

Media as Instruments of Power and Influence: A comparative analysis of France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV coverage of the 2011 Libyan crisis

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Abstract: In an era of information globalization, international news media have become geopolitical actors that shape state images, circulate political norms, and influence transnational public spheres. Within this context, Arabic-language international news channels play a strategic role in the competition for influence in the Arab world. Launched by France in 2007 and the United Kingdom in 2008 respectively, France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV operate as instruments of media diplomacy embedded in broader foreign policy strategies.

Focusing on their coverage of the 2011 Libyan crisis, this study combines media geopolitics, systematic qualitative content analysis, and theories of soft power and informational influence. Through a comparative case-study approach, the article demonstrates how both channels contribute to the construction of geopolitical narratives and the exercise of symbolic power in the Arab public sphere, while revealing significant differences in editorial framing, narrative strategies, and degrees of alignment with national foreign policy agendas.

Keywords: France 24 Arabic; BBC Arabic TV; 2011 Libyan crisis; influence; soft power.

ملخص: في عصر يتسم بتدفق المعلومات، تحولت وسائل الإعلام الدولية إلى فاعلين جيوسياسيين كاملين، يساهمون بنشاط في بناء صورة الدول، ونشر المعايير السياسية، وتشكيل فضاءات للتأثير عابرة للحدود. وفي هذا السياق التنافسي، تحتل القنوات الإخبارية الدولية الناطقة بالعربية موقعاً استراتيجياً في الصراع على النفوذ داخل العالم العربي. أطلقت كل من قناة فرانس 24 بالعربية عام 2007 وقناة بي بي سي العربية عام 2008، لتعمل كأدوات رئيسية للدبلوماسية الإعلامية، متأصلة ضمن أطر أوسع للسياسات الخارجية الوطنية ومشاريع القوة الناعمة. مع التركيز على تغطيتهما لأزمة ليبيا عام 2011، تعتمد هذه الدراسة إطاراً متعدد التخصصات يجمع بين جيوسياسة وسائل الإعلام، ونظريات القوة الناعمة واستراتيجيات التأثير المعلوماتي، وتحليل النوعي المضمون ومن خلال دراسة مقارنة بين القناتين، تظهر المقالة كيف تساهم كل من بي بي سي عربي و فرانس عربي في بناء روايات جيوسياسية متنافسة وممارسة السلطة الرمزية في الفضاء العام العربي، مع الكشف في الوقت ذاته عن فروقات كبيرة في التأطير التحريري، واستراتيجيات السرد، ودرجات التوافق مع أجندة السياسات الخارجية الوطنية لكل منهما.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فرانس 24 عربي؛ بي بي سي عربي؛ أزمة ليبيا لسنة 2011؛ التأثير؛ القوة الناعمة

1.INTRODUCTION :

The rise of international media in contemporary international relations reflects a profound transformation in the logics of power. In the context of information globalization, states no longer rely exclusively on military or economic resources, but increasingly seek to influence, persuade, and attract through instruments associated with soft power (Nye, 2004, pp. 2–6). Within this framework, international news media have become central tools of public diplomacy and geopolitical influence, enabling states to project narratives, shape collective imaginaries, and legitimize their positions on regional and global stages.

As Philippe Boulanger argues, a “global war of influence” is now unfolding, grounded in the control of information flows, the construction of representations, and the competition of narratives (Boulanger, 2014, p. 200). This dynamic is particularly visible in the Arab world, where several international powers have invested in Arabic-language news channels in order to reach regional audiences and to compete with the long-standing dominance of Al Jazeera. The United States launched Al Hurra in 2004 within a post-9/11 strategy aimed at winning the “hearts and minds” of Arab publics; the United Kingdom reinforced its media presence through BBC Arabic TV, building on the historical legitimacy of the BBC World Service; and France inaugurated France 24 in 2006, followed by its Arabic-language service in 2007, with the explicit objective of promoting a “French vision of news” and consolidating its influence in the international media arena.

For the Professor Abdesselam Benzaoui, The transnationalization of communication media today shapes the course of history and, to varying degrees, influences the destinies of peoples. The profound transformations of audiovisual media reveal the growing prominence of networks and cultural industries in the reconfiguration of power strategies, highlighting the relevance of a geopolitical perspective for analyzing their effects. These changes underscore the tensions between the closed national space and transnational vectors, oscillating between the philosophy of public service and the pragmatism of the free market, as well as between the logics of media globalization and the legacies of national habitus. The incorporation of international relations frameworks allows us to position audiovisual media within the political sphere, considering it as a central actor in the dynamics of power and influence. (Benzaoui, 2011).

The development of these state-funded Arabic-language channels can be examined through the lens of global information flows and counter-flows between North and South, raising critical questions about asymmetries in media circulation and the strategies deployed by states to (re)assert symbolic and geopolitical influence. In this regard, France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV represent two distinct yet comparable models of media diplomacy. While both channels are publicly funded and embedded in foreign policy ecosystems, they differ in their institutional traditions, editorial cultures, and normative claims particularly with respect to journalistic neutrality, independence, and the articulation of national interests.

Building on this perspective, this article proposes a comparative analysis of the strategies of influence deployed by France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV. It seeks to demonstrate that, beyond their shared role as international news broadcasters, both channels function as instruments of state communication with geopolitical intent, albeit through differentiated discursive, narrative, and editorial mechanisms. By combining systematic content analysis with an examination of editorial positioning, narrative formats, and framing devices, the study addresses the following research question: How did France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV construct and deploy strategies of influence in their coverage of the 2011 Libyan crisis, within the framework of their respective states’ foreign policy orientations?

The article is structured in three parts. The first section outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework of media influence, soft power, and public diplomacy. The second provides a historical and institutional comparison of the emergence of France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV, situating

both channels within their national and geopolitical contexts. The third section offers an empirical comparative analysis of their coverage of the 2011 Libyan crisis, in the broader context of the Arab Spring, a critical case that reveals how international Arabic-language media participate in the articulation of geopolitical narratives, the legitimation of intervention, and the exercise of influence in the Arab public sphere.

2. Methodology:

This article is situated within the field of media geopolitics and forms part of our doctoral research analyzing the strategies of power and influence deployed by international Arabic-language media, particularly in a post-Arab Spring context, marked by the reconfiguration of media landscapes and geopolitical balances (Benzaoui, 2016 ; Nye, 2004; Boulanger, 2014; Mattelart, 2004).

Our contribution focuses on the Arabic-language channels of France 24 and BBC Arabic TV, aiming to examine their strategies of influence through an in-depth, comparative, and diachronic analysis. The period selected for study is divided into two distinct phases: The first phase corresponds to the launch of the channels—2007 for France 24 Arabic (Brochand, 2002; Mattelart, 2004) and 2008 for BBC Arabic TV (BBC World Service, 2008)—allowing us to contextualize their creation within broader logics of state influence and media diplomacy. The second phase focuses on 2011, during which both channels extensively covered the Libyan crisis amid the Arab Spring, providing a case to compare how each channel navigates editorial policy, narrative framing, and strategic influence (Huyghe, 2010; Boullier, 2020).

To grasp the specific dynamics of influence at work in these channels, we identified three main analytical axes:

a) Context of emergence evaluating institutional positioning, funding structures, and geopolitical objectives. France 24 Arabic was established as a state-driven instrument of French public diplomacy, funded and supervised by the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (Brochand, 2002; Mattelart, 2004). In contrast, BBC Arabic TV operates as a public service broadcaster with historical claims to neutrality and credibility, funded in part by the UK Foreign Office but maintaining editorial independence (Boulanger, 2014; BBC World Service, 2008).

b) Editorial identity – analyzing discursive orientations, editorial policies, and the values conveyed. France 24 Arabic emphasizes a French perspective aligned with national foreign policy objectives, promoting democracy, human rights, and France’s geopolitical interests (Mattelart, 2004; Benzaoui, 2016). BBC Arabic TV prioritizes pluralism, analytical depth, and balanced reporting, reflecting the ethos of the British public service tradition and its historical reputation for neutrality (Boulanger, 2014; Boullier, 2020).

c) Application of influence strategies assessing coverage of the 2011 Libyan crisis through François-Bernard Huyghe’s five strategies of informational influence: fortress, belief, image, vectors, and access (Huyghe, 2010, pp. 23–58). This framework allows us to systematically compare how each channel mobilizes journalism to project influence: France 24 Arabic functions as a vector of French geopolitical narratives, while BBC Arabic TV emphasizes credibility, contextualization, and expert-driven analysis (Mattelart, 2004; Boulanger, 2014).

This comparative framework not only situates France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV within the broader geopolitics of Arabic-language media but also illustrates how different institutional models—state-driven versus public-service shape editorial choices, narrative strategies, and modes of influence in the Arab information space (Benzaoui, 2016; Huyghe, 2010).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Enter your results in this section; summarize the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to the discourse that is to follow. After presenting the results, you are in a position to evaluate and interpret their implications, especially with respect to your original hypotheses.

3. France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV: Historical, Editorial, and Strategic Dimensions

3.1 Historical and Institutional Context

The launch of France 24 Arabic in 2007 and BBC Arabic TV in 2008 represents pivotal moments in the media diplomacy of France and the United Kingdom, respectively. Both channels were conceived as instruments of state-led soft power, aiming to secure visibility and influence in the highly competitive Arabophone media landscape. France 24 Arabic was established under the aegis of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, while BBC Arabic TV operated within the institutional framework of the BBC World Service, benefiting from historical legitimacy and editorial independence guarantees rooted in British public broadcasting traditions.

Both channels were created in recognition of the Arab world as a critical geopolitical space, where media narratives shape political imaginaries, influence regional dynamics, and participate in global symbolic competition. In the wake of 9/11 and subsequent geopolitical upheavals, Western powers accelerated their investments in Arabic-language media, seeking to craft narratives capable of counterbalancing dominant regional outlets, particularly Al Jazeera (Qatar) and Al Arabiya (Saudi Arabia).

While France 24 Arabic reflects a relatively top-down, state-aligned model, BBC Arabic TV benefits from the institutional ethos of journalistic independence embedded in the BBC's mandate, resulting in nuanced differences in editorial latitude, narrative framing, and institutional credibility.

3.2 Editorial Identity: Between Journalism and Diplomacy

The editorial identity of both channels embodies a careful balance between claims to journalistic professionalism and the strategic objectives of their respective states. France 24 Arabic positions itself as pluralistic and impartial, yet its editorial orientation aligns closely with French foreign policy priorities, emphasizing democracy, human rights, multilateralism, and intercultural dialogue. BBC Arabic TV, by contrast, foregrounds journalistic independence, relying on its institutional credibility to frame international events while maintaining implicit alignment with British public diplomacy goals.

Both channels employ discursive strategies to project their national perspectives while engaging Arab audiences, yet they differ in tone and emphasis: France 24 Arabic often foregrounds explicit French viewpoints and diplomatic voices, whereas BBC Arabic TV leverages balanced sourcing, contextual analysis, and historical legitimacy to convey influence more subtly.

3.3 Semiotic and Visual Identity

Semiotic and visual strategies play a central role in both channels' influence efforts. France 24 Arabic's logo, graphics, and on-air design emphasize neutrality, modernity, and credibility, signaling a distinctive French presence within the Arab media sphere. BBC Arabic TV similarly utilizes visual consistency, formal graphics, and professional aesthetics to reinforce its authority and reliability. While both channels aim to construct symbolic presences in the Arab public sphere, France 24 Arabic foregrounds a nationally branded identity, whereas BBC Arabic TV emphasizes institutional continuity and global trustworthiness.

3.4 Programming and Formats

Programming strategies further reflect each channel's editorial and diplomatic objectives. France 24 Arabic combines hourly news bulletins, debates, talk shows, cultural programs, and investigative reports, designed to provide Arab audiences with "keys to understanding" regional and international affairs from a French perspective. BBC Arabic TV offers a similar range of formats, emphasizing in-depth analysis, expert commentary, and historically grounded reporting to maintain credibility and

attract a diverse Arab audience.

Debates and talk shows on both channels promote pluralism, yet France 24 Arabic often foregrounds French intellectual and diplomatic perspectives, whereas BBC Arabic TV prioritizes a broader range of expert voices, balancing local, regional, and international viewpoints.

Table 1/Comparative table summarizing the key dimensions of France 24 Arabic vs. BBC Arabic TV

Dimension	France 24 Arabic	BBC Arabic TV	Comparative Notes
Launch & Historical Context	2007; part of France Médias Monde; established under French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs; state-funded; designed as a tool of French audiovisual diplomacy.	2008; part of BBC World Service; operates under UK public broadcasting framework; historically rooted in journalistic independence; state-funded with editorial safeguards.	Both are European state-funded Arabic channels targeting the Arab world, but France 24 emphasizes explicit state alignment , while BBC Arabic leverages institutional credibility
Editorial Identity	Balances journalism and diplomacy; aligns with French foreign policy; emphasizes democracy, human rights, multilateralism; foregrounds French perspectives and voices	Claims strong journalistic independence; emphasizes balanced reporting; pluralism and source diversity; reflects British soft power indirectly through credibility and analysis.	France 24 is more state-centered , BBC Arabic is more institution-centered ; both project national influence, but via different editorial logics.
Semiotic / Visual Identity	Logo and graphics: blue color scheme, modern and neutral; visual design signals credibility and French symbolic presence.	Logo and graphics: professional, consistent, globally recognized BBC branding; emphasizes authority, neutrality, and reliability	Both use semiotic strategies to assert presence; France 24 highlights national branding, BBC Arabic emphasizes institutional legitimacy.
Programming & Formats	News bulletins, debates, talk	Similar range: news bulletins,	Both diversify formats to reach Arab audiences; France 24

	shows, cultural programs, investigative reports; “keys to understanding” events from French perspective; debates foreground French voices; cultural programs promote French heritage	analysis, debates, cultural programs; emphasizes expert commentary and contextualized analysis; pluralistic sourcing.	foregrounds French perspective, BBC Arabic foregrounds balanced expertise and neutrality
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3.5. 1Corpus of analyzed media content

The strategic dimension of both channels becomes particularly visible during crises, such as the 2011 Libyan uprising. France 24 Arabic aligned its coverage with France’s diplomatic and military involvement, framing events to reinforce French foreign policy objectives while maintaining the appearance of journalistic neutrality. BBC Arabic TV also covered the crisis intensively but emphasized balanced reporting, source diversity, and contextualized analysis, reflecting its institutional ethos while still contributing to British public diplomacy.

Using François-Bernard Huyghe’s five influence strategies (2010); fortress, belief, image, vectors, and access.

To illustrate the deployment of influence strategies, we conducted a content analysis of twelve (12) television news items broadcast by France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV between February and October 2011, corresponding to the major phases of the Libyan crisis: the outbreak of protests, the escalation of violence, the NATO intervention, the fall of the kadhafi regime, and the post-conflict transitional period. The selection of news items follows a purposive sampling strategy, guided by three main criteria:

- (1) temporal relevance, ensuring coverage of key moments in the conflict’s evolution;
- (2) narrative and discursive significance, privileging items that articulate central frames, justifications, or interpretative schemas; and strict comparability between the two channels, in terms of format, timing, and thematic focus.

Table2- Corpus Structure

Phase of the crisis	Date range	France 24 Arabic	BBC Arabic TV
Outbreak of protests	Feb–Mar 2011	2 news reports	2 news reports
NATO intervention	Mar–Apr 2011	2 news reports	2 news reports
Fall of Tripoli	Aug 2011	1 news reports	1 news reports
Post-kadhafi transition	Sep–Oct 2011	1 news reports	1 news reports

A. France 24 Arabic – Selected Broadcasts (n = 6)

1. “Libya: Protests Erupt in Benghazi”

Date: 18 February 2011

Format: Evening news report

Context: Outbreak of anti-Gaddafi demonstrations; initial framing of political unrest, protest legitimacy, and regime response.

2. “Escalation of Violence in Libya as International Community Reacts”

Date: 23 February 2011

Format: News report with studio analysis

Context: Intensification of repression; early diplomatic reactions and international positioning.

3. **“Libya: NATO Launches Military Operations”**

Date: 19 March 2011

Format: Breaking news report

Context: Launch of NATO-led intervention; articulation of France’s diplomatic and military role.

4. **“Libya Under NATO Airstrikes: Political and Humanitarian Implications”**

Date: 28 March 2011

Format: Studio analysis with expert commentary

Context: Justification of military intervention; humanitarian framing and construction of international legitimacy.

5. **“Tripoli Falls, but the Fighting Continues”**

Date: 22 August 2011

Format: Evening news report

Context: Entry of National Transitional Council forces into Tripoli; narrative of regime collapse and residual violence.

6. **“Libya After Gaddafi: Challenges of Transition”**

Date: 25 September 2011

Format: Analytical report

Context: Post-Gaddafi transition; narratives of reconstruction, governance, and political uncertainty.

B. BBC Arabic TV – Selected Broadcasts (n = 6)

1. **“Libya: Demonstrations Spread Amid Rising Tensions”**

Date: 18 February 2011

Format: News report

Context: Early phase of protests; cautious framing of political instability and regime endurance.

2. **“Libya on the Brink: International Pressure Mounts”**

Date: 24 February 2011

Format: News report with correspondent input

Context: Escalation of violence; emphasis on diplomatic initiatives and United Nations engagement.

3. **“NATO Intervention in Libya: Legal and Political Dimensions”**

Date: 20 March 2011

Format: Studio analysis

Context: Beginning of NATO operations; focus on international law, UN Security Council resolutions, and legitimacy.

4. **“Libya: Military Operations and Uncertain Outcomes”**

Date: 30 March 2011

Format: News report with expert commentary

Context: Evaluation of military intervention; strategic risks and potential long-term consequences.

5. **“Tripoli in Opposition Hands... But Where Is Libya Headed?”**

Date: 22 August 2011

Format: Report followed by a short studio debate

Context: Fall of Tripoli; emphasis on post-conflict uncertainty, political vacuum, and future scenarios.

6. **“Libya After Gaddafi: Between Hope and Instability”**

Date: 3 October 2011

Format: Analytical report

Context: Transitional phase; governance challenges, security dilemmas, and regional implications.

This corpus enables a comparative discursive analysis of how France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV construct narratives of conflict, legitimacy, and intervention. By aligning broadcast dates and formats across both channels, the analysis isolates editorial framing strategies and geopolitical positioning rather than differences attributable to timing or newsworthiness alone.

3.5.2. Linking the Empirical Corpus to Huyghe’s Five Strategies of Informational Influence

The empirical corpus presented in Appendix A is analytically structured around the five strategies of informational influence conceptualized by François-Bernard Huyghe; fortress (forteresse), belief (croyance), image, vectors (vecteurs), and access (accès). Rather than serving as a mere descriptive typology, this framework operates as an analytical grid that guides the systematic examination of narrative constructions, editorial choices, and symbolic mechanisms deployed by France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV during the Libyan crisis of 2011.

1. Fortress Strategy (Stratégie de forteresse): Controlling Narrative Boundaries

The fortress strategy refers to the capacity of media actors to establish and defend interpretative boundaries by stabilizing dominant narratives while marginalizing alternative frames. Within the corpus, this strategy is primarily observable in early reports on the outbreak of protests (18–24 February 2011), where both channels delineate the legitimate scope of political discourse.

France 24 Arabic tends to consolidate a narrative emphasizing popular uprising and regime illegitimacy, progressively excluding regime justifications from the discursive field.

Conversely, BBC Arabic initially adopts a more cautious and procedural framing, maintaining a broader spectrum of interpretations before gradually narrowing the narrative boundaries as international consensus forms. The selected items thus allow for a comparative analysis of how each channel constructs discursive “walls” that regulate what can be said, questioned, or normalized at different stages of the conflict.

2. Belief Strategy (Stratégie de croyance): Producing Credibility and Moral Adherence

The belief strategy concerns the production of trust, legitimacy, and moral adherence through authoritative voices and normative references. In the corpus, this strategy is activated through the recurrent mobilization of experts, international institutions, humanitarian arguments, and legal discourses, particularly in coverage related to NATO intervention (March 2011).

France 24 Arabic frequently anchors its narratives in humanitarian imperatives and responsibility-to-protect rhetoric, fostering moral adhesion to intervention. BBC Arabic, by contrast, foregrounds legal rationales and UN Security Council mandates, cultivating credibility through procedural legitimacy rather than moral urgency. The corpus selection especially studio analyses and expert commentaries provides a privileged site for examining how belief is constructed not as persuasion alone, but as shared normative evidence.

3. Image Strategy (Stratégie de l’image): Symbolic and Visual Framing of the Conflict

The image strategy refers to the symbolic, visual, and semiotic construction of meaning through images, metaphors, and narrative dramatization. Across the corpus, both channels rely on recurring visual motifs—crowds, destroyed infrastructure, military hardware, and symbolic urban spaces such as Benghazi and Tripoli—to produce emotionally charged representations of the conflict.

France 24 Arabic places particular emphasis on images of liberation, momentum, and historical rupture, especially during the fall of Tripoli (August 2011), reinforcing a narrative of irreversible regime collapse. BBC Arabic, while using similar visual material, tends to contextualize images within narratives of uncertainty and risk, thereby moderating their symbolic closure. The selected broadcasts enable a fine-grained semiotic analysis of how images contribute to competing geopolitical imaginaries.

4. Vector Strategy (Stratégie des vecteurs): Formats, Voices, and Modes of Transmission

The vector strategy concerns the channels, formats, and discursive vehicles through which influence circulates. The corpus explicitly includes a diversity of formats—breaking news, correspondent reports, studio analyses, and expert debates—allowing for an examination of how form itself becomes a vector of influence.

France 24 Arabic frequently mobilizes studio-based expert commentary to stabilize interpretative frames and align them with French and Western diplomatic positions. BBC Arabic relies more systematically on correspondents and multi-voiced debates, creating an appearance of pluralism while still guiding interpretative outcomes. The strict comparability of formats across the corpus makes it possible to analyze how vectors shape the intensity, authority, and directionality of influence.

5. Access Strategy (Stratégie de l'accès): Defining Who Speaks and From Where

Finally, the access strategy refers to the control of entry points into the public sphere—who is authorized to speak, which voices are amplified, and which are excluded. Throughout the corpus, access is structured around institutional actors (NATO, UN, Western governments), recognized experts, and opposition representatives, while pro-regime Libyan voices progressively disappear from the media space.

France 24 Arabic accelerates this selective access earlier in the conflict, aligning with France's diplomatic recognition of the National Transitional Council. BBC Arabic maintains a more gradual exclusion process, reflecting its institutional commitment to balance while ultimately converging toward similar access restrictions. The corpus thus enables an analysis of access not as neutrality, but as a strategic distribution of visibility and legitimacy.

By operationalizing Huyghe's five strategies through a tightly constructed and temporally aligned corpus, this study moves beyond abstract theorization to demonstrate how informational influence is enacted concretely within media discourse. The corpus functions as an empirical testing ground where strategies of fortification, belief production, image construction, vectorization, and access control intersect and evolve over time. This approach allows for a dynamic and comparative understanding of international Arabic-language media as active geopolitical actors, rather than passive transmitters of information

Table 3. Analytical mapping of corpus items to Strategies of informational influence

Channel	Broadcast (Date)	Fortress (Narrative Boundaries)	Belief (Legitimacy & Credibility)	Image (Symbolic Visual Framing)	Vectors (Formats & Discursive)	Access (Authorized Voices)
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France 24 Arabic	Protests Erupt in Benghazi (18 Feb 2011)	Delimitation of unrest as popular uprising	Credibility via eyewitnesses & journalists	Crowds, slogans, street mobilization	Breaking news + field reporting	Protesters, activists, journalists
France 24 Arabic	Escalation of Violence... (23 Feb 2011)	Exclusion of regime justification	Moral framing of repression	Victims, chaos, security forces	Report + studio analysis	NGOs, diplomats, analysts
France 24 Arabic	NATO Launches Military Operations (19 Mar 2011)	Normalization of intervention narrative	Humanitarian & R2P discourse	Military hardware, airstrikes	Breaking news	NATO officials, Western leaders
France 24 Arabic	Libya Under NATO Airstrikes (28 Mar 2011)	Stabilization of pro-intervention frame	Expert authority & moral urgency	Precision strikes, civilians	Studio expert commentary	Military experts, political analysts
France 24 Arabic	Tripoli Falls... (22 Aug 2011)	Closure of regime narrative	Victory and inevitability framing	Celebration, symbolic locations	Evening news	Opposition leaders, civilians
France 24 Arabic	Libya After kaddafi (25 Sep 2011)	Post-regime narrative consolidation	Transition legitimacy discourse	Reconstruction imagery	Analytical report	Transitional authorities, experts
BBC Arabic TV	Demonstrations Spread... (18 Feb 2011)	Cautious narrative openness	Procedural credibility	Tension, uncertainty visuals	Standard news report	Protesters, officials
BBC Arabic TV	NATO Intervention: Legal Dimensions (20 Mar 2011)	Framing intervention as conditional	Legal-institutional belief	Maps, legal documents	Studio analysis	Legal experts, UN figures
BBC Arabic TV	Military Operations and Uncertain Outcomes (30 Mar 2011)	Contestation of outcome narratives	Analytical distance	Ambiguous military imagery	Report + expert commentary	Analysts, correspondents
BBC Arabic tv	Tripoli in Opposition	Narrative opening to	Cautious legitimacy	Mixed celebration/ch	Report + mini-	Opposition figures,

	n Hands... (22 Aug 2011)	uncertainty	y	aos imagery	debate	analysts
BBC arabic tv	Libya After kaddafi (3 Oct 2011)	Emphasis on instability	Condition al optimism	Fragmented state imagery	Analytical report	Experts, regional observers

6. Experimental :

This experimental section presents the results of the qualitative content analysis conducted on the corpus of twelve television news items broadcast by France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV during the 2011 Libyan crisis. The analysis operationalizes François-Bernard Huyghe's five strategies of informational influence—fortress, belief, image, vectors, and access—as analytical variables, allowing for a systematic comparison of editorial practices and narrative constructions across both channels.

Rather than testing causal hypotheses in a positivist sense, the experimental dimension of this study lies in the empirical validation of a theoretical model through its application to a tightly delimited and comparable media corpus. The objective is to observe how strategies of influence materialize concretely within journalistic discourse, formats, and symbolic structures.

6.1. Differential deployment of fortress strategies

The analysis reveals a clear divergence in the temporal deployment of the fortress strategy, understood as the stabilization of interpretative boundaries. France 24 Arabic adopts an early narrative closure, rapidly consolidating the frame of a legitimate popular uprising opposed to an illegitimate regime. This closure intensifies during the NATO intervention, where alternative interpretations particularly those questioning the necessity or proportionality of military action are largely marginalized.

BBC Arabic TV, by contrast, maintains a more permeable narrative space during the initial phases of the conflict. Competing frames coexist for a longer period, especially regarding regime resilience and diplomatic alternatives. However, as international consensus around intervention solidifies, BBC Arabic gradually converges toward a similar narrative fortification, albeit with a delayed and more procedural logic.

6.2. Competing Logics of Belief Construction

The **belief strategy** emerges as a central axis of differentiation between the two channels. France 24 Arabic privileges moral and humanitarian registers, frequently invoking civilian protection, urgency, and ethical responsibility. This discourse fosters emotional and normative adherence, particularly in studio analyses that legitimize intervention through humanitarian imperatives. BBC Arabic TV constructs belief through institutional credibility rather than moral urgency. Legal discourse, United Nations resolutions, and expert procedural commentary function as anchors of legitimacy. Trust is thus produced through rationalized authority and institutional mediation, reinforcing the BBC's ethos of impartiality while still orienting audience interpretation.

6.3. Image Strategies and Symbolic Closure

At the visual and semiotic level, both channels mobilize powerful imagery—crowds, violence, airstrikes, and symbolic urban spaces but deploy them within distinct narrative grammars. France 24 Arabic's image strategy tends toward symbolic closure, particularly during the fall of Tripoli, where visuals of celebration and liberation are framed as historical rupture and inevitability. BBC Arabic TV employs similar images but systematically reinscribes them within narratives of uncertainty and risk. Visual material is less conclusive and more ambivalent, sustaining

interpretative openness even at moments of apparent victory. This confirms that images do not function autonomously but derive meaning from discursive framing.

6.4. Vectors and the Authority of Format

The analysis demonstrates that **formats themselves operate as vectors of influence**. France 24 Arabic relies heavily on studio-based expert commentary, which stabilizes meaning and reinforces alignment with Western diplomatic narratives. The studio functions as a site of authoritative interpretation.

BBC Arabic TV diversifies its vectors by combining correspondents, reports, and short debates. This multiplicity produces an appearance of pluralism, although interpretative trajectories remain guided. The choice of format thus shapes not only how information circulates, but also how authority and legitimacy are distributed.

6.5. Access and the Strategic Distribution of Visibility

Finally, the **access strategy** reveals how both channels regulate entry into the mediated public sphere. Over time, pro-regime voices are progressively excluded, while institutional actors, opposition figures, and recognized experts dominate the discursive space. France 24 Arabic accelerates this process, reflecting France's early diplomatic recognition of the National Transitional Council.

BBC Arabic TV maintains access diversity for a longer period, consistent with its institutional commitment to balance. Nonetheless, convergence occurs as the conflict evolves, illustrating that access is not a neutral reflection of reality but a strategic allocation of visibility and legitimacy.

7. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV operate not merely as information providers, but as active geopolitical actors engaged in strategies of informational influence. By applying François-Bernard Huyghe's five-strategy model to a rigorously constructed and temporally aligned corpus, the analysis moves beyond abstract theorization to reveal the concrete mechanisms through which influence is produced, circulated, and normalized within international Arabic-language media.

The findings highlight both divergence and convergence. Divergence is observable in the modalities of influence moral versus legal belief construction, early versus delayed narrative fortification, symbolic closure versus visual ambivalence. Convergence, however, emerges in the progressive alignment of access restrictions, narrative stabilization, and geopolitical framing as the conflict evolves.

More broadly, the study confirms the heuristic value of Huyghe's framework for media analysis, provided it is operationalized empirically rather than applied descriptively. Informational influence is shown to be dynamic, cumulative, and embedded in routine journalistic practices rather than exceptional propaganda efforts.

In the context of post-Arab Spring media geopolitics, international Arabic-language channels such as France 24 Arabic and BBC Arabic TV occupy a strategic position at the intersection of journalism, diplomacy, and soft power. Their influence lies less in overt persuasion than in the structuring of interpretative horizons defining what can be seen, said, believed, and debated. Future research may extend this model to digital platforms, audience reception, or comparative regional crises, further illuminating the evolving architecture of global media power.

In conclusion, these channels demonstrate that international Arabic-language media are active participants in global power dynamics, blending journalism, diplomacy, and strategic influence to shape regional and international perceptions.

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