotional impact of each report. Because every report deals with a stage of the Revolution, the ethnographic analysis is essential to clarify Aljazeera's approach regarding the events, with finding the themes on which each report is based. By reading these reports' explicit and hidden messages, which are directed to viewers in

general, and the revolutionaries in particular, this chapter provides a clearer vision of Aljazeera's ideological postures that enhances the understanding of its coverage role during the Revolution through its reports, which occupy an important part of its coverage.

### **6.3.1. MAZEN IBRAHIM REPORT - 8 FEBRUARY 2011**

In view of the events of the fifteenth day of the Revolution, this day, 8 February 2011, witnessed 'the largest demonstrations, and the scope of the protests expanded vertically and horizontally throughout Egypt and included sectors and levels that had not been reached before', as Aljazeera stated. That day, in introducing the report I discuss here, the presenter indicated that it addresses the 'police state' in Egypt. The report was written by Mazen Ibrahim, a journalist for Aljazeera, whose name is not as well-known as the two senior journalists, Bushra and Triki, in the field of TV reports. My choice to study this report comes from the standpoint of clarifying the difference between the style of the usual news report and the literary reports.

Ibrahim's feature report departed from the literary language in which Bushra and Triki's reports are distinguished. While the two, Bushra and Triki, rely on sophisticated literary language, and logical inferences to persuade the viewer, Ibrahim relies on the images and the human stories using a simple language. Thus, watching Bushra and Triki's reports requires more auditory focus, while the painful images in Ibrahim's report, accompanied by descriptions of repression and injustice were capable of arousing deep feelings among the viewers, even if they do not focus on the text of the report. Hence, analysing this report, along with Triki and Bushra's reports, makes the difference clearer between literary reports and news reports, and that despite the difference in style and language, the channel's endeavour to convince the viewer of the content is present in all reports, even if the tools of persuasion differ.

At the beginning of the report, it emphasises the point that most of Aljazeera's reports during the eighteen days of the Revolution had mentioned; the Egyptians have succeeded in 'breaking the wall of fear' (Aljazeera, 8 February 2011). This courage, Ibrahim sees that it revealed the Egyptian security authorities' abuse of citizens, which is the subject addressed in the report. In an attempt to exploit all information that criminalizes the regime, Ibrahim says in the report: 'For many, the regime is a

suppression apparatus supported by the police forces, central security, and state security services, reinforced by thugs’.

Ibrahim recounted the human stories that highlight the extent of the injustice that violated the Egyptians’ freedom. He begins with the story of Khaled Saeed, whose incident sparked the Revolution and was called the ‘Icon of the January Revolution’. Saeed's photo appeared, followed by a picture of his face after he was severely beaten. Followed by snapshots of torture of another person screaming in panic, then a video of a crying woman being tortured by hanging upside down, and another video of a person being continuously slapped in the face by a security man, while the security man’s colleagues were laughing. All of these videos were a series of scenes that cannot go unnoticed in front of the viewer, but rather leave a sad impact. In *Media and Emotion* Werner Wirth and Holger Schramm points out that ‘scenes of violence evoke emotional reactions in spectators’ that cause anger and disgust when these scenes are with deliberate violence as in the violation of human rights (Wirth & Schramm, 2005. p.16). For me, I could not forget these painful scenes since I saw them in this report ten years ago. While Ibrahim continued to emphasize the policy of ‘silencing the voices’ and ‘obstructing the implementation of judicial rulings’ and violations more scenes of security forces' brutal crackdown on citizens in the streets and scenes of security vehicles chasing the crowds to disperse them continued.

Over four minutes, Ibrahim reminded the viewers that the Egyptian security authorities used various forms of physical and psychological torture to suppress citizens, especially since the videos of torture cases inside prisons that appeared in the report were taken by the security men who carried out the torture, which depicts the extent to which these authorities are proud of their violations. In fuelling feelings, Ibrahim said that ‘for many years, oppression has intensified,’ the security services permitted prohibitions and created a climate of terror through stories of torture and what was happening in prisons, stressing that the security services have become a symbol of sadism.

After this intense dose of painful scenes of torture, this report leaves no room for forgiveness in the mind of the viewer towards the regime. Thus, Aljazeera’s decision to broadcast this report at this time, even though its content, the videos, or talk about the regime’s brutality, was old, was a right decision if the channel wanted to remind the

people and the revolutionaries of the painful reality that they revolted against so that they can stand firm on this day that witnessed an expansion of the Revolution, and not be deceived by the regime's attempts to reach solutions that are less than overthrowing the regime.

### **6.3.2. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 28 JANUARY 2011**

On the fourth day of the Egyptian Revolution, the most important since the beginning of the demonstrations, as it resolved the issue of the continuation of the Revolution and distinguished it from the previous protests during the regime's era, Aljazeera did not delay declaring its position by one of its most important tools in expressing its positions towards events openly and eloquently. In studying Aljazeera's news reports, it is noted that the channel chooses Bushra to make a report in the case of the most significant events, either in MENA or internationally. A number of Aljazeera staff confirms that the channel relies on Bushra and Triki reports in cases of major events (K.Benguenna, M.Krichen, 2020), and this was the case on *Friday of Rage*.

Aljazeera's Sudanese senior journalist, known in Arab media as 'the emperor of the televised reports' (Karar, 2017), attracts the audience attention to his reports with its sophisticated literary language that shows his skills and knowledge. Bushra explains his approach in writing news reports that in the beginning he had an aversion to the way television news is written, as it superficially deals with the image, and does not go beyond researching the profound meanings of the images. 'The image is part of reality, not all of it. It is a part of it that indicates it,' Bushra (2020) says, adding that he spent time training himself to see the news in which the image is a hint of reality. He confirms that he cared, throughout his years of work, to search deep into the meanings of images, and to renew the language of television journalism (F.Bushra, 2020).

In an article discusses four news reports written by Bushra during Arab revolutions, Mahmoud M. Galander indicates: 'Bushra's eloquence and deep voice attracted attention and popularized the style during the Arab spring' (2013. p.11). Both Bushra's choice of words and tone of voice became a brand that Aljazeera uses to lead the audience to realize the importance of the event. About the brand or what he calls the 'doctrine', Bushra says that he created his distinctive style and never abandoned it, until it had followers and admirers. He explains that there are those who were not satisfied

with his style who were guarding their professions as if they were guarding doctrines they believed in, with a fervour no less than that of the believers, while he was a 'great heretic' in this context (F.Bushra, 2020).

Bushra, as he does in all the news report he writes, uses literary style. He usually summarises events in a storytelling way and doesn't provide any new news, but rather a rhetoric version of the events, which demonstrates that Aljazeera aims through such reports to loudly points out its position on the events. Bushra discusses the issue of the reporter's position on the news, explaining that for the accuracy, news agencies are a resource that every journalist returns to, then each person addresses the news with the knowledge he/she got, the journalistic sensitivity he/she developed by training, and with his/her ability to express, inform and influence. In this, Bushra sees that 'the same photos are available to all televisions, but they live a different life in each channel, according to the available treatment and the ability to access the essence of its news' (F.Bushra, 2020).

The events of this day, 28 January 2011, were pivotal; the Egyptian authorities cut off the internet and text messages service and had deployed a special counter-terrorism force around Cairo at strategic points, while the revolutionaries were preparing again for demonstrations after Friday prayers. Clashes took place between demonstrators and security forces across the country, resulting in hundreds of injuries, and 11 civilians were killed in Suez. Several police stations were burned in Cairo and the governorates, and the headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party was burned, in addition to destroying several other offices of the party. In the afternoon, the Egyptian army forces began to appear in the streets, and a curfew was declared (BBC News, 2011).

During that day, Aljazeera rebroadcast a feature report by Bushra. In my analysis, I see that it was a summary of events, without going into depth on these events and providing any details. like all Bushra's reports, it was a literary report, and carried in its phrases, in four minutes, two themes: motivation, and alerting. Thus, the report includes the most important messages that the revolutionaries might need on a stressful day like that; so that they will not surrender, nor be deceived by the regime, especially since Bushra's reports, even if they talk about injustice, it does not carry any expression of weakness. On the contrary, his reports' language is full of strength that raises a sense of courage.

For example, he describes in 28<sup>th</sup> January report how brave are the Egyptians in the Revolution to the extent that they do not worry to die.

Bushra begins the report by linking the Tunisian revolution, which ended on January 14, 2011, and the Egyptian Revolution, which had just started. In this link, Bushra enumerates the similarities between the two, which directs the viewer to optimism towards the Egyptian Revolution of what the Tunisian revolution ended with. The first element of this link between the two revolutions is the element of surprise, as Bushra mentions at the beginning of the report that the Egyptians' demonstrations were not expected, just as in the Tunisian case. Bushra says in the report: 'The Egyptian street surprised the observers and analysts, its government and their president' (Aljazeera, 28 January 2011). Such a reference would support the demonstrators as if Bushra was telling them that you have broken the stereotype of the Egyptians surrender, which encourages them not to return to their previous silence. Bushra (2020) argues regarding the channel's role in this context:

Aljazeera was not a platform to incite the Revolution, but what Aljazeera did, as it is a unique and unprecedented media phenomenon in its way of dealing specifically with the Arab political issues, is that it carried out a process of education and enlightenment in the reality of the Arab situation., in a region whose countries' fate and issues are similar, and which suffers from the lack of democracy and good governance. Aljazeera has allowed over the years the Arab public to stand on much of what was not available to know on the official televisions linked to the Arab regimes.

Here, Bushra's words confirm Aljazeera's role in satisfying the Arab public' needs, through what he called 'a process of education and enlightenment', which created the channel's credibility with its audience, especially the Egyptian audience to whom the channel provided what the Egyptian official media did not provide in terms of knowledge. Thus, the ability of the messages directed by Aljazeera, through its reports, to influence is clear and understandable.

Returning to the report, the second linkage element, according to Bushra, is that the two revolutions exceeded previous demands regarding 'bread' to demand the departure of the regime. Here, Bushra reminds that both Tunisia and Egypt had witnessed demonstration over a rise in the price of bread, in Egypt in 1977, and in Tunisia in 1984. In this, Bushra affirms the will of the Egyptian people, and raises more optimism



and determination, as he says that 'Mubarak's dream to bequeath his rule to his son is about to end because of the Revolution' (Aljazeera, 28 January 2011). Thus, Bushra predicted at an early stage of the Revolution the end of Mubarak's rule and the failure of his plans to bequeath his rule to his son.

The aforementioned was in the context of motivating the revolutionaries that appeared in the report. On the other hand, not only did Bushra reinforce the positive image that encourages the demonstrators not to retreat, but also warns the public to be aware of some points, so do not be deceived. He does this by displaying the negative image of the regime, in two elements: President Mubarak and the security forces. Bushra alerts the public that the Egyptian security forces were not on the side of the demonstrators, and were not 'in the service of the people,' as they claim in their vision. He shows that it was quite the opposite, as a tool of repression in the case when the people do not respond to the will of the ruler. It is striking to note that Bushra's description of the security forces' repression of the demonstrators is accompanied by a scene showing five men beating one man, all of whom do not wear the uniform of the security forces, as they all appear to be civilians (see below *image 23*). The viewer here will see this scene of pain and a sense of injustice, linked to the description of the security forces violence against the citizens. While it cannot be confirmed whether the five men are supporters of the regime or demonstrators, and whether the abused man is one of the demonstrators or supporters of the regime.



*Image 23: Fawzi Bushra Report, 28 January 2011*

In the second element of the negative warning image that Bushra draws, he talks about President Mubarak in a language that incites against him, along with the tone of mockery. Bushra reminds the viewer that 'Mubarak remains silent', adding sarcastically: 'As if the events that were broadcast on television are not in Egypt' (Aljazeera, 28 January 2011). Bushra stresses reminding the viewer of Mubarak's silence, saying that Mubarak 'has not yet said to his people that he understood' (Aljazeera, 28 January 2011) as former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had said. He continues his implicit incitement against Mubarak and concludes the report by saying that late understanding will bring Mubarak to what he cannot do anything towards. Thus, on the one hand, Bushra seems to be warning Mubarak that his silence would cause him loss, and on the other hand, he incites the public to respond to this silence.

### **6.3.3. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 31 JANUARY 2011**

On the seventh day of the Revolution, through Bushra's report, the channel shows its rejection of the new cabinet that President Mubarak formed in an attempt to silence the demonstrations. Bushra begins the report with a certain expectation that this cabinet will fail and that it will not satisfy the Egyptian people, saying it will be the 'shortest-lived' government (Aljazeera, 31 January 2011). In this intro, Bushra frames the issue of the government's failure, and warns that it would not be able to save Mubarak's rule. Bushra does this framing by making a comparison that notifies the viewers that the regime will not be able to withstand the demands, whatever it does; he describes the regime as 'reeling' in the face of the 'public outrage' (Aljazeera, 31 January 2011). This comparison would give the rebels a determination to get rid of the regime even more vigorously, as I believe that in conflicts, strength, and steadfastness increase under confidence more than it increases due to fear.

The two main themes in the report are alert and frustration. In his second report on the Revolution, and just two days after his first report on it, Bushra continues to alert the people of the Revolution to stay vigilant so that the regime does not deceive them. The most prominent point Bushra alerts about is the main reason that will lead to the failure of the government in reform, which is that the new cabinet including 18 ministers from the previous government, out of 32 ministers. Bushra continues his alert to the audience to make the Egyptian viewers and revolutionaries reach more conviction to reject this

government, as he explains that the ministries whose ministers have not changed are the Ministry of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Petroleum, Media, Justice, Higher Education, and the Workforce, all of which are ministries that Bushra says are 'the pillars of the old regime' (Aljazeera, 31 January 2011). It is noteworthy here that Bushra called the regime the 'old', although the regime was still in place, and it has not yet left to be old. Through his use of language, Bushra gives viewers a sense of confidence that this regime will inevitably leave.

On the other hand, while Bushra gives confidence to the revolutionaries, he includes the report with a high dose of frustration directed against the new cabinet, which would increase the regime's anxiety and try to weaken it in the minds of viewers. Bushra's messages of frustration to the government appear repeatedly throughout the report. He describes the role Mubarak hopes the new cabinet to play as an 'impossible mission' (Aljazeera, 31 January 2011), especially as it was formed under pressure and without focus. Bushra also reminds that the new government is one of the means to curb change in the Egyptian street, then he returns to remind the viewers that it will fail in this because it does not find acceptance.

Once again, Bushra makes a comparison between the regime and the revolutionaries, as he states that Egypt is pulled in two directions. On the one hand, thousands are becoming more determined and united despite their different religions and political orientations, coming from all Egyptian cities and villages and making sacrifices. On the other side, Mubarak and his government, whom the people no longer believe. As in the previous comparison, Bushra's language and tone show that success is settled in favour of the Revolution, while the regime will fail quickly. This confidence in the tone of the report gives the revolutionaries a greater ability to confront, as the regime appears weak and extremely easy to defeat.

Bushra includes several statements from Mubarak's speeches, which appear as a challenge to Mubarak, and an affirmation of his deception of his people, as Bushra puts these phrases in the context that shows that Mubarak's actual actions with his people contradict what he stated in his speeches. For example, Mubarak's saying: 'I sided and will always be biased towards the poor people of my people' (Aljazeera, 31 January 2011), Bushra preceded it by mentioning that among the revolutionaries there are poor citizens who did not believe Mubarak's statements, but they believed those who called

for the Revolution and said that the reform of Egypt does not happen except with the departure of Mubarak.

Bushra ends the report with a clear challenge to Mubarak, as he includes part of Mubarak's latest speech, where he talked about the importance of Egypt's youth to make the future of Egypt, accompanied by a scene of the funeral of one of those killed in the demonstrations. This link between Mubarak's statement and scenes that contradict what he said would remind the viewers and prove to them that Mubarak is contradicting himself and lying to his people, as he rejects the revolution of these young people and kills the youth whom he claimed will make the country's future.

#### **6.3.4. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT – 6 FEBRUARY 2011**

With Bushra's report on that day, the number of his reports during the Egyptian Revolution reaches three, which has never happened before during the channel's coverage of any important event. As I explained previously, it appears through the study of the coverage that Aljazeera broadcasts Bushra's reports on the critical events, which would alert the viewer to the importance of the event and entrench it in her/his mind.

Entitled 'Mubarak's Rejection of the Demands of the Popular Revolution,' Bushra presents in this report a summary of the Revolution's events. While he focuses in his first report in the Revolution on the topic of linking the Egyptian Revolution to the Tunisian, and focuses in the second report on the new cabinet, there is no overriding topic in the February 6 report. For five minutes, Bushra moves from one topic to another smoothly and in his literary style, which leads the viewer, after the end of the report, to an emotional state without any new information.

Bushra begins the report by likening President Mubarak to the tyrant Pharaoh through the Quranic style, which Bushra is distinguished for using. Bushra relies in many of his reports on simulating the Quranic style, which succeeds in attracting audience attention, especially that Arab, Muslims in particular, are influenced by the stories of Quran, so they can get the meaning that the speaker intended to say, also they can realise his position toward the event immediately when they hear the verse. Bushra mentions the Quranic verse (Quran, 7:123) in which Pharaoh says, as if Mubarak were saying it: 'Did

you believe in Him before I have given you permission? This is surely a conspiracy you schemed in the city' (Aljazeera, 6 February 2011). With this verse, Bushra was able to convey to the viewer, without the need to say a lot, the amount of control Mubarak has over Egypt for thirty years, this control that reaches the point of controlling the people's ideas and beliefs, as was Pharaoh.

After the introduction, Bushra lists the stages that the Revolution's events have gone through to that day, and here the theme and significance of this report appear. As Bushra divided the stages of Revolution's events based on the response of the regime at each stage, and through this division, Bushra shows the viewer the repeated times that the regime tried to ignore and deny the Revolution, which reinforces the feeling of not giving confidence to the regime. On the other hand, Bushra explains the protesters' response to the regime's offer with the same unchanging response at each stage, demanding the departure of the regime, which confirms to the viewer the stability and steadfastness of the demonstrators against the floundering regime.

By studying Bushra's reports, it appears that the strength of his reports' emotional impact lies in the diversification of the tools he uses to convey his messages to the viewer. In addition to the Quranic style, Bushra makes comparisons, and in this tool itself, he uses several methods, so that ideas and images become more entrenched in the viewer's mind. Bushra reinforces the comparisons through language and tone, as in all of his reports in the Egyptian Revolution; he highlights the aspects that demonstrate the weakness of the regime, while emphasizing the points that demonstrate the determination and strength of the demonstrators. In this report, it is clear from Bushra's expressive tone and vocabulary that the revolutionaries are the strong party in the Revolution conflict, not Mubarak and his regime. Among the comparisons that Bushra presents in this report is the one between the regime's methods and the revolutionaries' methods of confrontation. He mentions that when the revolutionaries faced the regime through Facebook, the regime confronted them with the attack of thugs with mules and camels, reminding the revolutionaries of the barbarism of the regime, which would reinforce their rejection of dialogue with the government, as this was the regime's offer at the time.

As he did in previous reports, Bushra includes the report with parts of Mubarak's speeches, emphasizing Mubarak's deception of his people, since what Mubarak said in these speeches contradicts what he actually does. At the end of the report, digging in history, Bushra uses an interview with Mubarak, in which he had advised the late Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to resign to save Iraq and the Iraqis. In response to Mubarak's advice, Bushra wonders, while in the background the voices of the protesters chanting the Egyptian national anthem: 'Who might offer advice to Mubarak?' (Aljazeera, 6 February 2011). He means like the one Mubarak gave one day to Saddam. Thus, Bushra confirms the state of denial that the regime experiences, while the voice of the people is loud. By likening Mubarak to the Pharaoh at the beginning of the report, and to Saddam Hussein at the end, Bushra delivers to the viewers a message that confirms Mubarak's departure anyway.

### **6.3.5. FATIMA TRIKI REPORT – 6 FEBRUARY 2011**

I have always considered Triki's reports, besides Bushra's reports, as Aljazeera's voice to announce its position towards the events when any crises deepen. Triki's reports are similar to Bushra's in its literary language, and that they do not offer anything new in terms of news, but rather provide Aljazeera's vision and position quite frankly. Their reports differ from each other in that Bushra's summary reports deal with various events in the same report, while each Triki report highlights a specific event, dividing it into accurate details, and criticizing it.

On the thirteenth day of the Revolution, the discussions held by Vice President Omar Suleiman with representatives of the opposition parties emerged as a prominent event was called a 'dialogue'. Triki addressed these discussions in her report that day, through which Aljazeera seemed to seek to abort this dialogue before imposing its presence on the Revolution. From the first moments of the four-minute report, the channel's position rejecting this dialogue had emerged. Throughout the report, Triki gradually listed the points that guided the viewer to see the negative image of that dialogue. She started the report by drawing two scenes on the mind of the viewer, considering them contradictory: the 'millionth crowd' that prayed for the victims of the Revolution, and dialogue launched by the Egyptian authority with the opposition, which showed that the channel supported the first scene, and alienated from the second scene.

In her criticism of the dialogue, Triki began by criticizing the choice of the term 'dialogue', pointing out that the word dialogue indicates that it is taking place between two parties, differing on a matter, but they agree on the substance, which she did not see as the case in Egypt at that time. Here Triki explained that the situation in Egypt is that 'the ruled revolts to remove the ruler, and remove its popular legitimacy, without which constitutional or political legitimacy cannot be achieved,' thus she sought to convince the viewer that there is no place for dialogue in this case. She continued her criticism by discussing the outputs of the dialogue, underestimating these points when she indicated that 'all of them are points that Mubarak himself acknowledged,' in a reminding to the viewer that it was a futile dialogue. Inferring more reasons for refusing dialogue with the Egyptian authority, the report included the record of phone-in with the political activist Nawwara Najim, in which she stated that she did not know the young men who appeared in the dialogue with Omar Suleiman, and that 'the youth of the Revolution who are in the square refuse to negotiate until after the regime's departure' (Aljazeera, 6 February 2011).

In a part of the report, it appeared to be an attempt to whitewash the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in particular, as it despite their appearance in the dialogue; they were the only party that had space in the report to justify their involvement. The report included a record of phone-in with the Brotherhood's spokesperson Mohamed Morsi stating that they do not control the Revolution but are part of it and that they are 'in the square and the dialogue, there is no contradiction between this and that' (Aljazeera, 6 February 2011). It is worth noting that Morsi's intervention was followed by the response of another leader of the Brotherhood, Abdelmoneim Abu Alfotouh, indicating his refusal to negotiate and to participate in the dialogue, which I read as an attempt to form an image that shows the balance of the Brotherhood.

After the inferences that Triki included throughout the report to confirm the rejection of the dialogue, she concluded by saying that 'the government infiltrates the square and wants to drown it with the details of politics' and make the revolutionaries busy with negotiation (Aljazeera, 6 February 2011).

### **6.3.6. FAWZI BUSHRA REPORT - 11 FEBRUARY 2011**

Aljazeera's Arab audience, who live in the Middle East or any other region, either who were relying on Aljazeera to keep updated with news, or those who watched the channel only during the eighteen days of the Egyptian Revolution, or even those who were not interested in the news had watched, or at least heard about, the news report that was aired on Aljazeera on 11 February 2011, the last day of the Egyptian Revolution, and was rebroadcast repeatedly during the following day. The Egyptians in Tahrir Square watched the report while celebrating Mubarak's resignation, as Aljazeera's live coverage of the uprising was broadcasted on giant screens in Tahrir Square (Pintak, 2011). Although this report was broadcast after the Revolution achieved its most important demand, the president's abdication, the significance of the report lies in confirming Aljazeera's position toward the Revolution. The sense of victory that emerged in the report confirmed Aljazeera's ideology, which claims to be the people's channel.

Bushra's report summarizes the events that led to the Revolution in Egypt, from the very recent history and going backwards 30 years; it recalls the period during which Mubarak ruled. According to Bushra (2020), 'The fall Report is a moment of closing, the moment when the curtain falls on a huge and large event. It was in this spirit that I wrote it'. Bushra, in an interview in *Alsharq newspaper*, said that he wrote his 'famous report' a few hours before the announcement of Mubarak's abdication (Alsalman, 2012). Bushra (2020) confirms that, in his imagination, he was seeing 'the fall as if it had already happened'. He adds that even the situation was full of many possibilities, but as for the fall and the end of the regime, 'it was something that could be seen by those who monitor events continuously' (F.Bushra, 2020).

Bushra starts this report with strong significant beginning based on religious connotation; with a very symbolic Quranic verse (Quran, 10:92) describes the tragic fate of the drowned Pharaoh of Egypt the tyrant, Moses' enemy: 'today we will save you in body that you may be to those who succeed you a sign' (Aljazeera, 11 February 2011). This is not the first report Bushra uses the Quranic style, but what is interesting in this report is that Bushra likened Mubarak to Pharaoh in the report that preceded this one. So, This report seems to follow up on a story that Bushra had previously started, which would alert the viewer that the fate of the dictators who tyrannize their peoples



are similar, and this, in turn, will raise fears and anxiety in the hearts of the likes of Mubarak, while encouraging the idea of Revolution in the minds of peoples subject to dictators.

By expressing the sequence of events simply and clearly, the report could keep the audience engaged and interested with footages of the events described. The footages showed people injured in the protests, extreme violence on the part of the security forces, people living in absolute poverty, and when mentioning Mubarak the footage showed him surrounded by his men, bodyguards, and family who kept him away from his people.

The report mentions the Egyptian people's will, suffering, poverty, unemployment, lost dreams, national dignity, and their dreams of prosperity, progress, democracy and freedom, reminding that the Revolution was the people's revolution. Focusing on these aspects alongside footages that shows Egyptians suffering from lack of political freedoms and poverty brought to mind a mixture of sadness and hope, which raised emotions of hate toward the reason behind that suffering; Mubarak's regime.

Bushra is passionate; he is on the people's side telling the story of their suffering, while his deep rich voice announcing how people's will resulted in victory. Bushra's voice carries a large part of the emotional content of his message, which makes the listener motivated and feel that what happened is his/her victory. In the background of Bushra's voice over the report, the listener hears live people's voices in Tahrir square, celebrating Mubarak's departure, the combination that makes the audience closer to the event and closer to feel the emotions that the report is attempting to arise, the euphoria of victory in Egypt and bemoaning the situation of Arab countries in general. The report raised the question in non-Egyptians' minds: If Egypt succeeded in this, why we won't do?

The report includes pivotal events and dates of Egypt's history. 1975 the year President Anwar Sadat appointed Mubarak Vice President of Egypt, the assassination of Sadat in 1981 when Mubarak became the fourth president of Egypt, and the state of emergency was declared, and the constitutional amendments of 2007. No one of these events can be considered a proper development or as an achievement; he only listed bad ones. The

only non-local issue Bushra discusses regarding Egypt policy is the peace Initiative, blockade of the Gaza Strip, that imposed by Israel and Egypt since 2007, and the Egyptian position regarding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in general. In the Arab world, mentioning the Palestinian issue usually creates sympathy; for decades the Palestine-Israel conflict was the Middle East's most prominent and number-one problem, and for the most, the choice of peace with Israel was the leaders' while the majority of the peoples in MENA reject the peace process.

Since the first paragraph of recalling the history, Bushra reiterates mentioning the 30 years of Mubarak's rule five times, to show the magnitude of Egypt's suffering. Bushra compared Mubarak to the pharaoh, who is known in the Middle Eastern culture as a tyrant. He stated clearly that all the presidential elections during Mubarak's rule were rigged, and that Mubarak ruled with political marginalization of the Egyptian people and political parties, and did all in his power to weakening and terrorizing the opposition.

The end of the report is also sharp in raising emotions as the beginning. With Mubarak's statement: 'I am aware of the people's legitimate aspirations, and I know their concerns and their suffering' (Aljazeera, 11 February 2011), Bushra ended the report asking the rest of Arab leaders whether they learn from the lesson of Mubarak's fate, the question that showed Bushra's expectation of the wave of Revolution spread, and encouraged people to revolt.

Without any new news, this report became one of the most significant television news reports in the Arab world, if you say 'Bushra's report of Egyptian Revolution', or if you mention the first sentence in the report 'Today we will save you in body', a high percentage will know what you are talking about immediately. The Principle Presenter Khadija Benguenna (2020) confirms, during an interview (K.Benguenna, personal communication, 24 March):

By talking about sound professional standards, there is certainly a large amount of emotion in these reports, but if we look at these reports in their temporal context at the time with the magnitude of congestion and frenzy in Tahrir Square. I remember that people memorized Fawzi Bushra's last report after the fall of Mubarak very well.

Thus, this report captures the overall import of the Revolution from the perspective of Aljazeera and confirms the channel's position in support of the Revolution.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

By discussing the features that distinguish Bushra and Triki's reports, it becomes clear that Aljazeera has created a fundamental change in the news reports formats. The channel, in some cases, neglects journalistic editorial standards to produce reports that are effective in promoting the channel's political messages and creating emotional impact toward events. Thus, the importance of these reports lies in that each of the features that distinguish them from other reports is capable of creating an emotional impact on the viewer. As a result, their impact would be magnified when these features gather in a long report, with literary language rich in linguistic expressions and aesthetics, presents single opinion, and is repeated in excess of the usual throughout the day.

The reports I study in this chapter are dominated by themes that confirmed to the viewer the weakness of the regime and the futility of any reform action it takes because of this regime's precedents for deceiving the people and persisting in injustice. The narration of the events that stressed the tyranny of the ruler accompanied by footages reflecting people's suffering in all its forms and the demonstrators' voices in the Egyptian streets and Tahrir Square are all elements with conceptual messages would push the public to distrust the regime, and to get rid of it with confidence and determination.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **ALJAZEERA'S POLITICAL EXPERT'S COMMENTARY DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed Aljazeera's reports that were distinguished from other news reports, which highlights an aspect of the difference in the channel's coverage from others during the Revolution. In this chapter, in order to complement the understanding of the channel's role in its coverage of the Revolution, it is also important to study Aljazeera's political experts' commentary on the Egyptian Revolution, specifically the Arab intellectual Azmi Bishara's commentary. Although the channel hosted other political news analysts in its studios during the Revolution, such as Seif Eldin Abdelfattah and others, Bishara's appearance was more regular and intense throughout the day during the eighteen days of the Revolution.

There was, and still is, a lot of talk about Bishara's impact on the Egyptian Revolution and its events through his appearance on Aljazeera. For example, about his memories of the last day of the Revolution, the former presenter in Aljazeera, Ali Aldhafiri says in his book *Between Al-Jazeera and the Revolution* that a delegation from the Egyptian community in Qatar came to the channel, with sweets, and wanted to thank Aljazeera and Professor Azmi Bishara in particular (Aldhafiri, 2012, p.160). This public reaction calls for closer consideration of what made them go to Bishara to thank him. Thus, it requires research into the role he played by providing political commentary and analysis of the Egyptian Revolution on Aljazeera, the role that made the audience determine that he was credited with reaching this stage in the Revolution.

In research based on a survey questionnaire on a sample of 100 Egyptian journalists, politicians and university professors, the researcher Muhammad Aref Abdullah finds that 55% of the respondents agree that 'the role of political analyst Azmi Bishara, while he appeared on Aljazeera continuously during the Egyptian Revolution, went beyond providing political analysis to providing advice and guidance to the revolutionaries'

(Abdullah, 2012, p.117). These views do not go beyond acknowledging the effectiveness of Bishara's role and that he had 'an active role in the Revolution' (Abdullah, 2012), without delving into the content he presented, the themes and the impact of his messages on the general audience, and the Egyptian revolutionaries in particular.

About the three elements in this chapter, Aljazeera, Bishara and the Revolution, Academic Bakhti Albasheer indicates in what may be an exaggeration in the description that the channel needed a thinker like Bishara, since 'he fulfils the desire of Aljazeera to be its hero and its knight as if it was an empty and lost ship in the midst of the Arab revolutions without him' (Albasheer, 2011). Aldhafiri affirms, based on his experience from his interviews with Bishara on Aljazeera, that Bishara played an exceptional role in the Egyptian Revolution, and other revolutions, such as the Tunisian and Syrian revolutions (Aldhafiri, 2012. p.158). Journalist Nader Almatrook considers him the 'thinker of the revolutions', as he is the most prominent in terms of analysing the Arab revolutions and providing them with the necessary intellectual support (2011). All are Individuals' opinions from a general perspective that lack detailed depth of research and based on their political orientations, and their stances towards the different Arab political regimes. While, in this chapter, I will examine the details of Bishara's political commentary at the time of the Egyptian Revolution, by analysing the themes of Bishara's discourse, approach, and emotional impact. All these details I discuss in this chapter of Bishara's political commentary are part of the general content provided by Aljazeera to the Arab viewer during the eighteen days of the Revolution. Therefore, Bishara's thoughts, speech, and stances towards the Egyptian Revolution cannot be separated from the channel's discourse.

To get a clearer and closer picture to understand Bishara's role and the ideas he presented at the time, I rely in my research on analysing the archive, the interviews I conducted with the channel staff, in addition to my long interview with Bishara. Yet before analysing the themes of Bishara's political commentary, I seek to provide a picture that clarifies his ideas and approach.

## **7.2. WHY AZMI BISHARA?**

To understand why Bishara's analysis occupied the largest space of the political commentary on Aljazeera during the Egyptian Revolution, I first focus on knowing who

Bishara is, and what distinguishes his thoughts and approach. Then, the answer to this question explains an important aspect of the research on the role of Aljazeera in the Revolution and demonstrates how Bishara's political commentary influenced the Revolution.

Bishara is an intellectual, politician, political philosopher, researcher and author, and holds a doctorate in philosophy. He is a Palestinian and Israeli citizen, and received Qatari citizenship in 2007. Bishara was the leader and founder of the National Democratic Rally and a former member of the Israeli Knesset in 1996, and subsequently he was re-elected in 1999, 2003 and 2006. He was the most prominent Arab member representing the Palestinians in Israel in Parliament, and he was charged several times with refusing the Jewishness of the state, and for incitement to demonstrate during the Second Intifada (azmibishara.com, 2018). Several attempts were made to remove his parliamentary immunity, as he was accused of 'helping the enemy in times of war', regarding supporting the Lebanese resistance during the 2006 Lebanon War by giving Hezbollah information on strategic locations in Israel that should be attacked with rockets (Ynetnews.com, 2007). Subsequently, Bishara fled Israel in 2007, and submitted his Knesset resignation from the Israeli embassy in Cairo, to settle in Qatar permanently thereafter (The Times of Israel, 2014).

I note that the characteristics that made Bishara's discourse during the Egyptian Revolution distinctive are linked to each other, like a chain; each one is a consequence of another characteristic as well as a cause of another one. Bishara's intellectual approach, knowledge, and the style of his presentation, all are characteristics he has that enabled him to play the role he played on Aljazeera in the Egyptian Revolution.

### **7.2.1. BISHARA'S INTELLECTUAL APPROACH**

In understanding why Bishara's was the suitable person for theorizing, analysing and commenting on the Egyptian Revolution I delve into his intellectual approach. Aldhafiri, who was the presenter who interviewed Bishara the most after the Revolution, acknowledges that 'you can hardly find on television screens a cultured personality with this amount of knowledge and the ability to properly analyse, and this

solidity and faith in the truth and theorizing it without tirelessness or boredom' (2012. p.158).

Bishara has nearly 20 books in Arabic, two books in Hebrew, and one in English, in addition to hundreds of articles published in many periodicals in Arabic, German, Hebrew, and English. Being an intellectual who has practised political work, Bishara's intellectual approach was distinguished in the Arab world, where there is a deficiency in the existence of a similar model that combines the two sides: theorizing in political thought and working in politics, and this made his presence more prominent, and thus enabled him not only to be a theoretician but a contributor and renewer of Arab thought in several political issues, such as Arab nationalism, democracy, freedoms, the Palestinian cause and the Arab countries' resistance to the Israeli occupation.

His influence in the Arab public sphere began to increase since his analysis of the society and the state in Israel, especially during the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, the war on Lebanon in 2006 and the Gaza war in 2009. But in his theorizing through the media, Bishara's influence increased, shortly before the 2011 Arab revolutions, in deepening political concepts among the public through addressing the democratic transformation and citizenship rights, especially since he had established in 2010 the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies in Doha. He realizes that the fastest way to play a useful role in a stage like the revolution is 'the direct word to people on television as they congregate, and not only them but all Arabs as well' as he mentions during an interview (A.Bishara 2020, personal communication, 7 May).

Bishara adopts the concept of Arab nationalism as a cultural identity facing sectarianism, familialism, and others. Arab nationalism is an ideology based on that the Arab people are one nation united by language, culture, history, geography and interests, celebrating the glories of Arab civilization. Bishara focuses on this concept in his political discourse. In his book *On Being Arab in the Present Day*, which includes a collection of his lectures and articles, Bishara sees that Arab nationalism 'is not a bond of blood or race, but rather a group imagined with tools of language and modern means of communication striving to become a sovereign nation' (Bishara, 2009. p.17).

As for theorizing about democracy and freedoms, Bishara has presented democratic discourse since the end of the 1990s. This can be seen in his books in which he promoted the idea of citizens' states, where the task of democracy is to raise the issue of

the democratic system of governance alongside educating on the values of democracy and not waiting for the spread of democratic culture. In Bishara's book *On the Democratic Choice ... Critical Studies* (2001), he seeks to contribute to the debate on a number of issues related to calling for democracy as a viable choice for Arab society, in light of what Bishara sees as a failed experience with authoritarian regimes in most Arab countries. In his book *On the Arab Question: An Introduction to an Arab Democratic Statement* (2007), Bishara aims to contribute to the theories of democratic transformation through criticism, questioning the concepts of these theories, explaining its internal contradictions, its theoretical and explanatory limits, and trying to produce Arab thinking of the issue of democratization in the Arab world. The importance of the issue of democracy and its primacy to the issues that Bishara devoted his intellectual discourse to, appears in his saying that: 'the best expression of the will of the nation is democracy, and the other side of the nation's sovereignty is the principle of equal citizenship, citizenship rights, and social rights, such as medical insurance, free education, and worker rights, are part of the nation-building process' (2009, p.14).

The intellectual content presented by Bishara, which focuses on advocating for democracy, was in many cases a reference for change on which the protesters relied in analysing the situations against which they revolted (Gilad, 2011). Journalist and writer Hussein Gilad notes that Bishara's discourse dealing with public affairs was mixed with the intellectual revolution against regimes that see any critical analysis as an incitement against their sovereignty. The call for change, which resulted in revolutions in the Arab world, appears in Bishara's intellectual approach, linked to the general affairs and issues he discussed. On the concept of revolutions, Bishara clarified (2020) that the revolutions that have occurred in the world since 1789 are revolutions due to the presence of structural factors, crises, and the inability of a regime to carry out reforms in a timely manner, an accumulation of anger and resentment, which he calls 'the emergence of a revolutionary situation', and defines it as follows:

The old regime can no longer rule by the old methods, and the people are no longer willing to tolerate staying under the old methods, and this situation arises as a result of economic tensions or political crises, and sometimes it arises even in conditions of economic prosperity or economic recovery that lead people to dare to go out and demand more.

Since the beginning of the Arab revolutions, Bishara started a research project that accompanies the revolutions in succession, leading to the volume of books that are a



documentary reference for the Arab Spring revolutions; understanding and theorizing the revolutions. Bishara's books in this regard were divided into two contexts, one concerned with the political thought of revolutions, the book *On Revolution and the Possibility of Revolution* falls within this context. As for the second context, Bishara is interested in studying Arab revolutionary models, such as the books: *The Egyptian Revolution*, *The Glorious Tunisian Revolution*, and *Syria: The Path of Pain to Freedom*. The three books on the Arab revolutions provided a holistic context for the revolutionary situation that each book reviews. These books brought together different social sciences, such as economics, political science, history, and sociology. Bishara points out that his book on the Tunisian revolution was the first experience, and then the methodology developed gradually after each research, so the methodology matured more in the book on the Syrian revolution, then in his book on the Egyptian Revolution. In the introduction to the book, *The Egyptian Revolution*, Bishara mentions what shows his approach to analysing political events and critical thinking, as well as how deeply he has gone into Egyptian history. Bishara (2016) says:

It is not possible to start studying and preparing for the Egyptian on January 25, 2011, not even from the rigged 2010 elections, or with the killing of Khaled Saeed, as foreign journalists sometimes do. In researching the Egyptian Revolution, it is not sufficient to diagnose a 'cause' here and another there, or a specific event. Rather, it is supposed to address its historical backgrounds and then move to the formation of the historical actors and the emergence of the revolutionary situation.

Bishara describes his book on the Egyptian Revolution as a 'research on the revolution itself, at the level of the macro (the comprehensive picture) and the micro (the detailed or microscopic image)' (Bishara, 2016), which, in my opinion, also characterized the political commentary that Bishara presented during the Egyptian Revolution on Aljazeera, as he diversified during his analysis of the daily events of the Revolution between delving into the details of the events of the Revolution and the demonstrations and its repercussions and developments, raising awareness of the regime's position and actions towards the Revolution, clarifying the international position, in addition to shedding light on stations in the modern history of the Egyptian state and the history of democratic transitions in the world, and through all the above, he presented his vision of the expectations about the regime and the Western countries, and the scenarios that he directed to the revolutionaries.

Likewise, Bishara's book on the Tunisian revolution, in terms of digging into details and forming a comprehensive perception of the event, makes the book encyclopaedic. The content of the book is an attempt to understand the structure of the Tunisian revolution and its process through its daily events. In this context, Bishara provides an in-depth critical reading of the forms of authoritarianism witnessed in some Arab countries. By adopting the same integrated approach in studying revolutions in all their dimensions and ramifications, Bishara presents his book on researching the Syrian revolution in its two phases: the peaceful civil and the armed phase. Bishara analyses the structure of the Syrian regime and the relationship of society and the state in Syria, and monitors the aspects of the strategy adopted by the Syrian regime based on suppressing the revolution with violence, which has led to patterns of violence that were never familiar in Syria. Thus, what distinguishes Bishara's books of the three revolutions is that he transcends the process of documentation to understanding; he transcends the classical historical review to the method of socio-historical analysis, which requires openness to all fields of the social and human sciences.

Bishara's enlightening role, which grew with the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, made Arab regimes and some of the media affiliated with them took a hostile stance, accusing him of playing an important role during the Arab Spring, and for standing on the side of Arab peoples against their regimes. About this stage, researcher Khaled Walid Mahmoud (2014) says that after dictatorships put obstacles in the way of Arab youth to establish democracy in their country, some people chose to be at the forefront of defending the right of future Arab generations to a free, dignified, and democratic life. Mahmoud continues that Bishara was in the foreground, through effective contributions and intellectual and philosophical literature, until he became a reference for researchers, academics, and science students. Mahmoud explains that Bishara is 'one of the rare cases that combined the struggling model with intellectual production, and this is what inspired the younger generation' (Mahmoud, 2014). Here Mahmoud refers to the smear campaigns that some parties launched against Bishara because of his successes and his theorizing about the Arab revolutions, 'when authoritarian regimes confronted him with hostility because they feared change and sought to kill young people's aspirations for liberation and independence' (Mahmoud, 2014).

### **7.2.2. BISHARA'S KNOWLEDGE**

Bishara's intellectual approach is reflected in his knowledge of political sociology, just as his knowledge lends its impact on his intellectual approach in analysing and criticizing events and foreseeing the next in the future.

It should be noted that he is a political philosopher known for his prolific intellectual production and research which are references in the fields of civil society and his work in the renewal of Arab thought. Political Philosophy is the basis of Bishara's cross-disciplinary research and analytical approach in the social sciences, as he adopts it in approaching the complex issues he addresses in his writings, such as freedom, justice, religion, myth, secularism, the state, nationalism, the nation, civil society and others, which I explained earlier in this chapter.

Bishara's knowledge in politics and sociology appears within his speech, especially when he uses terms that not all viewers may understand. But he is not one of those showing their culture using what is difficult for the public to understand, as he immediately explains what he means by the term. In this way, he combines being educated, who knows all that is necessary to know about the stage, and simplifies and interprets his language when it is required to do so, and that was the situation on Aljazeera during the Egyptian Revolution. Therefore, intellectuals and experts are usually interested in following him in the media since the level of his rhetoric suits their cultural level, and on the other hand, the public, who are not experts in politics and sociology, aspired to raise their level of understanding of the Egyptian Revolution through watching his commentary.

Bishara's knowledge is also shown through the illustrative examples and comparisons he addresses in his analysis, through which he brings the idea or conceptualization closer to the viewer. In his description of the Egyptian Revolution and the development of its events for instance, he addresses in his explanation the case of the French and Iranian revolution. Almost every answer from Bishara's answers to the presenters' questions is a return to past experiences that are similar to the current event. By giving examples from history, he helped the viewer to understand the event, and provided insights for the revolutionaries to benefit from the lessons of history. For example, in dealing with the Egyptian Revolution, he repeatedly indicated that just as there have been victims in revolutions throughout history, it is natural to have victims in the

Egyptian Revolution in order to achieve the Revolution's ultimate goal of liberation, democracy and the rule of the people. Here, I see that through recalling and discussing past experiences from history, he demonstrates to the viewer the extent of his wide knowledge in the context of revolutions in particular. That makes what he says more credible with the public, so he becomes the reliable source who has the answers from history. Mohammed Dawood, Director of Quality and Editorial Standards at Aljazeera says, during an interview (M.Dawood 2020, personal communication, 31 March), that Bishara is a credible star, popular with Aljazeera's audience, and because of his culture, he was able to give the scene a historical depth and future extrapolation added to the daily coverage dose.

Bishara's knowledge of history gave him the ability to foresee the future. For example, during the Egyptian Revolution, Bishara was sure that President Mubarak would inevitably step down, and he made that clear in his commentary since the eighth day of the Revolution. Moreover, he repeatedly warned of chaos and the control of military rule, which happened after a time, following the consequences of the Revolution that he alerted about. But that knowledge of political sociology and history was not the only source for his ability to analyse the present and foresee the future. He was monitoring the events of the Egyptian Revolution from the heart of the event, which strengthened his vision of the present and the future. He was not satisfied with learning the news of the demonstrations from the media, but he was in contact with the revolutionaries. Bishara (2020) explains that he has been in contact with political leaders he knows personally, Egyptian intellectuals, and university professors. He also approached the Revolution on the ground more through Egyptian youth who initiated contact with him after his appearance on Aljazeera, as he says that they were watching him, and sometimes they called him afterwards, and many times they called him before his appearance, telling him what they would do, and what issues baffled them (A.Bishara, 2020). In Bishara's opinion, as he analyses the event, he should not rely on CNN and the BBC to know what is happening in Egypt. 'I have to hear from people,' he confirms (2020).

Looking at Bishara's history in practising politics, he presented a set of political stances that emphasize the concept of popular sovereignty, just as his political discourse, directed at the popular classes, is based on criticism of the regime, its officials and the elites, which makes him able to understand, communicate with and direct the masses.

Hence, Bishara is a political intellectual inseparable from the voice of the masses and their demands.

### **7.2.3. BISHARA'S STYLE OF PRESENTATION**

Appearing in the media, specifically daily on live television requires, in addition to the richness of the content which is guaranteed by the knowledge and the intellectual approach, a distinctive style of presentation. In describing Bishara, Mohamed Krichen, a Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, refers, during an interview (M.Krichen, personal communication, 23 March), to the two elements as he considers Bishara to have a deep discourse and can deconstruct events well and shed light on their angles, which makes 'his analyses are different, not clichés'. Bishara never answers a short answer, no matter how simple the question seems, he goes back to the origins and roots of the topics under discussion, historically and conceptually. For example, during the Egyptian Revolution, speaking about the personality of Omar Suleiman and confirming his rejection by the Egyptian revolutionaries, Bishara returned to the origins of Suleiman's mission in the Mubarak regime as a military intelligence man, and the history of his relationship with Israel and the friendship that prevailed in it, thus Bishara detailed the reasons for the Egyptian people to reject Suleiman's presence in the Egyptian scene during the Revolution.

Bishara's knowledge of history and the nature of democratic transformations in the world, as well as his understanding of the nature of the Egyptian street and its Revolution, and his familiarity with the oppressive Arab security services enabled him to provide strategic and operational guidance to the revolutionaries regarding what they must do. He repeatedly used guiding phrases such as: 'Here we must...', 'but on the condition that...', 'It is essential now to...' relating to the next steps the revolutionaries should take in order to success in achieving their demands and overcome the obstacles in their confrontation with the regime. Bishara's possession of the knowledge we just discussed made him confident of his mastery of dialogue and analysis. This confidence, in turn, reaches the viewer who sees in Bishara's directives the right, which cannot be deviated from.

In addition to the above, his thoughts are arranged, and this is what many who are hosted in the media lose, especially in tense events. Albasheer agrees that Bishara is ‘a quiet man who introduces his intellectual material calmly and clearly, with his rational style, logical sequence and historical citations’ (Albasheer, 2011). What I noticed and worth mentioning about Bishara's style of presentation during his commentary on Aljazeera in the Egyptian Revolution is the simplicity of presenting his ideas away from the complexity that characterizes his style of presenting his ideas in his books and lectures. Bishara was aware of the nature of the masses he was addressing at that stage, and he wanted to reach the people in general, not just the educated and the elites. In addition to the above, his personal appearance was also simple at that stage, as his clothes were casual (see *image 24 & 25* below), and he did not wear formal clothes with a tie, as is the custom for those who appear in the channel's studio.



*Image 24: Aljazeera, 29 January 2011*



*Image 25: Aljazeera, 30 January 2011*

This indicates Bishara's closeness to the demonstrators in the Egyptian street. Not exaggerating in his clothes indicates his closeness to the reality of the Revolution that began due to poverty and unemployment.

### **7.3. ANALYSIS OF BISHARA'S POLITICAL COMMENTARY DURING THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION**

Bishara did not appear on Aljazeera to comment on the events from the first days of the Revolution. Looking at the archive, he appeared on the fifth day of the Revolution when it began to take a decisive turn, and the matter became worthy of discussion because of its prospects for continuing and achieving the goals of the Revolution. Mostefa Souag, the Director-General of Aljazeera, the News Director at the time of the Revolution, says that Bishara is one of the thinkers known for his contribution to contemporary Arab political thought. Souag, during an interview (M.Souag 2020, personal communication, 5 April), adds about choosing the channel for Bishara at that stage:

There was no choice of a specific person unless he provided an analytical addition, and this by the way is present in all countries, in the BBC, CNN, they have people known for their analytical competence because they are researchers who do not have special affiliations with any party, so they were naturally presented on this basis, on the basis that this is an analyst who is present and follows the news daily.

According to Bishara, as an intellectual, he felt the importance of his role at this stage, so he had to say his word. Bishara (2020) recalls the beginning of the Revolution:

I had a feeling that this moment is historical and I must contribute. First, I had a certain feeling that something huge is happening, and the change from Egypt, for us Arab democrats, is a very important key that changes everything. Second, I thought it was a spontaneous revolution, and the intellectual can play a role because when there is spontaneity to this degree, the intellectual can play a role remotely because he is not overwhelmed with details. With someone who knows Egypt and the situation and has at least experience with revolutions, democracy and historical transitions, and is biased towards the Revolution and democracy, can play a useful role.

By saying this, Bishara confirms that he contributed to that event. Based on his constant calls for democracy and Arab nationalism, he was keen on the change taking place in Egypt. Bishara also confirms his keenness on the Revolution, especially since he saw that it was spontaneous, so it was important as an intellectual to play a role in it, to benefit it from his experience.

While the news in the bulletins and the reports, with its images and style, attract the general viewers and inform them of the channel's direction of events, Bishara's analysis and commentary were directed more to the revolutionaries who led the scene on the ground. In terms of content, Bishara's commentary was not primarily a comment intended for the viewer to understand the events in the Egyptian street, but rather was a dialogue with the revolutionaries to enlighten them about the issue surrounding them and analyse the reality they face so that they can deal with it in three contexts: encouraging context, warning context, and guidance context. Commenting, Bishara agrees with my analysis, saying, 'This is how I saw my role' (A.Bishara, 2020).

Before the Egyptian Revolution, Bishara had never appeared on Aljazeera in this manner and intensity. His daily and frequent appearances on Aljazeera during the Revolution gave him space to present content in all three contexts. As I mentioned in the previous section in this chapter, the characteristics that distinguish his discourse enabled him to present content that was not limited to being informative about news, but rather went beyond that, which made observers believe that Bishara, through his discourse, was a participant in the event, and an actor as well.

By studying Bishara's political commentary at that period, it is noticeable that he was enthusiastic, unlike his calm manner in presenting his thoughts in the media before. This reinforces the feeling that he had a role in the Revolution or that he was somehow a participant in it, especially since he says that dealing with events with optimism is sometimes aimed at spreading optimism. Bishara (2020) interprets his enthusiastic manner as follows:

I was aware of the fall of the Mubarak regime. There was a combination of why this was my opinion; it was clear from the army's behaviour in the beginning that it was an opportunity for the army to prevent succession, and it was the Obama period, although America did not stand with the Revolution, it was difficult during Obama's period to stand with Mubarak. It was clear to me that the fall was coming, so I spoke with this optimism. By the way, sometimes optimism is meant to spread optimism and not because you are an optimist. With my analysis, I was certain that the regime was leaving, and I was saying this analysis publicly.

Here, Bishara confirms once again his keenness for the success of the Revolution, as besides the informative content that he provided in his political commentary on Aljazeera during the Revolution; he presented emotional content through his attempt to spread optimism.



Bishara's body language and insistence on his thoughts suggest that he was advocating for personal gain. I understand this when taking into account that Bishara has always called for democratic transformation, and being an Arab nationalist, Egypt is the backbone of this ideology in the region, so in the case of the Egyptian Revolution, Bishara was like someone who sees the product of his thought appears on the ground. Bishara talks about his role in the Revolution:

I somehow think this role was beneficial. The problem is that we could not influence the next stage of the Revolution. When the partisan struggles began, it became like a crying voice in the wilderness, so we used to do interviews as if it were theoretical ... But in the first stage (the Revolution) the leaderships were neutral, the young people on the street were enthusiastic, good intentions, our word was echoed, because there were good intentions and people without interests, the talk was really resonating, it was a spontaneous stage, when I was speaking at the time I was leaving with the satisfaction that I affected something positive.

Here, Bishara's endeavours to make an influence are evident, as he regrets the stage in which he was unable to make an influence as before, which indicates that his appearance on the channel was not intended to educate only, but also was aimed at making an impact on events, which is confirmed by what he mentioned of the correlation between his state of satisfaction and his words making an impact.

It is clear from Bishara's words that he was interested in the success of his role, which was embodied in the success of the Revolution and the democratic transformation that he has always called for in his writings and political activity, so his appearance on Aljazeera was an opportunity to direct public opinion to gain the product of his thought that he called for the past years.

### **7.3.1. CONTEXT OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

The first context in which Bishara's comment was directed is the context of encouragement and morale-raising of the revolutionaries, since the first days of the Revolution in continuation to its end. Within this context, various themes have been included that lead to giving confidence and enthusiasm to the revolutionary Egyptians, by talking about the strength of the revolutionaries, and on the other hand, by recalling the weakness of the regime.

At the beginning of the Revolution, and specifically on the fifth day, Bishara made several observations indicating the strength of the Revolution. The first element indicating this was the size of the demonstrations. Speaking about the number of demonstrators, Bishara responded to the presenter's question about the fact that the numbers were not very large, that it was not right to look at one place, and that there were hundreds of places where demonstrations took place. He gave an illustrative example from the Iranian revolution, as the demonstrations at the time were in Tehran, and not in all Iranian cities. Bishara thus strengthened the advantage of the Egyptian Revolution and said: 'What we are witnessing is movement in all Egyptian cities, neither Aljazeera nor CNN can surround it' (Aljazeera, 29 January, 2011). This encouragement regarding the participation of large numbers and that it was, as he described it, 'a comprehensive, rapid and extended popular revolution' (Aljazeera, January 29, 2011) would enhance the participation in the demonstrations and strengthened the steadfastness of the demonstrators already present, especially since it was in its early days. Between what was happening and Bishara's optimistic expectations about the Revolution, its spread and its acceleration, his encouraging tone appeared obviously.

The encouragement that was in Bishara's commentary was more like a hidden encouragement for the revolutionaries, as he said on the seventh day of the Revolution: 'Tomorrow you will see the numbers multiply exponentially in several cities and at once, to break all the numbers we know about other revolutions in the region and perhaps the world' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). Here, Bishara said these words depending on his understanding of the nature of revolutions and his profound understanding of the Egyptian people's nature, and his relations and contacts with the revolutionaries on the ground. However, he said it mainly based on the optimism that characterized his discourse at that stage, which I discussed earlier, and which would encourage the revolutionaries that their numbers will increase, so that they do not retreat, just as it encourages those at homes to take to the street to demonstrate.

With the continuation of the Revolution, Bishara continued to affirm that 'the number is enormous, and it imposed its wills' (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011), and reassured that the revolutionaries will thus achieve gains, and that they have completed the halfway and overcoming a lot as if he comforts them to be patient and continue. Bishara spoke in a reassuring spirit, with tone and phrases that stimulated optimism among those who

heard him. For example, which shows the extent of his confidence in the strength of the revolutionaries, his reply when the presenter asked him if there will be 'bloodbaths' when the demonstrators approach the Republican Palace, the issue that may spread fear among the protesters; Bishara replied that the size of the Revolution settles this issue: 'when a million demonstrates, all guns and mouths are silent' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). Bishara's answer indicated that the Central Security Forces will not be able to confront and suppress demonstrations of this size, which reassured the demonstrators that there will be no violent and bloody confrontations to deter them. This confidence in Bishara's discourse was transmitted to the revolutionaries, giving them the ability to advance without fear, and assuring them the importance of increasing their numbers, as it is what gives them the ability to confront the regime.

Bishara did not address the size of the Revolution from the perspective of the revolutionaries' strength by exerting pressure on the regime only, but also on the international community. He continued to affirm that it is the prestige of the masses that 'narrowed the margin of manoeuvre with the West' (Aljazeera, February 5, 2011), and that Western countries 'do not have much to do' when the people take to the streets, and that the revolutionaries 'are the ones who will decide, not the leaders of the region' (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011). He stressed reassuringly that although Obama communicated with Arab leaders for consultations, he realized the seriousness of the Revolution, and even Israel, despite its keen interest in what was happening in the region, the decision was in the hands of the people who went out to revolt (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011). Thus, Bishara increased the resolve of the demonstrators when they knew that the extent of their strength has reached the point of standing up to the strong West, not just their regime.

After recalling the size of the Revolution, Bishara demonstrated another element of the Revolution's strength, that its demands and slogans were mature. Thus, it was a revolution with 'unprecedented political maturity' and a 'civilizational and civil transformation more than even many European countries' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). Here, Bishara's enthusiasm for the Revolution was evident in this description; in the context of his analysis, he exaggerated the positive image of the Revolution at the time. Bishara supported his opinion and cited examples of comparison with the French revolution and the Iranian revolution, as the first left a vacuum that lasted for years, and the second in which the conflict lasted for months (Aljazeera, 3 February, 2011). By

listing these examples, Bishara invited the viewer to interpret him as the expert source, rich in knowledge, whose information was relied upon at that stage, which made revolutionaries in the Square call him after the commentary and sometimes before his appearance (A.Bishara, 2020). Hence, Bishara delivered a two-way message, the first for the revolutionaries, and its essence to be proud of themselves and continue as they were no less determined than other countries that have revolted, but rather they were superior to others in the advancement of their revolution, and the second message was to the enemies of the Revolution and those who take a position of neutrality and non-participation in it that 'nothing will stop this process' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011).

Based on Bishara's talk about the Revolution being civilized, he focused on another element that increased the strength of the Revolution, which is that it was a result of the people's democratic will (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011). Bishara stressed, especially in the first days of the Revolution, that the development of events will be peaceful, civil, and democratic, and that 'Egypt will definitely not become Iran' (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011). He repeated the examples that showed his admiration for the Revolution and his keenness on it, which would make the revolutionaries proud and increase their determination, saying that 'democracy in the West in its beginnings was not of this sophistication, it was much less than that in terms of sophistication and lack of bloodshed and expansion, the Egyptian Revolution is a democratic revolution in all meaning of the word' (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011), and that it took France 30 years to become a democracy, because its revolution was bloody and not peaceful (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011). These comparisons and examples of the experiences of countries that the Egyptians consider to be advanced and strong may have increased the confidence of the revolutionaries and their determination to preserve their revolution in a way that makes it better than other revolutions that took place in developed countries.

Bishara was optimistic about the Revolution and that it had brought about an important change in Egyptian society, which is the spirit of the Revolution, and it is another element that added to the resolve of the revolutionaries and encouraged them. In his opinion, Tahrir Square was not just a sit-in, but rather a solid core that will continue to form a centre for revolutionary action. He also described the Revolution as 'a unique phenomenon that extends and is not an act of protest for one or two times' (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). Furthermore, Bishara praised that people have begun to doubt, the stage which he called 'a process of purification' from the filth and pests of the previous

stage (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). Bishara's use of the word 'purification' indicates his bias towards the Revolution, as it entrenches in the viewer's mind that the reality against which the Egyptians revolted is one that must be changed, and that this situation should not be accepted.

While Bishara stressed the strength of the revolutionaries, on the other hand, he repeatedly recalled the weakness of the regime. The retreat is the topic that Bishara focused on in showing the extent of the regime's weakness, this word showed as if the conflict between the two sides was taking place on a battlefield, in which one side advanced and won, while the defeated party retreated. He enumerated the steps taken by the regime to retreat in an attempt to save itself and made clear that it was tactical, as the regime could not continue with its same tools. (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011) Bishara explained that the new ministerial appointments were 'clear fundamental setback' by the regime as a result of public pressure, the retreat on the issue of inheritance and the appointment of a deputy, and a series of setbacks related to the People's Assembly and others. In the Vice-President of Egypt Omar Suleiman's speech, Bishara commented on what would encourage the revolutionaries: 'I think that we have reached a stage that all revolutions reach, which is the stage of the regime's beginning to retreat and the beginning of the Revolution to advance' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). This repetition in the enumeration of weaknesses would encourage revolutionaries that the defeat of the regime was approaching, along with brief phrases that Bishara said that reinforced the idea of Mubarak's end, such as: '100% there is no future for Mubarak in the presidency' (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011), 'Mubarak's position is weak and lacks legitimacy' (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011), and 'Mubarak is reeling, and there are moments left before he falls' (Aljazeera, February 3, 2011). Talking about the regime's weakness with this confidence and decisiveness created confidence among the revolutionaries.

Along with the short, powerful phrases that Bishara used to illustrate the system's weakness, he demonstrated this through inference. For example, to emphasize the weakness of the system, he said that the idea of the ruling family has ended and that it was the first pillar of the system, the National Party has ended and it was the second pillar, and security remained. Thus, he did not only provide information or say a phrase and then proceeded to another idea. Rather, it seems as if he wanted to reassure the revolutionaries in a way that increases their confidence to continue, as he demonstrated

to the international community the fragility of the system and its unworthiness for protection and support.

Between the strength of the revolutionaries and the weakness of the regime, Bishara showed that statement No. 1 of the Military Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces resolved the issue in favour of the Revolution. Bishara addressed the statement with joy: 'I cannot hide my emotions. Spring has come early this year to the Arab nation. It is a great day for the nation' (Aljazeera, February 10, 2011). Bishara's glorification of this event confirms his intellectual approach and previous writings calling for democracy and the rule of the people, and that the opportunity he was waiting for came. Here, although he asserted that the army has taken a balanced move in delicate circumstances, he insisted that the masses were still the main element and what he called 'agents of history' in the field, the makers of history (Aljazeera, February 10, 2011). This would make the revolutionaries feel the utmost power when they feel that their will dominates the scene and that they are the decision-makers, not the army.

Bishara continued to encourage the masses until the last day, and after Mubarak stepped down, his joy was very clear at the time, as he said optimistically that 'nothing is excluded in the next stage', and that 'many things can be imagined to happen' (Aljazeera, February 11, 2011). This indicates that Bishara saw the success of the Egyptian Revolution as a wave that will continue and allow for greater aspirations towards the entire Arab region. This in turn would encourage other Arab peoples to follow in the footsteps of the Egyptians.

Bishara's admiration for the Egyptian Revolution was evident, for many times he praised it for several reasons throughout its days, which he summarized in what he said on the day he stepped down: 'This revolution gifted humanity something. It gave the Arab nation the restoration of wasted pride and wasted dignity, and showed the world who the Arabs are, that they are capable of a revolution in more civilized revolutions, in the literal sense of the word and the western meaning of the word, from all the European revolutions that I know' (Aljazeera, February 11, 2011). This saying greatly clarified how Bishara saw the Revolution and his optimism towards it and it, in turn, conveyed his feeling to the masses that saw in this Revolution a prelude to salvation in the Arab world.

In my opinion, the emotional impact that Bishara presented in the context of encouragement occupied an important space in his political commentary, especially as it appeared not only in the themes of this context, but in the encouraging language and words, as well as in the enthusiastic tone and the spirit of optimism.

### **7.3.2. CONTEXT OF WARNING**

This context occupied the largest space of Bishara's commentary on the Revolution, and was a reflection of his concerns about what might fail the Revolution, and his anxiety about losing it, as he considers it 'historical days that should not fail' and 'need a long historical period to pass in order to be repeated' (Aljazeera, January 29, 2011). Bishara stressed the necessity of caution, so he recalled the sacrifices the Egyptians made at this stage. The issues that Bishara warned about are multiple and relate to all parties associated with the events of the Revolution, which indicates Bishara's awareness of the Egyptian political scene, its past and present, and Egypt's presence in the international community. Bishara's experience and his knowledge made him worried about what Egyptians might not see as a concern in the details of the Revolution's news. Moreover, his vision of what might pose a threat to the Revolution was clearer because he was not inside the scene of the Revolution, but rather he was observing and studying it from a distance, which made him, as a political thinker, aware of aspects that those who were in the field did not realize.

Since the regime was the opposite face of the Revolution, and its overthrow was the main demand that the revolutionaries sought, Bishara's warning about the regime was the most intense and frequent in his commentary. In addition to other aspects of contexts, encouragement and guidance, warning against the regime, in particular, was the main theme of every commentary of Bishara on Aljazeera throughout the Revolution. As if someone seizes the opportunity from the very first moment, Bishara revealed the regime's intentions from the beginning, by alerting the revolutionaries to the regime's first steps to try to calm the situation. Some may see the ministerial changes made by the regime by appointing Omar Suleiman as Vice President of the Republic and assigning Ahmed Shafiq to head the Council of Ministers, as a good step to prove goodwill on the part of the regime, but Bishara responded to it very strictly, as he called it 'the alleged gains' (Aljazeera, 29 January, 2011). In his analysis, Bishara

addressed the regime's nature, the analysis that based on Bishara's deep knowledge and understanding of Egyptian history besides his calling for freedom and democracy, which made him question dictatorial regimes and did not see any goodwill in their attempts at reform.

He warned the Egyptians not to accept these changes and wondered how they will be satisfied with this after 30 years. He explained that President Mubarak had assistants and they had security duties, as they took orders from him, those who implement them, and those who consult with him. Bishara thus confirmed and reminded that what was required in the Revolution was to get rid of the regime, not from the president only (Aljazeera, February 3, 2011), and that changing people in ministries did not mean that the regime changed. In the same context, Bishara made the revolutionaries aware repeatedly to continue demonstrating and not be deceived, so he reminded them that 'the regime is what prevents free elections, it is intelligence system, it is torture in prisons, the system of corruption, corruption of the public sector, the surrounding corrupt businessmen, the regime is an oppressive system, not Mubarak alone' (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011).

As for Mubarak specifically, Bishara did not miss any opportunity to remind the Egyptians of Mubarak's bad qualities, so that this reminder took the form of incitement to completely reject Mubarak and not overlook his stay in power. Bishara reminded the viewers that Mubarak is one of the symbols of what he called 'the bleak horizon stage', and that he came to power by chance, was not charismatic, had no competencies, and had no vision or projects (Aljazeera, January 29, 2011). Commenting on Mubarak's second speech in the Revolution, Bishara described it, with complete rejection, as a 'shameful speech' and that it was clear that Mubarak did not hear or see, he believed his lies, and his speech contained fallacies. Bishara likened Mubarak's stubbornness to Nero, who preferred to burn Rome to punish the people, as Bishara warned that Mubarak in his speech threatened with chaos, and that the tone of his speech was a reprimanding tone and not conciliatory at all (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011). Commenting on Mubarak's third speech, Bishara warned of the extent of the deception carried out by Mubarak, when he tried to ask for the sympathy of the masses to treat him on the basis that he was a hero of October War, while he treated the October heroes badly in terms of granting them health treatment, insurance, and a generous and honourable old age (Aljazeera, February 10, 2011). With all that Bishara mentioned



about Mubarak's personality, speeches, and stances throughout the days of the Revolution, he strengthened the image of the dictator in the minds of Egyptians, an image that protesters were almost fooled with many times throughout the eighteen days. Bishara's description of Mubarak's personality and its analysis was based, in addition to historical data, on Bishara's thought which advocates for freedom, and will not defend the dictator's personality, rather will search in every detail for evidence that the dictator's policy will not change. This shows how keen Bishara was for the Revolution.

In another step of the regime, the call for dialogue, Bishara's decisive rejection appeared once again, and he addressed this issue sharply, seeing that the dialogue with Omar Suleiman succeeded in causing a split in the ranks (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). Bishara showed that the call for dialogue launched by the regime is psychologically studied by the regime's security services, as this call appeared after the thugs' attack of Tahrir Square, a situation that many may not tolerate, which facilitated the revolutionaries' submission after it (Aljazeera, February 3, 2011). By this, he warned that the regime wanted to 'pass the crisis' and did not want to respond to the demands and change, and that the regime's speech alone did not guarantee the implementation of the people's demands, and reminded that the regime did not tell the truth about what was happening in Tahrir Square. About the severity of his rejection of dialogue, Bishara said in his commentary after Mubarak's resignation, that his fear for the Revolution was when the regime began to penetrate the Revolution when its dialogue with the parties began. He confirmed that it was his main worrying moment (Aljazeera, February 11, 2011).

The warning context in Bishara's commentary was not limited to the regime, as he was wary of all parties, even towards some of those who joined the Revolution after a while. In the first days of the Revolution Bishara warned of the opportunists, then in the middle of the Revolution he warned of the 'Committee of the Wise'. He wondered how a group of intellectuals could call themselves this name, then warned the revolutionaries that accepting this committee presume that others were stupid (Aljazeera, February 5, 2011). Bishara's concern for the Revolution and warning even of the dangers that were not clear to everyone was important to the Revolution, especially since it is the first experience of Egyptians in revolutionary work, so they lacked a broad awareness of political games, and lacked the ability to pay attention to those who might try to thwart the Revolution or exploit it for other interests far from its original demands.

The army was a party to the events of the Revolution, but Bishara's warning regarding it was not a rejection of the army as an entity, as his rejection of the regime, but rather he repeatedly warned that the military institution existed as a political party. He indicated that the army's mission was to secure the state and guarantee the democratic transition process (Aljazeera, 1 February, 2011), noting that 'the Revolution came out for the sake of democratic rule and the army secures democracies, not for military rule'. Speaking about the army, Bishara sought to make the revolutionaries conscious to deal intelligently, as he warned that the army's position in the past was with Mubarak, and if the masses were silent, the army would be with Omar Suleiman, since the army changes with the ongoing dynamic process because what matters to the army is to preserve the country (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). In this, Bishara warned the revolutionaries of the necessity to continue and not to retreat, because the army stands with the stronger side.

The parties that Bishara warned about in his commentary were numerous, forming a circle revolving around the Revolution and the revolutionaries, and Bishara appeared as someone who is watching from a high place and clearly sees these parties that try to attack the Revolution. Among these parties was the international community, with its powerful Western countries linked to Egypt by common interests such as the United States of America and Israel, and Arab countries that were ineffectual in the international community. In the beginning, Bishara talked about the West in general and warned that they were 'hypocrites and opportunists' and stressed this repeatedly, giving an example to confirm this from the case of Tunisian President Ben Ali. He explained his opinion of the West that they wanted an alternative to Mubarak that was not anti-Western from outside the regime, and they were trying to be within the regime, just as their experience was with Mubarak. Here, Bishara recalled the peculiarity of Mubarak's relationship with the United States of America, and that he was the first man on whom it relied in all the crises the Arab region has gone through, providing them with tremendous services, as he helped them in Iraq when he thwarted finding an Arab solution there, in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and when he contributed in the siege of Gaza (Aljazeera, February 3, 2011). All this worsened the image of Mubarak in the viewers' minds and reminded the revolutionaries of the nature of the personalities with whom the United States has allied, which confirmed that it does not seek what is in the interest of Egypt or the region.

Bishara repeatedly reminded that the West was trying to save the situation by preferring a loyal alternative to rule Egypt, and that the USA, in particular, would be in contact with some Egyptian opposition figures to ensure that the transformation is not absolutely hostile to it. Bishara stated: 'Certainly the United States is working on several scenarios' (Aljazeera, 30 January, 2011). Here, Bishara informed the Arab viewer and the Egyptian in particular, that America was looking dynamically at what was happening, and what mattered to it was its interest in Egypt. This situation was generally known, but Bishara's warning at this time called on the revolutionaries to pay attention and preserve their revolution from the interests of the USA that may interfere in the course of the Revolution in a way that may lead to its failure. To increase the dose of alerting the Egyptians, Bishara reminded in his commentary that the USA spent money on the Egyptian army, trained it, and trained a large number of its officers in its schools (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011). No other political analyst preceded Bishara in mentioning this information during this time on media, which would alert the Egyptians to stay aware and awake that the army was loyal to the USA which may interfere by directing the army to what is consistent with USA interests only.

One of the aspects that Bishara stressed in his analysis of the Western position was the warning that Israel was behind the scenes in the process of discussing the state of the Egyptian Revolution, as Israel was the source of Western information about the Revolution, and the only point of view for the United States was the issue of peace with Israel (Aljazeera, January 30, 2011). Bishara's warning by mentioning Israel would increase the revolutionaries' caution about the Western position that embodies Israel's interest, especially that Israel, in the Arab mind, is their first enemy and any matter related to its name is suspicious and rejected.

Regarding the Arab position, Bishara stated that dialogues were taking place with leaders of the Arab region, and warned that they were 'not experts in the transition to democracy, nor long-term strategic theorizing'. He cited illustrative examples about the advice of Arab leaders regarding the war on Iraq, as he recalled how Mubarak thwarted the Arab conference, which could have avoided the war. Thus, he reassured the revolutionaries that the position of the Arab leaders was not worrisome, as their opinion was of no value at the time and it will make no difference. This time Bishara directed his warning at Arab rulers to avoid the domino effect, and to initiate deep and comprehensive reform processes based on citizenship, the rule of law, and the gradual

transition to citizen respect, fighting corruption, the independence of the judiciary, and the integrity of the elections.

Between Bishara's warning of the regime, and his warning about the Western position, specifically the American and Israeli, Bishara warned of an element that had a common denominator between the two sides, Omar Suleiman. Suleiman was affiliated with the regime by the nature of his position as a former director of the Egyptian intelligence system and then Mubarak appointed him the vice president of the republic during the Revolution, and on the other hand, he was the preferred person for America and Israel, as Bishara explained. Hence, starting on the seventh day of the Revolution, when Suleiman gave a speech, which was his first appearance after assuming the position of vice president, Bishara's warning about Suleiman was remarkably intense and had a daily portion of warnings. The first reason for Bishara's rejection of Suleiman, to which Bishara alerted the revolutionaries, lay in Suleiman's previous position as head of intelligence. Bishara wondered how people fighting against tyranny would accept the head of intelligence, especially since the intelligence system represents oppression in the Arab mentality. Bishara stated clearly that Suleiman is incapable and untrusted in implementing the democratization process due to his professional background (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011), and more explicitly he warned against accepting Suleiman as an alternative: 'This is unacceptable and unreasonable' (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011).

The second reason why the revolutionaries should refuse Suleiman, in the context of Bishara's intense warning, was that Israel, and specifically the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, favoured Suleiman. Here, Bishara explained, based on his deep experience in Israel, what may not be noticed much of the reflection of what Netanyahu said in a speech in Jerusalem before the meeting of Israel's friends of European parliamentarians, on the sixth day of the Revolution, on the issue of trying to impose a person like Suleiman on the Egyptians. Bishara explained that Netanyahu did what Sharon had done in the past in the People's Assembly elections when he demanded that George W. Bush understand the use of force against voters if the regime was to lose in the second round (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). In this context, Bishara mentions in his book on the Egyptian Revolution that on January 31, new slogans were added against Suleiman to abort the marketing of him as an alternative to Mubarak (2016, p.467). Bishara explained in every appearance during the days of the Revolution that Israel saw

Suleiman as a strong man who can control the situation so that it does not deteriorate further concerning geostrategic issues in the region (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011). Bishara confirmed that Suleiman was one of the main pillars of the regime, and a key policymaker in the regime, especially on the Palestinian issue and relations with Israel (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011).

Bishara made an important part of the warning about Suleiman, as he addressed the issue of Suleiman's taking charge of matters in all its dimensions, and he talked about him in-depth to convince the Egyptians of the danger of accepting him. On the penultimate day of the Revolution, Bishara likened the regime to an inverted pyramid; if the head is struck, the whole system that is with it will reel. Here, Bishara repeated his insistence on not accepting Suleiman, stressing that he was the worst pillar of Mubarak's administration, as he was 'the director of his intelligence system who oversaw everything that was bad under his administration, and his loyal servant in every corner of the world, where the hands of this administration have been polluted in many matters. The Egyptians will write about that later, not me' (Aljazeera, February 10, 2011). By saying this, Bishara handed over the banner to the masses, whom he accompanied on the journey of their Revolution to the stage in which the regime become a thing of the past. The responsibility Bishara placed on the revolutionaries' shoulders when he said that they will write about the corruption of Mubarak's administration would make them keener on making their revolution a success to get rid of this corruption.

Bishara's keenness on the Revolution and dealing with it as a historical achievement that took many years to happen made him warn of everything that might cause it to fail. From his knowledge of the models of global revolutions, he was aware of what might befall a revolution, so he was keen to warn the revolutionaries of the constitutional vacuum and chaos that accompanies the emergence of revolutions, which is usually created by the counter-revolutionary parties. That was why Bishara warned, specifically in the first days of the Revolution, of these parties, which in the Egyptian case were represented by the National Party and the thugs used by them, who had criminal histories and are paid in exchange for riots. To confirm his warning against them, Bishara recalled that the NDP had previously used thugs in the parliamentary elections (Aljazeera, January 29, 2011). On the other hand, Bishara warned that the withdrawal of security forces from all regions was causing chaos and allowing criminals to act

without deterrence (Aljazeera, 29 January, 2011). Bishara's warning of chaos was like someone taking the reins of a careful watch to allow the revolutionaries in the field to successfully accomplish their revolution.

The amount of the warning content in Bishara's commentary is one of the aspects that reinforce the belief that Bishara played an important role in the Revolution, as it indicates the intensity of his determination to preserve the Revolution. It also indicates that the dangers surrounding the Revolution were many, which Bishara was aware of, so the amount of the warning in his commentary outweighs the amount of the encouragement and tactical direction, which was what the Egyptian revolutionaries, being new to revolutions, needed so that they would not be deceived and their revolution failed. This is what Bishara provided them with on a continuous daily basis, using logical inferences and the historical backgrounds of events.

### **7.3.3. CONTEXT OF GUIDANCE**

Although Bishara started providing instructions to the revolutionaries from the first days of his appearance during the Revolution, the intensity of his instructions increased as the Revolution progressed. As I mentioned earlier, it was important to encourage Egyptians who had never faced this regime as they did in the Revolution, and it was more important to warn them of what might fail their revolution. As for taking steps to ensure that their demands are obtained and sustained, it is an issue which importance appeared after the revolutionaries proved that they were continuing and that it was not just demonstrations and sit-ins that end like previous demonstrations in the history of Mubarak's regime. That is why Bishara began his first directive by talking about what the Revolution needs in its early days in terms of unifying forces. He stressed the Egyptian street's need for the political forces to meet and agree on a political program. (Aljazeera, January 29, 2011) Bishara continued to emphasise the need for a clear and unequivocal political framework that brings together all parties (Aljazeera, 30 January, 2011). Bishara's directives in the early days served as a compass to guide the rebels in light of the confusion and the multiplicity of voices that appeared at that stage.

After talking about unifying forces, Bishara moved in the following days to talk about the democratic transition in more detail. As he directed the revolutionaries to the

necessity of having a political elite that can represent them to negotiate how to move. Here he directed and defined the categories that can be entrusted with the democratic transformation in Egypt: 'Former elites, for example, parts of the political establishment, the judges' apparatus, the army' (Aljazeera, January 31, 2011), and he went back to confirm that part of them should be representatives of the revolutionaries, as they had the credit for sparking the Revolution. Bishara appeared as a revolutionary, but not in the squares, as his precise directions on the rights and presence of the revolutionaries indicated the extent of his keenness on the Egyptian Revolution, and that he saw in its success a success for his ideas and aspirations for the Arab world.

Bishara continued his directions and enriched them in more detail and clarification as the Revolution progressed. Bishara directed that the transition to a new regime must be done with complete caution and the utmost precision, peacefully and not bloodily, and in the light of a dialogue that has rules and principles, and in the presence of a national unity government with representatives from the military establishment, the political opposition, and technocrats (Aljazeera, February 1, 2011). Bishara's style of guidance provided the revolutionaries with what they could not find on other news channels at the time, as he provided the most accurate details of the strategies he advocated, and he served as a reference for Egyptians who were new to revolutions. For example, on the day before the last, he said clearly that what should be demanded is a president who is the president of the Constitutional Court, a transitional government of professionals and qualified people capable of running the country's affairs towards elections based on a constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly, and free and democratic elections, and the one who will win the elections will rule, or a coalition of those who will win the elections, not the Egyptian army (Aljazeera, February 10, 2011). In light of the crowded events of the Revolution and the multiplicity of parties and movements participating in it, Bishara's clear and detailed directives were what the revolutionaries needed to take an impartial path, looking rationally and comprehensively away from the dispersed interests and ideologies.

On the other hand, Bishara indirectly directs to increase the momentum of the Revolution in quantity and quality, as he confidently said: 'Tomorrow there will be millions, I have no doubt, and there must be millions to narrow the margin of manoeuvre on the system' (Aljazeera, February 5, 2011). On another day, he said: 'Tomorrow you will see that the momentum will not stop at all, on the contrary, it takes

different forms' (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). Bishara also directed that this revolution needed a strategy, because, as he said, the Revolution required revolutionizing different sectors of society (Aljazeera, February 5, 2011), stressing the importance of the role of intellectuals at this stage that they must explore the path and present proposals for the correct way to implement the process of democratic transformation (Aljazeera, 5 February, 2011). Then he urged the importance of the presence of unions within the Revolution, such as the Union of Journalists, Lawyers, and Doctors (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). The confidence in Bishara's anticipating the future, which is characteristic of his style, gave him the ability to influence the recipients, who would feel that what he said was correct, so they implement the scenario Bishara described.

Bishara's keenness on the Revolution indicated that his directives were not limited to Egyptians in Egypt, as he showed the importance of the role of Egyptian communities abroad in the Revolution (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011). He also called on Arab countries to provide all possible support to the Egyptian people and the new regime, and called on Egyptians to amend management systems and fight corruption as quickly as possible to encourage the Arab investors to invest in Egypt. Here, Bishara's thoughts of Arab nationalism and his aspirations for the importance of this Revolution were embodied.

Until the last day of the Revolution, Bishara continued to provide instructions, as at that time there was no need for further encouragement or warning after the revolutionaries had made their first gains. The general joy of the event and Bishara's joy, in particular, called for guiding those who have achieved important success and wanted to preserve it. Regarding the next stage of the Revolution, Bishara stressed that there must be an agreement on the principles of the democratic transition process, on which everyone must agree, regardless of ideologies, and care about cleaning the state's institutions from the corrupt mentality, culture, and values that prevailed (Aljazeera, February 11, 2011).

Once again, as in the context of warning, Bishara's keenness on the Revolution appeared through the directives he provided, as he did not present it as mere advice, but was decisive in his ideas and directions and was firm about it. This reinforces the belief that Bishara's role on Aljazeera during the Egyptian Revolution went beyond political commentary and analysis to sometimes explicit guidance when he said decisively that



the revolutionaries must do something, and sometimes implicit when he said confidently that they will do something.

#### **7.4. CONCLUSION**

All the above discussion of Bishara's political commentary and its three contexts is part of the general content provided by Aljazeera to the Arab viewer during the eighteen days of the Revolution. Therefore, Bishara's thoughts, speech, and stances towards the Egyptian Revolution cannot be separated from the channel discourse. He said about his role in the Revolution: 'Fate wanted us to sit here and help analyse what is going on and direct the compass for Arab public opinion, and we hope that it was so in Egyptian public opinion. There is no doubt that you, on Aljazeera, allowed us to do so. Not every place provides an opportunity for a rational analysis of matters in such circumstances' (Aljazeera, February 11, 2011.) Like any media organization in the Arab world, it will not invite a political analyst to be present daily to comment live on events unless they agree with his presentation. Bishara, with his sophistication and intellectual and political background, would not accept to be considered affiliated with a media institution, so he was clever to mention that although he sometimes had criticisms about Aljazeera, it was a window without which there would have been massacres (Aljazeera, February 7, 2011).

Hence, had it not been for the existence of a channel that provided a platform for Bishara to provide encouragement, warning and guidance, and had it not been for Bishara's involvement in playing his role as an Arab intellectual and thinker, this media content would not have emerged. In conclusion, what Bishara presented in the days of the Egyptian Revolution on Aljazeera was not just a commentary by a political expert, but rather, with its enlightening, educating, warning, encouraging, guiding and planning content, it was, in my opinion, a guide or a handbook to the revolution for the viewer and the revolutionary, and this was with the approval of Aljazeera.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

#### 8.1. FRAMING THE DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis has been to reach a comprehensive understanding of the role of TV news media content, considering the historical and political context of the event. Thus, I used ethnographic approach through 'telling of tales from the field' and 'indulge in the appropriate stylistic maneuvering' (Murphy, 2003, p.397), aiming at achieving the methodological contribution of this research, and reaching an accurate understanding of the case under study.

This understanding highlights the importance of media content in bringing about political change in the Arab region by educating viewers by satisfying their knowledge needs and creating an emotional impact. Here, based on the results, Aljazeera's content, during the Egyptian Revolution, was more than just news content. The channel employed emotions as a primary tool in attracting collective and individual attention, combining satisfying the viewers' needs for knowledge and arousing emotions which created trustful relationship with the audience that enabled it to influence the shaping of their political awareness. With its educating, warning, encouraging, guiding, and planning content, Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution was a guide or handbook of the revolution for the viewers and revolutionaries.

This chapter will review around the major findings of the research, which discuss the nature of Aljazeera's role in influencing the political awareness of Arab, especially during the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution. The conclusions that emerged from my fieldwork and archival analysis are divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on conclusions regarding the journalistic procedures and techniques implemented by Aljazeera in its live coverage, the themes and editorial style of the channel's main news bulletin, news reports, and political commentary during the Revolution. The second section highlights the conclusions drawn about the research's

questions and the research's contribution to knowledge, leading to the final section in the chapter proposing recommendations for future studies.

## **8.2. ALJAZEERA'S COVERAGE OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION**

I focused particular attention on the aspects of Aljazeera's intensive coverage of the Egyptian Revolution from January 25 to February 11, 2011, in four chapters of the thesis. The aspects I analysed included the journalistic procedures and techniques that Aljazeera used to accomplish its coverage of the Revolution in the face of the obstacles and bans imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the channel's work. Besides, I studied Aljazeera's news content, including the main news bulletin, news reports, and political commentary, through analysing its themes, discourse, language, editorial style, visual elements, and emotional impact. Thus, this research, by employing thematic analysis with ethnographic analysis, provided a space to understand more about news content from the procedural stage to the final media product, to fill a gap I faced within the literature. As there is a shortage of academic research addressing both sides of Aljazeera's coverage of a specific event, and as for the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution in particular, there has never been any research that examines both sides until the time of this research.

Building on the ethnographic analysis of Aljazeera, my thesis revealed that before the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera provided continuous news coverage of some events suspending its all programs; nevertheless, it is worth noting that the events that Aljazeera covered in this manner were generally wars, which implies that the channel framed the Revolution in the context of an event of the significance of wars. As a result of the interviews I conducted with Aljazeera's staff, it became clear to me that the tendency for continuous coverage stemmed from two factors: one is a professional media factor, as the news of the Revolution is a consumable commodity that the viewer is looking for, and the other is a democratic political factor, as the Revolution represented a democratic transformation that Aljazeera agreed with and supported.

Accordingly, I concluded that Aljazeera's intensive coverage on the Revolution, the size of the channel's access to news since the beginning of the events, and its prominent role in disrupting the official Egyptian TVs' propaganda made the Egyptian authorities

take measures against the channel which, I believe, were directed in two methods; prevention and treatment. In their pursuit of prevention, the authorities tried to keep the channel away from the Egyptian scene by closing its office, withdrawing its work licences, and cutting the internet and phone service. In another direction, in their quest for treatment, the authorities tried to prevent the Egyptian viewer from watching the channel by cutting off its signal on the Egyptian satellite, and demonising the channel, accusing it of inciting the Revolution. But, what the Egyptian regime made to face Aljazeera's coverage increased the channel's popularity, putting it in the position of a victim who gained sympathy from the Arab peoples, a victor who was able to stand in the face of injustice, and the primary source that Egyptians followed to know the news of their Revolution as they wanted a media that convey their voice to the world after the obscuring in the Egyptian media. In this context, the Battle of the Camels was one of the parts of the continuous coverage that strengthened the audience's confidence in the distinction of Aljazeera's coverage at that stage, and increased the tension between the channel and the Egyptian regime, especially as this incident caused progress in favour of the Revolution. Aljazeera's coverage had a role in protecting the Revolution, as it was the only channel that witnessed the incident. The detailed picture provided by Aljazeera about the incident put the viewer in the atmosphere of panic which the event created in the Square, while no other channel presented it. That atmosphere of panic confirmed to the viewer the extent to which the regime's injustice reached, which leaves no room for forgiveness for the regime, and reinforces that no retreat from get rid of the regime.

On the other hand, this thesis's results demonstrate that the intense live coverage was accompanied by exaggerations in several media aspects, which reinforced the questions about Aljazeera's role in revolutionizing the Egyptian street. Both, archival analysis and interviews in this study confirmed that the general mood in the channel among its staff during the Egyptian Revolution was filled with enthusiasm resulted in exaggerations and irregularities occurred in terms of professionalism in the coverage. Based on the archive analysis, Aljazeera's presenters used an angry revolutionary language, their facial expressions remained tense, and their performance was emotional, which would have emotional supportive impact on the Egyptian revolutionaries, and would give the Egyptian viewers confidence and courage to participate and confront the regime on reality.

The space given to the Muslim Brotherhood to appear on the channel was among these exaggerations. Aljazeera's staff's justification for this was that the Brotherhood's presence in the revolutionary scene was strong and could not be overlooked. Although what Aljazeera did was professional in part, as it provided them the opportunity to appear while other Arab channels did not, the space that was provided to them was greater than what was provided to other forces participating in the Revolution. This space would have provided the Brotherhood with a platform to strengthen their political presence and bring them closer to the public than before, showing their unity and clarifying their political vision compared to other forces, especially through phone-ins of a number of their leaders, including Essam Elerian, Abdelmoneim Aboufotouh, and Mohamed Morsi who became the first president of Egypt after the Revolution.

Exaggeration in Aljazeera's live coverage of the Egyptian Revolution was most evident in the promos, which were unconventional and unfamiliar in news channels. Rich with images of the revolutionaries accompanied by enthusiastic music and famous Arabic songs like Umm Kulthum's and Abdelwahhab's songs, about homeland and revolution against corruption, injustice and dictatorship, those promos had an exceptional style driven by the enthusiasm of the Revolution. Performing an act of mobilization, moving to campaigning, and waiving the task of objective journalism, these songs caught the attention of all Arab viewers, affected them, and touched their hearts and aroused sympathy.

In an essential part of the coverage, Aljazeera's main news bulletin, *The Harvest*, constituted a summary of the daily news content of the Revolution. The main conclusion that can be drawn regarding the Harvest is that Aljazeera used the themes of the bulletin, its discourse and visual content for the benefit of the Revolution. By examining the content of the bulletin, the channel's keenness on the Revolution's success was evident, embodied in its choice of vocabulary and repetition, and deepening the themes through phone-ins that support the revolutionaries' point of view, with which the channel agrees, and not the view of the Egyptian regime. Throughout the bulletin's themes, Aljazeera focused on the elements that demonstrate the power of the Revolution, such as the spread and intensity of demonstrations, its inclusiveness of all Egyptians, regardless of any differences, its organization, and the courage and steadfastness of the demonstrators, presenting an opposite image to that presented by

the Egyptian channels, which would enhance the steadfastness of the rebels and encourage Egyptians to demonstrate. Aljazeera's keenness on the Revolution was also demonstrated by its emphasis on the Revolution's list of demands, which became clear and well-established in the viewers' minds. In the other side Aljazeera emphasised the errors and flaws of the Egyptian regime in-depth and detail in terms of highlighting the seriousness of the economic, security and freedoms situation in Egypt during the 18 days, which indicates that Aljazeera was keen to clarify that the situation is becoming worse than it was before the Revolution.

Out of sympathy for the Revolution, Aljazeera's keenness on the Revolution's success made the channel provide more than news. Aljazeera often interfered in the events, which was most evident in the theme of identifying the enemies of the Revolution to make Egyptian viewers; in particular, aware of those who do not want the Revolution to succeed at all levels. Thus, Aljazeera showed the relationship between the revolutionaries and the army as a cautious relationship, used warning expressions to assert that Mubarak does not care about his people's demands, affirmed, repeatedly, its rejection of Omar Suleiman and the National Party, intensely reminded the viewers of the security forces' attacks on demonstrators and the confiscation of their right to demonstrate and express, highlighted that the United States of America only cares about its interest in the Middle East, addressed Israel as another enemy the Egyptians must be wary of its intentions, and addressed the Egyptian media as an enemy of the Revolution.

Among the elements of the channel's intensive coverage with a strong impact were Aljazeera's reports, which were distinguished by their literary style that is different from the usual news reports, namely the reports of journalists Fawzi Bushra and Fatima Triki. These reports' style is considered by some media professionals as commendable audacity, and others consider it a departure from the editorial standards. On this basis, this thesis concluded that one of Aljazeera's most important tools in declaring its positions towards events openly and eloquently is Bushra's reports. Aljazeera chooses Bushra to make a report in the case of the most significant events, either in MENA or internationally. Bushra's choice of words and voice tone became a brand that Aljazeera uses to lead the audience to realize the importance of the event. So are Triki's reports, as her reports usually highlight and discuss a specific event from Aljazeera's point of view, when a crisis deepen, dividing the event into accurate details, and criticizing it.

During the Egyptian Revolution, these reports defended the Revolution against the regime, depending on Aljazeera's ideology of being biased toward the people and their demands of the Revolution.

With their sophisticated literary language, and logical inferences to persuade the viewer, Bushra and Triki's reports are closer to being considered as very short documentaries, rather than considering them as ordinary news reports. The literary language depends on using the aesthetics of language, like metaphors, Qur'anic phrases, Arab poetry phrases to deepen the meanings in the text, which affect the Arab viewers' emotions, who have deep ties to religion and Arabic literature, instead of using simple direct declarative sentences. Bushra relies in many of his reports on simulating the Quranic style, which succeeds in attracting audience attention, especially that Arab, Muslims in particular, are influenced by the stories of Quran, so they can get the meaning that the speaker intended to say, also they can realize his position toward the event immediately when they hear the verse. By examining the differences that characterize these reports, it becomes clear that Aljazeera has changed and innovated in the news formats. In some cases, Aljazeera neglects journalistic editorial standards in order to spread its political messages and create emotional impact toward events.

In a critical aspect of Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution, the political thinker Azmi Bishara's role emerges, through his political commentary on the channel at the time. Bishara's role was overlooked by researchers, so I sought in my research to fill this gap in academic research, especially since Aljazeera provided a platform for Bishara, where his thoughts, speech, and stances towards the Egyptian Revolution cannot be separated from the channel's discourse.

What enabled Bishara to occupy a large period of time of political analysis on the channel during the Revolution is that he is an intellectual who has practised political work, as he combined two sides: theorizing in political thought and working in politics, which distinguished his intellectual approach in the Arab world where there is a deficiency in the existence of a similar model. In addition to his background, I concluded through my interview with Bishara that he was monitoring the events of the Egyptian Revolution from the heart of the event, which strengthened his vision of the present and the future, as he was in contact with the revolutionaries, and political leaders he knows personally, Egyptian intellectuals, and university professors. They

were watching him, and sometimes they called him afterwards, and many times they called him before his appearance, telling him what they would do, and what issues baffled them. This is an important finding in understanding that Bishara's commentary was not primarily a comment intended for the viewer to understand the events in the Egyptian street, but rather was a dialogue with the revolutionaries to enlighten them about the issue surrounding them and analyse the situation they face so that they can deal with.

Based on thematic discourse analysis, it would appear that Bishara's discourse provided the following themes: encouragement, warning and guidance to the Egyptian revolutionaries. In the context of encouragement, Bishara emphasized the strength of the revolutionaries by focusing on the size of the demonstrations, the maturity of the Revolution's demands and slogans, and being a result of the people democratic will. He also emphasized the weakness of the regime by focusing on the steps taken by the regime to retreat in an attempt to save itself. The emotional impact that Bishara presented in this context occupied an important space in his political commentary, especially as it appeared in his encouraging words, as well as in the enthusiastic tone and the spirit of optimism. The context of warning occupied the largest space of Bishara's commentary on the Revolution, and was a reflection of his concerns about what might fail the Revolution, which reinforces the belief that Bishara played an important role in preserving the Revolution. In this context, Bishara warned about the regime intensively and frequently, by focusing on Mubarak's personality, Omar Suleiman, the call for dialogue with Omar Suleiman, the National Party NDP, the army, besides the warning from the international community, specifically from the United States of America and Israel.

In the context of guidance, Bishara's directives in the early days served as a compass to guide the rebels in light of the confusion and the multiplicity of voices that appeared at that stage. Based on archival analysis, this thesis concludes in arguing that Bishara provided the most accurate details of the strategies he advocated, which served as a reference for Egyptians who were new to revolutions. Bishara's knowledge of history and the nature of democratic transformations in the world, as well as his understanding of the nature of the Egyptian street and its Revolution, and his familiarity with the oppressive Arab security services enabled him to provide strategic and operational guidance to the revolutionaries. Bishara's directives were regarding the next steps the



revolutionaries should take in order to success in achieving their demands and overcome the obstacles in their confrontation with the regime, including the necessity of unifying the political forces to create a clear and unequivocal political framework and strategy that revolutionize the different sectors of society.

Bishara's commentary moved between the comprehensive picture and the detailed image, delving into the details of the events of the Revolution and the demonstrations and its repercussions and developments, raising awareness of the regime's position and actions towards the Revolution, clarifying the international position, in addition to shedding light on stations in the modern history of the Egyptian state and the history of democratic transitions in the world, and through all the above, he presented his vision of the expectations about the regime and the Western countries, and the scenarios that he directed to the revolutionaries. Therefore, Bishara's role, during the 18 days of the Revolution, and thus Aljazeera's role, went beyond providing political analysis to providing advice and guidance to the revolutionaries.

Being the first research to examine Aljazeera's coverage of the 18 days of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution in such depth and detail, combining ethnographic analysis with thematic analysis, this section of this chapter reviews the answer to the question: What did Aljazeera do in its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution? To reach a comprehensive understanding of Aljazeera's role, the next section provides the answer to the question: How did Aljazeera cover its coverage of the Egyptian Revolution?

### **8.3. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ALJAZEERA'S ROLE IN SHAPING THE POLITICAL AWARENESS OF ARAB**

While many of the previous studies which address Aljazeera, Arab Studies in particular, attempted to prove that the channel was either the engine that caused Arab revolutions, or the weapon that brought destruction to the Middle East, this research is a contribution to the ongoing debate over the nature of Aljazeera effect on Arab, especially during the 18 days of Egyptian Revolution. My aim, therefore, is to fill the gap in the existing literature on understanding how this channel has affected on Arab political awareness during a critical stage in the history of the Arab region.

In investigating how Aljazeera conducted the coverage, research into success factors is a major issue. Here, the ethnographic analysis and the information I obtained from the interviews indicate that the huge financial capacity, and the conscious planning that is associated with it, are two main pillars in conducting the channel's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, in particular, and in its work in general since its inception. The channel's funding and news management planning allowed it to empower, increase and diversify its sources at the time of the Revolution, the same pillars that enabled it to specialize in the field of news television, so it was the pioneer in the Arab region. Another factor that the study has revealed is that Aljazeera's correspondents are fighters who face difficulties to obtain information, by virtue of being in areas of tension, and this is what happened in the channel's coverage that preceded the Arab revolutions, which I reviewed previously (see Chapter 3). This factor was strongly embodied during Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution, as the obstacles that the channel faced in accessing news accumulated. For example, the channel delivered smuggled transmission devices with one of its staff who travelled from Doha and entered through Cairo International Airport, with the transmitters, to support the establishment of a secret point for broadcast in Tahrir Square. In addition to the strength of the channel's correspondents, it relied on citizen journalism in its coverage of the Revolution. When the Revolution began, Aljazeera reaped the fruits of the support it provided to the citizen journalist early before the revolutions. Aljazeera succeeded in building a wide network of relations with blogging activists and citizen journalists through free training Aljazeera Media Institute in Doha provided to a large group of citizen journalists, aiming to enable people to express themselves, and many cameras have been distributed in large parts of the Arab world, phone-like cameras that can film and send materials. The channel also worked a lot on empowering the citizen journalist; in 2006 it produced the documentary film *Bloggers* noticing the importance of this phenomenon. Aljazeera was a pioneer in using videos filmed by Egyptian citizens in the events of the Revolution and thus took a new approach in the traditional television media related to its interest in digital media and the citizen journalism. By broadcasting these videos, despite its lack of professionalism, Aljazeera gave these materials more credibility and made them acceptable in the Arab media, while they were unwelcomed as reliable news sources (Wall, 2019), so other channels imitated Aljazeera in using these videos.

The analysis of the archive in the light of the ethnographic analysis highlighted that one of the factors that made Aljazeera a reliable source for news of the Revolution is that the channel diversified its information delivery tools, considering the differences between people and their interests. Besides the richness of visual content with the live scenes of the demonstration and the archival scenes of poverty and torture that provoke more frustration against the Egyptian regime, Aljazeera simplified the complicated news by displaying information written in lists and points. Aljazeera helped to clarify news stories that may contain confusion, providing briefings on issues of upcoming importance to Egypt, and providing historical and biographical information. Thus, the revolutionaries took Aljazeera as a source of the Revolution's news in all Egyptian cities; the protesters in Tahrir Square were watching Aljazeera on screens in the heart of the square, ignoring the local TV stations. In return, the protesters were protecting and guiding Aljazeera's team. This, in turn, created a reciprocal relationship between Aljazeera and the revolutionaries that was in itself a strength factor for the channel.

The present findings confirm that one of the factors that distinguish Aljazeera's coverage of the Revolution from others is that it succeeded in satisfying the audiences' cognitive and emotional needs at a time when the official Egyptian media were ignoring and denying the Revolution. It also satisfied the audience to be kept abreast of the latest developments and to understand the complicated events and political information. Here, unsurprisingly, the study concludes that the popularity of Aljazeera among the Arab peoples was not only a result of its power, but also the result of the weakness of other media outlets in satisfying the public's need for knowledge.

#### **8.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

This thesis is the first research to examine Aljazeera's coverage of 18 days of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution in such depth and detail. It combined ethnographic analysis with thematic analysis, to get a comprehensive understanding of Aljazeera's role during a critical period in the Arab region. Focusing on the journalistic procedures of the coverage and the news content including its linguistic and visual aspects during the Revolution, the research focused on the television media aspect of the event, while the political details were addressed in case of need. So, this study does little to increase our

understanding of the relation between Aljazeera and Qatari foreign policy. In this context, a study of the channel's coverage of Qatar diplomatic crisis that began in 2017 to 2021 with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, would make an interesting study to show how Aljazeera has turned into Qatar's weapon in the face of the country's political opponents.

Based on my observation of the difference between the coverage of Aljazeera Arabic and the coverage of Aljazeera English, a comparative study of the two channels' coverage of a single event would be valuable. As such, my study will provide a good starting point for future research that compare between the two channels' coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, which would be significant to explore Aljazeera's way in addressing the events and news stories depending on the differences between the audiences.

## **8.5. FINAL THOUGHTS**

Aljazeera's pioneering media experience was not only in terms of the technical side, that is, its ability to directly transmit the event with a network of correspondents covering the globe, but also in what it created in terms of dealing with news, which differed from the norms of Arab media that did not free itself from state control.

Since its inception, Aljazeera has satisfied the audience's need to learn more about all the world's news and events. Aljazeera gave the Arab human being, in particular, the right to acquire knowledge that regimes had hidden from him/her. Aljazeera's contribution to the Arab citizens' state of awareness over the years touches on issues such as tyranny, lack of freedom, and social and economic justice, as well as the daily problems of poverty, ignorance, unemployment, and social problems caused by the corrupt political practices of Arab regimes and the absence of genuine human and economic development projects. This increase in awareness enabled people to challenge authority, monitor it, and eventually demand their rights in movements against governments and revolutions.

Based on this, I assume that local news channels in the Arab region must provide the citizens of the country, from which they broadcast, detailed news regarding the events taking place in the country without delay, concealment, manipulation or ignoring one of

the parties of the event, and with the possible degree of impartiality. In this way, the citizens derive information from their state's channel, so that their only source of the country's news is not other channels that have different agendas based on their interests.

Aljazeera's satisfaction of Arab viewers' needs, both the cognitive needs and values related needs, in the pre-revolution period and during the Egyptian Revolution, had an influence on the viewers' awareness of the information the channel delivered regarding the Revolution and the regime. Aljazeera's impact on the Egyptian Revolution was profound, in my opinion, as it was cumulative rather than immediate. Although Aljazeera was not the main cause of the Revolution, it was one of its causes, because the people revolted as a result of their awareness, of which Aljazeera was one of its means.

To conclude this study, it is important to note that during the Egyptian Revolution, Aljazeera's content was more than just news, bulletins, reports, and political commentary; it was, in my opinion, a guide or handbook of the revolution for the viewers and revolutionaries, with its enlightening, educating, warning, encouraging, guiding, and planning content.

## APPENDICES

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

- **Jamal Elshayyal**, Correspondent and Producer at Aljazeera, 22 March 2020.
- **Ahmed Alsheikh**, Media Advisor to the Chairman of Aljazeera, Editor-in-chief during the Revolution, 22 March 2020.
- **Mohamed Krichen**, Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, 23 March 2020.
- **Khadija Benguenna**, Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, 24 March 2020.
- **Fatima Triki**, Senior Journalist and Producer at Aljazeera, 25 March 2020.
- **Montaser Marai**, Manager of Media development, news producer and field correspondent in Aljazeera in Tahrir Square during the Revolution, 26 March 2020.
- **Mohamed Dawood**, Executive Director of Quality and Editorial Standards in Aljazeera, News Planning Director during the Revolution, 31 March 2020.
- **Jamal Rayyan**, Principle Presenter at Aljazeera, 2 April 2020.
- **Mostefa Souag**, the Director General of Aljazeera, the News Director during the Revolution, 5 April 2020
- **Abdelfattah Fayed**, Editor of Egyptian affairs at Aljazeera, the channel's Cairo Bureau Chief during the Egyptian Revolution, 25 April 2020
- **Tayseer Allouni**, Director of Aljazeera bureau in Afghanistan, 27 March 2020.
- **Yasser Bishr**, the Executive Director of Digital at Aljazeera, 30 April 2020.
- **Tamer Meshal**, Aljazeera correspondent in Gaza, 30 April 2020.
- **Azmi Bishara**, Arabic intellectual, political philosopher and author, 7 May 2020.
- **Fawzi Bushra**, Senior Journalist and Producer at Aljazeera, 9 May 2020.

## INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

Personal Information

Name:

Current position:

Position during the Egyptian revolution in January 2011:

Duration of experience in Aljazeera:

- How was the beginning of your work with Aljazeera?
- What distinguishes Aljazeera from others? Since its beginnings, what distinguished it?
- If BBC Arabic had not been closed, on whose ruins Aljazeera was founded, would Aljazeera have existed? Was the emergence of Aljazeera just an idea that emerged after the closure of BBC Arabic, or was it planned in advance? When did the idea appear, especially as it is the first channel of its kind in the Middle East?
- Who were the personalities that were part of the channel's founding team?
- Being a former BBC employee, what is the difference between working for the BBC and Aljazeera? Do you think your name would have been known as it is now in the Arab world if you were still at the BBC?
- How does Aljazeera choose its presenters?
- How does Aljazeera choose its correspondents?
- Why did the channel choose the slogan *The Opinion and the Other Opinion*?
- What did Aljazeera gain from allowing the Israelis to appear on the channel? Was this so important that it deserves to be criticized, especially by the Arabs who refuse to deal with Israel in any way?
- How would you describe the freedom of the channel compared to other Arab news channels?
- Do you see that there is something that distinguishes Aljazeera from Western news channels?
- On the way to the revolution, did Aljazeera contribute to the outbreak of revolutions, in one way or another? Many believe that had it not been for the role of Aljazeera TV, the Arab revolutions would not have appeared in the first place.
- Is the presence of Aljazeera different today from what it was before the revolutions? How?
- The channel's coverage of the war on Afghanistan was what made Aljazeera's name known globally. How was Aljazeera able to be there, and even get close to the Taliban to the point that it was able to obtain exclusive recordings and interviews?
- Was the relationship between Egypt and Aljazeera tense before the revolution?
- When did Aljazeera decided to put aside its regular programming schedule to focus on the demonstrations in Egypt?
- Why was the coverage continuous?

- Do you remember the first day of the Egyptian demonstrations? How would you describe the atmosphere of that day in the channel, and how the channel dealt with the demonstrations on the first day of the revolution?
- What did Aljazeera do to technically and logistically bypass its ban by the Egyptian authorities during the revolution?
- How did Aljazeera get through the internet cut on January 27, 2011?
- How many correspondents and staff were in Aljazeera's offices in Egypt before the revolution? And how many were they after the start of the revolution after the ban during the 18 days?
- What was the channel's first reaction after being banned by the Egyptian authorities?
- Do you remember the details of the day Mubarak stepped down?
- How did Aljazeera manage to cover 24 continuous hours for 18 days? What do you think helped the channel to achieve this?
- It is said that without Aljazeera, the January revolution would not have succeeded. What do you say? If not, what do you think Aljazeera provided for the January revolution, and would the result have been the same if the coverage had not been for 24 hours?
- Do you think that the channel's coverage of the revolution protected the demonstrators from the Egyptian security forces' persistence in attacks?
- Placing two giant screens in Tahrir Square showing the channel's broadcast. What did this mean to Aljazeera?
- I have never heard a song on a satellite news channel, and this song carries the message and position of the channel. How and based on what songs were used in the promos?
- Researchers say that the analytical space provided by Aljazeera in the Egyptian revolution went beyond the news and political analysis to an attempt to persuade and provide advice and guidance to the revolutionaries. What is your opinion?
- What is your comment on those who say that the Muslim Brotherhood had the largest share in the interventions and appearance of revolution activists in the content of the coverage?
- What are the challenges that Aljazeera faced in covering the revolution on the ground in the field?
- It is said that Aljazeera's role was not only a news media role. For example, the presenter asks a volunteer field doctor about the necessary medical materials that they need, and it appears on the screen that 'for those who wish to deliver medicines to the field hospital in Tahrir Square, contact a number..'. What is your response that Aljazeera has turned from a reporter of news to a participant in the event?
- Why was Azmi Bishara chosen to analyze the events in the Egyptian revolution?



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abboud, R. (2006). *The relation between modern technologies used in Arab news channels and the level of knowledge of the Arab public about current events*. PhD Thesis: Cairo University.
- Abdelhadi, M. (2014). *The Secret of Al Jazeera*. [online] Alaraby Aljadeed. Available at: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/0-سرء-ءالجزيرة> [Accessed 10 Oct. 2019].
- Abdelmoula, E. (2012). *Al-Jazeera's democratizing role and the rise of Arab public sphere*. PhD Thesis: University of Exeter. Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/9697/AbdelmoulaE.pdf> [Accessed 21 Oct. 2019].
- Abdelmoula, E., Miladi, N., Zarn, J., Al Raji, M., Zayani, M., Shigenobu, M., Al Yahyao, Y., Vignesko, T., Miller, N., Hussein, H., Doway, A., Mabrouki, M., Hamido, K., Bridges, S., Powers, S. and Seib, P. (2016). *Al Jazeera in Twenty Years: Its Impact on Media, Politics and Academia*. Aljazeera Centre for Studies & Arab Scientific Publishers.
- Abdelrahman, A. (2004). *The Arabs and space media*. Beirut: Arab Unity Studies Centre.
- Abdulla, R. (2014). *Egypt's Media in the Midst of Revolution*. [online] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/16/egypt-s-media-in-midst-of-revolution-pub-56164> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2019].
- Abdullah, M. (2012). *Al Jazeera's role in political change in the Arab world*. MA Thesis: An-Najah National University.
- Abu Bakr, S. (2014). *Emotion is the first step towards the Arab mind*. [online] Ammon News Agency. Available at: <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/215111> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2022].

- Abu Shabab, J. (2011). *Aljazeera: How did a 15-year-old channel cover a nation's revolutions?* Qatar: Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.
- Abualrub, M. (2010). *Aljazeera & Qatar: The politics discourses & the discourse politics.* Jerusalem: Abu Ghosh Press.
- Abunajela, M. (2012). *Al Jazeera and Arab revolutions.* MA Thesis.
- Al Harahsheh, S. (2013). *Analysis of Al Jazeera's discourse towards the events of the Arab Spring In Syria.* MA Thesis.
- Al Jazeera (2006). *Aljazeera in the eye of the storm, in Aljazeera: I see, I hear, I speak.* [online] Aljazeera.net. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.net/programs/al-jazeeraspecialprograms/2006/11/8/2ج-العاصفة-عين-الجزيرة-في> [Accessed 26 Nov. 2019].
- Al Jazeera Breaking News (2011). *1 February, AJENews.* [online] Twitter. Available at: <https://twitter.com/ajenews/status/32486955467939840> [Accessed 12 Sep. 2019].
- Al Jazeera Documentary (2017). *Arab Television between Governance and Opposition.* [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woaBsVvIHuc> [Accessed 12 Nov. 2018].
- Al Kharusi, R. (2016). *Ideologies of Arab media and politics: a critical discourse analysis of Al Jazeera debates on the Yemeni revolution.* PhD Thesis: the University of Hertfordshire. Available at: <https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/17659/12240546%20Al%20Kharusi%20Raiya%20Final%20PhD%20Submission.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Al Thani, F. (2008). *Total quality management in media institutions applied to Aljazeera From 2004 to 2006.* Beirut: Dar Almarefa.
- Al-Habsi, M. (2015). *Offering a new(s) view of the Arab world: A study of the news production of Al Jazeera.* PhD Thesis: University of Leicester. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/2381/32013>.

Al-Jazeera: The story of the network that is rattling governments and redefining modern journalism. (n.d.).

Al-Mahdawi, F. (2009). *Iraq coverage in Arabic satellite channels : an analysis of the content of news on Iraq in al Jazeera and al Arabiya satellite channels*. PhD Thesis.

Al-Nasser, H. (2017). Arab political emotion. [online] *Alayam*. Available at: <https://www.alayam.com/Article/alayam-article/405473/Index.html> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2022].

Al-Rihani, M.S. (2015). *The authenticity of the Arab media slogan through building the news image*.

Al-Shammari, T. (2007). *Al-Jazeera, a channel or a party or a state: the media, popular and political role of Al-Jazeera channel in the Arab, Islamic and Western world*. Cairo: Dar Alketab.

Al-Zaidi, M. (2003). *Aljazeera and breaking taboos in Arab Media Space*. Beirut: Dar Altalae'.

Alafandi, A. (2002). The liquidation of Aljazeera channel to return the Arab waters to their streams. *Alquds Alarabi*. 15 Oct.

Alalawi, N. (2015). How Media Covered “Arab Spring” Movement: Comparison between the American Fox News and the Middle Eastern Al Jazeera. *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism*, 05(11).

Alalem, S. (2013). *Media Role in Democratic Transformation-Egypt*. Doha: Aljazeera Center for Studies.

Albasheer, B. (2011). *Intellectual Azmi Bishara and the revolution's approach*. [online] *Azmibishara.com*. Available at: <https://www.azmibishara.com/ar/-كلمات-عن-عزمي-بشارة> [Accessed 3 Sep. 2020].

Aldelingawi, O. (2011). *2011 year of the revolution*. Cairo: ktab INC.

- Aldhafiri, A. (2012). *Between Aljazeera and the revolution: Years of despair and winds of change*. Beirut: Arab Network for Research and Publishing.
- Aldreabi, H.A. (2017). Narrative Account of the Arab Spring: Translations of Aljazeera and RT of the Egyptian and Syrian Uprisings as Case Study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(10), p.819.
- Aldulaimi, A. (2011). *Arab Media: Pressures of the Present and Future Challenges*. Dar Al Masirah for Publishing & Distribution.
- Alfatih, H. (2020). The use of graphics in the production of television news programs for Al-Jazeera news channel. A study in habits and patterns of use. *Al-Hikma Journal for Media and Communication Studies*, 7(4), pp.35–61.
- Alhadithi, W. (2007). *International Media: Some Problems of Arab Media Discourse. Notes, Opinions, Proposals*. Cairo: Scientific Books House for Publishing and Distribution.
- Alhawari, S. (2018). The influence of Al Jazeera media network in the Arab public affairs. *Journal of Media Studies*, 1(1), pp.5–33.
- Aljazeera Media Network (n.d.). *Editorial Standards*. [online] Al Jazeera Media Network. Available at: <https://network.aljazeera.net/about-us/our-values/standards> [Accessed 6 Feb. 2019].
- Aljazeera Media Network (n.d.). *Our Story is Telling*. [online] Al Jazeera Media Network. Available at: <https://network.aljazeera.net/about-us/timeline> [Accessed 20 Jul. 2019].
- Aljazeera Media Network (2011). *This is Aljazeera*. Aljazeera Media Network.
- Aljazeera.com (2011). *Egypt shuts down Al Jazeera bureau*. [online] [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com). Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/01/201113085252994161.html> [Accessed 17 Nov. 2017].

- Aljazeera.net (2017). *Al-Jazeera denounces the blockade countries' demand to close it*.  
 [online] Aljazeera.net. Available at:  
<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/english/2017/6/23/الجزيرة-تستنكر-مطالبة-دول-الحصار-لقطر>  
 [Accessed 29 Oct. 2017].
- Alkanani, M.G. (2012). *Media dialogues techniques: Aljazeera channel as a model*. Amman: Dar Osama.
- Alkhaleej Online. (2014). *Al Jazeera..18 years and the coverage continues*. [online] Available at: <https://alkhaleejonline.net/سياسة/قناة-الجزيرة-18-عاماً-والتغطية-مستمرة/> [Accessed 4 Dec. 2019].
- Alkhattinah, S. and Alnawaisa, F. (2011). *Social Psychology*. Amman: Almanhal.
- Alkhazendar, S. (2008). *Questionnaire of media & political science lecturers' opinions about Aljazeera channel's professionalism*. Amman: World of Knowledge Center for Opinions Questionnaires.
- Allan, D. and Brown, C. (2010). The Mavi Marmara At The Frontlines Of Web 2.0. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40(1), pp.63–77.
- Almamlouk, M. (2014). *The president's cave: Mubarak's last confessions*. Cairo: Konouz for Publication and Distribution.
- Almanawi, A. (2012). *The last days of the Mubarak regime: 18 days*. Cairo: The Egyptian Lebanese Publishing House.
- Almatrook, N. (2011). *The thinker of the revolutions*. [online] Al-Akhbar Newspaper. Available at: <https://al-akhbar.com/Opinion/86681> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2020].
- Almorsi, M. (2019). *Today - Al Jazeera..a platform for media disinformation and spreading lies*. [online] dmc TV. 28 Oct. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vceKaFyw0lA> [Accessed 1 Nov. 2019].

- Alnabulsi, M.A. (2011). *Eager revolutions: Future reading of the Arab sphere transformations*. ed. Beirut: Dar Alfarabi.
- Alquds Alarabi (2013). *To what extent did the news channels contribute to the spark of the Arab Spring revolutions?* [online] Alquds Alqjabi Newspaper. Available at: <https://www.alquds.co.uk/ما-مدى-مساهمة-القنوات-الإخبارية-في-قذح/comment-page-1/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2019].
- Alrizo, H.M. (2008). *The Image Revolution: Media Landscape and Reality Space*. Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies.
- Alsaman, A. (2012). Bushra: I wrote Mubarak's abdication news report. *Alsharq Newspaper*. [online] Available at: <http://www.alsharq.net.sa/2012/02/02/108274> [Accessed 26 Jan. 2018].
- Alsamany, A. (2011). Bahraini activist: Aljazeera ignored Bahrain protests. *Tahrir News*. [online] Available at: <https://www.tahrirnews.com/خارج-الحدود/حقوق-بحريني-«استقبال-> / [Accessed 26 Oct. 2018].
- Alsammurai, I. (2019). *News satellite channels: their role in guiding public opinion politically*. Cairo: Alarabi Publishing and Distributing.
- Alshibl, L. (2011). *Luna Alshibl Exposes Aljazeera Channel and Reveals a lot of facts*. [online] *Addounia TV*. 29 Apr. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPb\\_Zl\\_vL4E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPb_Zl_vL4E) [Accessed 20 Jul. 2020].
- Alshujairi, S. (2018). *Media bias*. Dar Hemithra for Publishing & Translation.
- Alterman, J.B. (1998). *New media, new politics? : From satellite television to the Internet in the Arab world*. [online] Washington, Dc: Washington Institute For Near East Policy. Available at: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/new-media-new-politics-satellite-television-internet-arab-world-0> [Accessed 23 Dec. 2019].

- Amin, J. (2002). *Globalization of oppression: the United States, Arabs and Muslims before and after the events of September 2001*. Cairo: Dar Alshoroq.
- Ammon News. (2009). *Al Jazeera and Alarabiya...Divergent in transferring the reality of the Gaza war*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/32807> [Accessed 5 Dec. 2019].
- Ana Masry (2017a). *Egyptian media before and after the January 25 revolution - Part 2*. [online] [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUvGmnwCCCU&list=PLvfOy8mMvuC5PZum3nVBNm4ZfRm9awIwq&index=2&t=0s> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].
- Ana Masry (2017b). *Egyptian media before and after the January 25 revolution - Part 3*. [online] [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nICCC4DDcJ8> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].
- Arabi21. (2014). *Al Jazeera ranks first in the Arab world in terms of viewership*. [online] Arabi21. Available at: <https://arabi21.com/story/797944/-الجزيرة-في-المرتبة-الأولى-عربيا-من-حيث-المشاهدة> [Accessed 4 Sep. 2018].
- Auter, P., Arafa, M. and Al-Jaber, K. (2005). Hungry for news and information: Instrumental use of Al-Jazeera TV among viewers in the Arab World and Arab diaspora. *Journal of Middle East Media*, [online] 1(1), pp.21–50. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/3822890/Hungry\\_for\\_news\\_and\\_information\\_Instrumental\\_use\\_of\\_Al\\_Jazeera\\_TV\\_among\\_viewers\\_in\\_the\\_Arab\\_World\\_and\\_Arab\\_diaspora](https://www.academia.edu/3822890/Hungry_for_news_and_information_Instrumental_use_of_Al_Jazeera_TV_among_viewers_in_the_Arab_World_and_Arab_diaspora).
- Awwad, J. (2005). *Al-Jazeera's discourse of "Arabness"*. PhD Thesis.
- Ayish, M.I. (2002). Political communication on Arab world television: evolving patterns. *Political Communication*, 2(19), pp.137–155.

- Azar, J. (2006). *The opinion and the other opinion*. [online] [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com). Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2006/10/200841010922766666.html> [Accessed 25 Oct. 2019].
- Barakat, R. (2015). *Al-Jazeera, Intellectuals, and the Deconstruction of Social Realities*. [PhD Thesis] Available at: <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/23516> [Accessed 25 Dec. 2021].
- Barkho, L. (2007). Unpacking the discursive and social links in BBC, CNN and Al-Jazeera's Middle East reporting. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 1(1), pp.11–29.
- Barkho, L. (2008). *Strategies of power in multilingual global broadcasters: How the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera shape their Middle East news discourse*. PhD Thesis: Jonkoping University. Available at: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:128213/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Bashri, M., Netzley, S. and Greiner, A. (2012). Facebook revolutions: Transitions in the Arab world, transitions in media coverage? A comparative analysis of CNN and Al Jazeera English's online coverage of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 5(1), pp.19–29.
- Bauer, M. and Gaskell, G. eds., (2000). *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. [online] London: Sage. Available at: <http://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209731> [Accessed 10 Mar. 2018].
- BBC (n.d.). *Editorial Guidelines, Section 4: Impartiality - Introduction*. [online] Bbc.com. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidelines/impartiality> [Accessed 2 Aug. 2019].
- BBC News (2001). US urges curb on Arab TV channel. [online] 4 Oct. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1578619.stm> [Accessed 13 Aug. 2018].
- BBC News (2005). Spain jails al-Jazeera reporter. *news.bbc.co.uk*. [online] 26 Sep. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4283328.stm> [Accessed 26 Nov. 2019].



BBC News Arabic (2011). *2011: Chronology of events in Egypt*. [online] BBC News Arabic.

Available at:

[https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/12/111228\\_year\\_ender\\_egypt\\_chronological](https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/12/111228_year_ender_egypt_chronological) [Accessed 30 Oct. 2017].

Bednarek, M. and Caple, H. (2014). Why do news values matter? Towards a new methodological framework for analysing news discourse in Critical Discourse Analysis and beyond. *Discourse & Society*, 25(2), pp.135–158.

Bednarek, M. and Caple, H. (2019). *News discourse*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Beinin, J. (2016). *Workers and thieves: labor movements and popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Ben Moussa, M. (2007). Al Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel That is Challenging the West. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 32(1).

Berger, A.A. (1995). *Essentials of mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Berger, J. and Mohr, J. (1982). *Another Way of Telling: A Possible Theory of Photography*. Bloomsbury.

Bin Hamad Al Thani, T. (2017). *60 Minutes: Qatar's emir stands defiant in face of blockade*. [online] *CBS news*. 29 Oct. Available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/qatars-emir-stands-defiant-in-face-of-blockade/> [Accessed 5 Nov. 2017].

Bin Jabor Al Thani, H. (2017). *Al haqiqa, episode 97*. [online] *Qatar Television*. 26 Oct. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOdW04XCwHk> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2017].

Bishara, A. (2001). *On the democratic choice ... critical studies*. Center for Arab Unity Studies.

Bishara, A. (2007). *On the Arab question: An introduction to an Arab democratic statement*. Center for Arab Unity Studies.

- Bishara, A. (2009). *On being Arab in the present day*. Center for Arab Unity Studies.
- Bishara, A. (2011). *On revolution and the possibility of revolution*. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Bishara, A. (2012). *The glorious Tunisian revolution*. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Bishara, A. (2013). *Syria: The path of pain to freedom*. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Bishara, A. (2016). *The Egyptian Revolution: from Egypt's July revolution to January 25 revolution*. Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Bloor, M. (2016). *Practice of critical discourse analysis : an introduction*. Routledge.
- Bogomolov, A. (2015). The 18 days that changed Egypt: the concept of REVOLUTION in the Egyptian Arab Spring discourse. *The Oriental Studies*, (70), pp.11–34.
- Bosio, D. (2013). How Al Jazeera reported the Arab Spring: A preliminary comparative analysis. *Media Asia*, 40(4), pp.333–343.
- Boucheikh, H. (2011). *Opinion Programs on Aljazeera Satellite*. Algeria: Alwisam Alarabi.
- Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information : thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks (Ca.): Sage Publications.
- Boyd, D.A. (1982). *Broadcasting in the Arab world : a survey of radio and television in the Middle East*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, [online] 3(2), pp.77–101. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706QP0630A>.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.
- Brennen, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. New York: Routledge.

- Brosius, H., Donsbach, W. and Birk, M. (1996). How do text-picture relations affect the informational effectiveness of television newscasts? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 40(2), pp.180–195.
- Brosius, H.-B. (1991). Format Effects on Comprehension of Television News. *Journalism Quarterly*, 68(3), pp.396–401.
- Burkholder, R. (2002). *Arabs Favor Al-Jazeera Over State-Run Channels for World News*. [online] Gallup.com. Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/7210/arabs-favor-aljazeera-over-staterun-channels-world-news.aspx> [Accessed 7 Sep. 2021].
- Burriss, L.L. (1987). How Anchors, Reporters and Newsmakers Affect Recall and Evaluation of Stories. *Journalism Quarterly*, 64(2-3), pp.514–532.
- Calcutt, A. and Hammond, P. (2011). *Journalism studies : a critical introduction*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- CAPMAS (2020). *The population of Egypt in 2020*. [online] Capmas.gov.eg. Available at: <https://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/populationClock.aspx> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2020].
- Chaves Lopes, G. (2013). Social Networks and New Scheduling Flows: An Analysis of Al Jazeera Coverage of the Arab Spring. *Palabra Clave - Revista de Comunicación*, 16(3), pp.789–811.
- Chouliaraki, L. and Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data : complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Cohen, S. (n.d.). *Using visualizations to Tell Stories*. [online] DataJournalism.com. Available at: <https://datajournalism.com/read/handbook/one/delivering-data/using-visualizations-to-tell-stories> [Accessed 18 Aug. 2019].
- Corner, J. (1999). *Critical ideas in television studies*. : Clarendon Press.

- Cottle, S. (2011). Media and the Arab uprisings of 2011: Research notes. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, [online] 12(5), pp.647–659. Available at: <https://journals-sagepub-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1177/1464884911410017> [Accessed 28 Feb. 2019].
- Crabtree, B.F. and Miller, W.L. eds., (1999). *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design : choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Crigler, A.N., Just, M. and Neuman, W.R. (1994). Interpreting Visual Versus Audio Messages in Television News. *Journal of Communication*, 44(4), pp.132–149.
- Croteau, D. and Hoynes, W. (2003). *Media, society : industries, images, and audiences.* : Pine Forge Press.
- Curran, J. (2002). *Media and power*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Da Lage, O. (2005). The Politics of Al Jazeera or the Diplomacy of Doha. In: M. Zayani, ed., *The Al Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*. London: Pluto Press.
- Daly, J., Kellehear, A. and Gliksman, M. (1997). *The public health researcher: A methodological approach*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, p.
- Dapkus, M.A. (1985). A thematic analysis of the experience of time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(2), pp.408–419.
- Davies M.M. and Mosdell, N. (2006). *Practical research methods for media and cultural studies: making people count*. Edinburgh Edinburgh Univ. Press.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, p.

- Dimitrova, D.V. and Connolly-Ahern, C. (2007). A Tale of Two Wars: Framing Analysis of Online News Sites in Coalition Countries and the Arab World during the Iraq War. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 18(2), pp.153–168.
- Drew, D.G. and Grimes, T. (1987). Audio-Visual Redundancy and TV News Recall. *Communication Research*, 14(4), pp.452–461.
- Edwardson, M., Grooms, D. and Proudlove, S. (1981). Television news information gain from interesting video vs. talking heads. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 25(1), pp.15–24.
- Eid, M. and Dakroury, A. (2008). *Introduction to communication and media studies*. New York: Pearson Custom Pub.
- El Oifi, M. (2005). Influence without Power: Al-Jazeera and the Arab Public Sphere. In: M. Zayani, ed., *The Al-Jazeera Phenomenon: Critical Perspectives on New Arab Media*. London: Pluto Press.
- El-Afify, A. (2011). *The Coverage of Tahrir Square protest from 25 January to 11 February 2011 by Al Jazeera and BBC*.
- El-Nawawy, M. and Iskandar, A. (2002). *Al-Jazeera : how the free Arab news network scooped the world and changed the Middle East*. Cambridge, Ma: Westview.
- El-Nawawy, M. and skandar, A. (2003). *Al-Jazeera: The story of the network that is rattling governments and redefining modern journalism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Eldrige, J. (1995). *Glasgow Media Group Reader Volume 1: News Content, Language and Visuals*. London: Routledge.
- Eltounsy, A. (2002). Reflections on the Arab Satellites, the Palestinian Intifada, and the Israeli War. *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, [online] Spring/Summer 2002(8). Available at: <https://www.arabmediasociety.com/reflections-on-the-arab-satellites-the-palestinian-intifada-and-the-israeli-war/> [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power*. London: Taylor Et Francis.
- Fandy, M. (2000). Information Technology, Trust, and Social Change in the Arab World. *Middle East Institute*, 54(3), pp.378–394.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge ; and, the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Friedman, T. (2001). Opinion | Foreign Affairs; Glasnost In the Gulf. *The New York Times*, [online] 27 Feb., p.23. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/27/opinion/foreign-affairs-glasnost-in-the-gulf.html> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2021].
- Frijda, N.H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge ; New York Etc.: Cambridge Univ. Press ; Paris.
- Galander, M.M. (2013). Al-Jazeera, Advocacy and Media Value Determinism Re-conceptualizing the Network's Coverage of the Arab Spring of Revolutions. *Global Media Journal*. [online] Available at: <https://www.globalmediajournal.com/open-access/aljazeera-advocacy-and-media-value-determinismreconceptualizing-the-networks-coverage-of-the-arab-spring-of-revolutions.php?aid=35901> [Accessed 22 Sep. 2019].
- Gallagher, J. ed., (2015). *Images of Africa : creation, negotiation and subversion*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Garde-Hansen, J. (2011). *Media and memory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.
- Gelvin, J.L. (2015). *What everyone needs to know : what everyone needs to know*. Oxford ; New York, Ny: Oxford University Press.
- Gerbner, G. (1999) The stories we tell and the stories we sell. *The Journal of International Communication*, 5:1-2, 75-82, DOI: [10.1080/13216597.1998.9751865](https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.1998.9751865)

- Ghareeb, E. (2000). New Media and the Information Revolution in the Arab World: An Assessment. *Middle East Journal*, [online] 54(3), pp.395–418. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329508> [Accessed 4 Mar. 2021].
- Ghazal, A. (2015). A Critical Discourse Analysis of SANA and Aljazeera English Channel's Coverage of Syria's 2014-2015 Uprising. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(3).
- Ghazi, O. (2009). *The Gaza War and the Arab Satellite TV War*. [online] Dunia Alwatan. Available at: <https://pulpit.alwatanvoice.com/content/print/158597.html> [Accessed 5 Dec. 2019].
- Ghoneim, W. (2012). *Revolution 2.0: If the people once wanted to live*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Dar Al Shorouk.
- Ghonim, W. (2012). *Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People Is Greater than the People in Power: A Memoir*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Gilad, H. (2011). *Azmi Bishara: The Arab revolutions have a logic*. [online] Aljazeera.net. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2011/3/24/عزمي-بشارة-للثورات-العربية-منطق> [Accessed 17 Nov. 2020].
- Gorton, K. (2009). *Media audiences : television, meaning and emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Graber, D.A. (1990). Seeing Is Remembering: How Visuals Contribute to Learning from Television News. *Journal of Communication*, 40(3), pp.134–156.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. and Namey, E.E. (2012). Introduction to Thematic Analysis. In: *Applied Thematic Analysis*. [online] Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, pp.3–20. Available at: <http://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436> [Accessed 16 Feb. 2018].
- Hafez, K. ed., (2008). *Arab media : power and weakness*. New York: Continuum.

- Hafez, K. (2010). *Radicalism and political reform in the Islamic and Western worlds*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hamdi, A. (2002). *Arab Media Discourse: Prospects and Challenges*. Algeria: Dar Houma for Publishing and Distribution.
- Hamdi, M.E. (2021). The use of graphics technology in the production of TV news bulletins at Al Jazeera News Channel. *Al-Hikma Journal for Media and Communication Studies*, [online] 7(4), p.34. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348994087\\_astkhdam\\_tqnyt\\_alghrafyks\\_fy\\_antaj\\_alnshrat\\_alakhbaryt\\_altlfzywnyt\\_bqnat\\_aljzyrt\\_alakhbaryt](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348994087_astkhdam_tqnyt_alghrafyks_fy_antaj_alnshrat_alakhbaryt_altlfzywnyt_bqnat_aljzyrt_alakhbaryt) [Accessed 14 Jan. 2021].
- Hanson, R.E. (2009). *Mass communication : living in a media world*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Hantrais, L. (2005). Combining methods: a key to understanding complexity in European societies? *European Societies*, 7(3), pp.399–421.
- Harris, R.J. (2004). *Cognitive psychology of mass communication*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Herman, E.S. and Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent : the political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Hijjawi, A. (2011). *The Role of Al-Jazeera (Arabic) in the Arab Revolts of 2011*. [online] Beirut: Heinrich Boll Stiftung. Available at: [https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download\\_de/Perspectives\\_02-10\\_Aref\\_Hijjawi.pdf](https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/assets/boell.de/images/download_de/Perspectives_02-10_Aref_Hijjawi.pdf).
- Horvat, E.M. and Heron, M.L. (2013). *The beginner's guide to doing qualitative research : how to get into the field, collect data, and write up your project*. New York: Teachers College Press.



- Howeidi, F. (2006). Setting the News Agenda in the Arab World. In: *The Al Jazeera decade, 1996-2006*. Doha: Al Jazeera.
- Hudson, M. and Stanier, J. (1999). *War and the media : a random searchlight*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing.
- Hunaid, M. (2020). *Arabs are emotional people*. [online] Arabi 21. Available at: <https://arabi21.com/story/1305920/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9> [Accessed 7 June. 2021].
- Idrees, M.S. (2004). *Arab media and occupation of Iraq*. Damascus: Alwahda Library.
- Ismaeil, M.H. (1997). *Political Upbringing-Study of Television News Role*. Cairo: Universities Dar alnasher.
- James Paul Gee (2005). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis. Theory and Method*. New York And London: Routledge.
- Jay, P. (2012). *Al Jazeera Journalist Explains Resignation over Syria and Bahrain Coverage*. [online] The Real News Network. Available at: <https://therealnews.com/stories/ahashempt10319> [Accessed 20 Feb. 2019].
- Kahn, R.L. and Cannell, C.F. (1958). *The dynamics of interviewing : theory, technique, and cases*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Karar, H. (2017). Fawzi Bushra. *Al-Watan Newspaper*. [online] 19 Jun. Available at: <http://www.al-watan.com/Writer/id/6413> [Accessed 20 Feb. 2018].
- Katz, E., Adoni, H. and Parness, P. (1977). Remembering the News: What the Picture Adds to Recall. *Journalism Quarterly*, 54(2), pp.231–239.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J.G. and Gurevitch, M. (1974). Uses and Gratifications Research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, [online] 37(4), pp.509–523. Available at:

<https://academic.oup.com/poq/article-abstract/37/4/509/1816598> [Accessed 11 Nov. 2018].

Khaddour, A. (1998). *Television Studies*. Damascus: Media Library.

Khalil, E.N. (2000). *Grounding in English and Arabic news discourse*. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Khalil, K. (2011). *Messages from Tahrir : signs from Egypt's revolution*. Cairo: The American University In Cairo Press.

Khasib, N. and Ersoy, M. (2016). Citizen, mainstream and peace journalism relationship in covering Syria events: a content analysis of Aljazeera. *Quality & Quantity*, 51(6), pp.2647–2664.

Khatib, L. (2013). *Image politics in the middle east : the role of the visual in political struggle*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Kidder, L.H. and Fine, M. (1987). Qualitative and quantitative methods: When stories converge. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, Fall(35), pp.57–75.

Konijn, E.A. (2012). *The Role of Emotion in Media Use and Effects*. Oxford Handbooks Online. Oxford University Press.

Korn, A. (2004). Reporting Palestinian casualties in the Israeli press: the case of Haaretz and the Intifada. *Journalism Studies*, 5(2), pp.247–262.

Kraidy, M. (2008). From Activity to Interactivity: The Arab Audience. In: K. Hafez, ed., *Arab Media: Power and Weakness*. Continuum.

Kraidy, M. (2010). *Reality television and Arab politics : contention in public life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krashinsky, S. (2011). Al Jazeera creates consciousness in Arab world. *The Globe and Mail*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/al-jazeera-creates-consciousness-in-arab-world/article564092/> [Accessed 9 May 2018].

- Krippendorff, K.H. (2004). *Content Analysis: an Introduction to Its Methodology*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ksobiech, K., Tiedge, J. and Bor, A.M. (1980). Visualization Mode, Perceived Immediacy and Audience Evaluation of TV News. *Journalism Quarterly*, 57(1), pp.55–60.
- Lang, A., Newhagen, J. and Reeves, B. (1996). Negative video as structure: Emotion, attention, capacity, and memory. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 40(4), pp.460–477.
- Langdrige, D. and Hagger-Johnson, G. (2009). *Introduction to research methods and data analysis in psychology*. Harlow, England ; New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Lasswell, H.D. (2015). *Propaganda technique in the world war*. Greenville: Coachwhip Publications.
- Lecheler, S. (2020). The emotional turn in journalism needs to be about audience perceptions. *Digital Journalism*, 8(2), pp.287–291.
- Lynch, M. (2006). *Voices of the new Arab public : Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East politics today*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Macagno, F. and Walton, D. (2010). What we hide in words: Emotive words and persuasive definitions. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(7), pp.1997–2013.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- McCombs, M. and Reynolds, A. (2002). News influence on our pictures of the world. In: D. Zillmann, ed., *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mcquail, D. (2010a). *Mass communication theory: an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mcquail, D. (2010b). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. 6th ed. London: Sage.
- Mehrez, S. (2012). *Translating Egypt's Revolution: The Language of Tahrir*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

- Miladi, N. (2006). Satellite TV News and the Arab Diaspora in Britain: Comparing Al-Jazeera, the BBC and CNN. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(6), pp.947–960.
- Miles, H. (2005). *Al Jazeera : how the Arab TV news challenged the world*. London: Abacus.
- Milne, S. and Black, I. (2011). The story behind the Palestine papers. *The Guardian*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/23/story-behind-leaked-palestine-paper> [Accessed 22 Jul. 2017].
- Moran, R.E. and Usher, N. (2020). Objects of journalism, revised: Rethinking materiality in journalism studies through emotion, culture and “unexpected objects.” *Journalism*, 22(5), pp.1155–1172.
- Mortensen, M. (2015). *Journalism and eyewitness images : digital media, participation, and conflict*. New York: Routledge.
- Moussa, A. (2020). Ahmed Moussa exposes the Al Jazeera terrorist network targeting Egypt. *Al-Ahram Gate newspaper*.
- Murphy, P. and Kraidy, M.M. (2003). *Global media studies : ethnographic perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Muhtwa.com. (n.d.). *Tahrir Square*. [online] Available at: <https://www.muhtwa.com/170295/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%> [Accessed 6 Sep. 2021].
- Nacos, B.L. (1994). *Terrorism and the Media*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nasr, A. (2014). Al-Jazeera and the Arab Uprisings: The Language of Images and a Medium’s Stancetaking. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 7(4), pp.397–414.
- Ngarmboonanant, G. (2011). *Talk with the Chief: An Interview with Amjad Atallah*. [online] The Politic. Available at: <https://thepoliticbackend.org/talk-with-the-chief-a-look-into->

al-jazeeras-reporting-appeal-and-controversy-an-interview-with-amjad-atallah/

[Accessed 5 Nov. 2017].

Nightingale, V. (2011). *The handbook of media audiences*. London: Willey-Blackwell.

Norris, P. (2004). *Political Communications encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. [online]

Harvard University. Available at:

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/ Acrobat/Political%20Communications%20ency>

[clopedia2.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/ Acrobat/Political%20Communications%20ency) [Accessed 2 May 2019].

Nuolijärvi, P. and Tiittula, L. (2011). Irony in political television debates. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(2), pp.572–587.

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms? In: Roberts H, ed., *Doing feminist research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.30–61.

Ogola, G. (2015). Constructing images of Africa: from troubled pan-African media to sprawling Nollywood. In: J. Gallagher, ed., *Images of Africa: Creation, negotiation and subversion*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Ortony, A., Clore, G.L. and Collins, A. (1988). *The cognitive structure of emotions*. Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Painter, J. (2008). *Counter-hegemonic news : a case study of Al-Jazeera English and Telesur*. Oxford: Reuters Institute For The Study Of Journalism.

Parks, L. (2007). Insecure Airwaves: US Bombings of Aljazeera. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 4(2), pp.226–231.

Pasha, T. (2011). *Islamists in the headlines: critical discourse analysis of the representation of the Muslim brotherhood in Egyptian newspapers*. PhD Thesis: The University of Utah. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/276265308.pdf> [Accessed 21 Jul. 2019].

- Philo, G., Beharrell, P. and Hewitt, J. (1977). One Dimensional News – Television and the Control of Explanation. In: G. Philo and P. Beharrell, eds., *Trade Unions and the Media*. London: Macmillan.
- Philo, G. and Berry, M. (2004). *Bad news from Israel*. ed. London: Pluto Press.
- Pintak, L. (2011). The Al Jazeera Revolution. *Foreign Policy*. [online] Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/02/the-al-jazeera-revolution/> [Accessed 9 Oct. 2018].
- Ramadan, T. (2012). *Islam and the Arab awakening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ramasubramanian, S. (2010). Television Viewing, Racial Attitudes, and Policy Preferences: Exploring the Role of Social Identity and Intergroup Emotions in Influencing Support for Affirmative Action. *Communication Monographs*, 77(1), pp.102–120.
- Reese, S.D. (1984). Visual-verbal redundancy effects on television news learning. *Journal of Broadcasting*, 28(1), pp.79–87.
- Reuters (2011). Al Jazeera urges Egypt's Nilesat to resume service. *Reuters*. [online] 2 Feb. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-jazeera-idAFLDE7110P320110202> [Accessed 14 Jun. 2020].
- Richardson, I. (2003). *The failed dream that led to Al-Jazeera*. [online] [www.preddonlee.com](http://www.preddonlee.com). Available at: [https://www.preddonlee.com/al\\_jazeera\\_origins.html](https://www.preddonlee.com/al_jazeera_origins.html) [Accessed 29 Oct. 2019].
- Richardson, J.E. (2008). Language and Journalism: an expanding research agenda sue 2, 2008. *Journalism Studies*, 9(2).
- Rinnawi, K. (2012). Al Jazeera invades Israel: Is satellite TV challenging the sovereignty of the nation state? *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 5(3), pp.245–257.
- Robinson, J.P. and Levy, M.R. (1986). *The main source : learning from television news*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

- Robinson, P. (2002). *The CNN effect : the myth of news, foreign policy, and intervention*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Rocklage, M.D., Rucker, D.D. and Nordgren, L.F. (2018). Persuasion, Emotion, and Language: The Intent to Persuade Transforms Language via Emotionality. *Psychological Science*, [online] 29(5), pp.749–760. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29543563/> [Accessed 2 Aug. 2019].
- Rougier, E. (2016). Fire in Cairo: Authoritarian–Redistributive Social Contracts, Structural Change, and the Arab Spring. *World Development*, 78, pp.148–171.
- Rushing, J. (2007). *Mission Al Jazeera : build a bridge, seek the truth, change the world*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sakr, N. (1999). Satellite Television and Development in the Middle East. *Middle East Report*, [online] (210), pp.6–8. Available at: <https://merip.org/1999/03/satellite-television-and-development-in-the-middle-east/> [Accessed 20 Oct. 2019].
- Sakr, N. (2001). *Satellite Realms Transnational Television, Globalization and the Middle East*. London I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd I.B.Tauris.
- Sakr, N. (2007). *Arab media and political renewal : community, legitimacy and public life*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Saleh, S. (2011). *Media and Global Conflict Management*. Cairo: Alfalah Library for Publishing and Distribution.
- Schmidt, T.R. (2021). “It’s OK to feel”: The emotionality norm and its evolution in U.S. print journalism. *Journalism*, 22(5), pp.1173–1189.
- Seib, P.M. (2008). *The Al Jazeera effect : how the new global media are reshaping world politics*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books.

- Seib, P.M. (2010). *War and Conflict Communication*. Routledge.
- Severin, W.J. and Tankard, J. (1997). *Communication theories: origins, methods, and uses in the mass media*. : Longman.
- Shaheen, F. (2019). *News report in the television news bulletin*. Doha: Qatar University Press.
- Shanahan, J. (1999). *Television and Its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, C. (2011). *Al-Jazeera played a major role in the Egyptian revolution and the downfall of Mubarak* | *Georgia Straight Vancouver's News & Entertainment Weekly*. [online] The Georgia Straight. Available at: <https://www.straight.com/blogra/al-jazeera-played-major-role-egyptian-revolution-and-downfall-mubarak> [Accessed 11 Sep. 2019].
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stein, R.L. and Swedenburg, T. (2005). *Palestine, Israel, and the politics of popular culture*. Durham Duke University Press.
- Sultan, N. (2013). Al Jazeera: Reflections on the Arab Spring. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 3(2), pp.249–264.
- Telhami, S. (2013). Al Jazeera: The Most-Feared News Network. *Brookings*. [online] 15 Jun. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/al-jazeera-the-most-feared-news-network/> [Accessed 7 Sep. 2019].
- The Economist. (2001). *Explosive matchbox*. [online] Available at: <https://www.economist.com/international/2001/10/11/explosive-matchbox> [Accessed 3 Sep. 2019].
- The Guardian (2001). *Al-Jazeera accuses US of bombing its Kabul office*. [online] The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/nov/17/warinafghanistan2001.afghanistan> [Accessed 26 Nov. 2019].



- The Times of Israel (2014). *Fugitive ex-MK Azmi Bishara to head new Qatari TV channel*. [online] [www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com). Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/fugitive-ex-mk-azmi-bishara-to-head-new-qatari-channel/> [Accessed 25 Mar. 2021].
- Tuggle, C.A. and Huffman, S. (1999). Live news reporting: Professional judgment or technological pressure? A national survey of television news directors and senior reporters. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 43(4), pp.492–505.
- Valassopoulos, A. and Mostafa, D.S. (2014). Popular Protest Music and the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. *Popular Music and Society*, 37(5), pp.638–659.
- Wall, M. (2019). *Citizen journalism : practices, propaganda, pedagogy*. London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Wetherell, M., Yates, S., Taylor, S. and Open University (2012). *Discourse theory and practice: a reader*. London ; Thousand Oaks Calif.: Sage.
- Whitaker, B. (2003). *Controversial TV channel al-Jazeera struggles to survive*. [online] The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/feb/07/iraqandthemedial.afghanistan> [Accessed 9 Nov. 2019].
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology : adventures in theory and method*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Wirth, W. and Schramm, H. (2005). Media and Emotion. *Communication Research Trends*, [online] 24(3), pp.3–39. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233387230\\_Media\\_and\\_Emotion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233387230_Media_and_Emotion) [Accessed 16 May 2020].
- Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research : design and methods*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage Publications.

- Yishai, R.B. (2007). *Bishara recommended that Hizbullah attack south of Haifa*. [online] Ynetnews.com. Available at: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0> [Accessed 30 Aug. 2020].
- Yusuf, M. (2019). *The problem of research in our social sciences!* [online] www.shorouknews.com. Available at: <https://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=20122019&id=935fe09c-16a8-4880-91db-b60d733274e2> [Accessed 29 Jul. 2021].
- Zaituna Center for Studies and Consultations (2019). *Palestine Today Newspaper Archive January 2009*.
- Zayani, M. ed., (2005). *The Al Jazeera phenomenon : critical perspectives on new Arab media*. London: Pluto Press.
- Zayani, M. and Sahraoui, S. (2007). *The culture of Al Jazeera : inside an Arab media giant*. Jefferson, N.C.: Mcfarland & Co.
- Zelizer, B. and Allan, S. (2011). *Journalism after September 11*. London: Routledge.
- Zelizer, B. and Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2014). *Journalism and memory*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zillmann, D., Gibson, R., Ordman, V.L. and Aust, C.F. (1994). Effects of upbeat stories in broadcast news. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 38(1), pp.65–78.