Arab digital media's treatment of the fall of the regime in Syria An analytical study by Aljazeera.net

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Abstract:
This study aims to explore how the media addressed the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria in light of the evolving political and military developments in the region, focusing specifically on Arab digital media, represented by the Aljazeera.net website. The objective is to assess the level of interest in the Syrian crisis, its repercussions, and the international responses to it. The research adopts a descriptive analytical survey method. Through the analysis of media framing of the issue, the study found that Aljazeera.net demonstrated a clear tendency to present comprehensive and detailed information in its coverage of the current situation. The study concluded that the website utilized various media formats, including news articles and reports, to enrich its coverage and closely follow the developments. It also relied on insights from political, military, and academic figures to examine the different dimensions of the crisis.

***key words**: **Media Treatment; Digital media ; Syrian regime; Al Jazeera.net website**.*

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Introduction

The contemporary world has witnessed numerous rapid transformations as a result of innovations in the field of information and communication technology across various sectors. [1] This paradigm shift has been driven by the emergence of the World Wide Web and its related applications, which have effectively filled gaps in real reality. Understanding these variables is essential for a comprehensive grasp of the current global landscape. It involves integrating real reality with digital virtual reality in various forms and methods, [2] using the latest technological tools and applications to explore or clarify the fundamental and interconnected relationship between the real and virtual realms across political, economic, cultural, military, security, and other domains. [3] New media has emerged as a dominant concept within the digital content industry for various institutions and organizations, due to the wide range of topics and ideas it covers across different aspects of public life. [4] Given the current global tensions—reflected in Al Jazeera Net's coverage of political and military coups in some regions—there is a pressing need to understand the complex interplay between these two realities. This requires managing a set of variables when dealing with current situations, necessitating wise governance of such issues overall. Consequently, digital media has focused on numerous topics, [5] addressing them in a manner aligned with its mission to inform public opinion, [6] especially regarding the global focus on the Syrian crisis, which has had profound repercussions on the region and

neighboring countries. [7] In light of this introduction, the following research question arises:

How did the Al Jazeera website address the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria?

Previous studies:

1/A study by Madi Nabil , Khadidja Hadef ,(2024): This study aimed to monitor and analyze how digital media addresses current global issues and crises. The researchers specifically focused on the media frameworks used to cover the conflict in the African Sahel region, particularly concerning the coup in Niger, using a descriptive and analytical survey method to examine a sample of various media materials related to the ousting of President Mohamed Bazoum. The study's findings revealed that the Al Jazeera website maintained a neutral position in its coverage of the crisis.

2/A Study by Madi Nabil, Taleb Kihoul, (2023): The objective of the study was to monitor and analyze how digital media addressed current issues. The study specifically focused on the media coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war, with particular emphasis on the Wagner crisis, through the Al Jazeera website.

3/ A study by Manel Redaoui (2024), The researcher aimed to monitor and analyze how the media addressed contemporary issues. The focus of the study was on the media coverage of the repercussions of the Al-Aqsa Flood events, as observed on the Al Jazeera News Channel, particularly within a selection of episodes from the *Gaza What Next* program. Using a media survey approach, which included both descriptive and analytical components, the study's findings revealed that the media's approach was in opposition to the Israeli aggression policy in the Gaza Strip.

4/ A study by the researchers Farek, Ben Terad (2023**)**, The researcher aimed to monitor and analyze how the media addressed contemporary issues, focusing specifically on the media treatment of the Ukrainian-Russian crisis in the talk shows on the Al Jazeera News Channel. The study conducted an analytical examination of a sample from the *Beyond the News* program. The findings revealed that the program utilized news and reporting templates to enrich the talk show by 33.33%. The program also supported the development of the crisis by featuring political and military figures to discuss it. Additionally, the study found that the program's approach was dominated by neutrality in addressing the current crisis, with this neutrality accounting for 50% of its content.

5/A study by Sawsan Mekki (2024), The objective of the study was to clarify how the Al-Jazeera news website treated the Al-Aqsa Flood battle in its media output. To achieve this, a sample of selected topics was analyzed to determine their general features and characteristics, as well as the website’s position on the Al-Aqsa Flood. The study revealed that the Al-Aqsa Flood was covered extensively, characterized by an immediacy in news presentation rather than an in-depth analytical approach, and relied more on rational appeals than emotional ones.

6/A study by Fatima Al-Ahmedi (2022), The study focused on the frameworks used by international news sites in processing coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Its aim was to identify how these international sites covered the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the developments in Ukraine, and their consequences, with a particular focus on CNN, France

24, and RT Russian websites. The study's results confirmed a difference in the nature and types of topics related to the Russian war on Ukraine that the sample sites focused on. Additionally, the findings indicated that, in terms of the methods used in processing the Russian war on the studied sites, the category "using more than one method" ranked first. The study also found that the category "reporters" ranked first, accounting for 17.8%.

Research Question:

- what extent has Aljazeera.net invested in the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria?
- What sources did Aljazeera.net rely on to gather information and news related to the fall of the regime in Syria?
- What journalistic formats were used by Aljazeera.net to cover the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria?
- What was Aljazeera . net's position and direction regarding the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria?
- What reasons, according to Aljazeera.net, led to the fall of the regime in Syria?

Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive analytical approach, utilizing a descriptive survey method to achieve its objectives. This study is a descriptive analytical study, which, as noted, relies entirely on uncovering the truth and achieving satisfactory results. [8] The appropriate method for this study is the descriptive survey method, which aligns with its nature and objectives. [9]

The present study used content analysis, a direct technique applied to written, audio, audiovisual, or digital material produced by individuals or groups or addressing various topics, to analyze the articles and topics found on the Al Jazeera Net website related to the issue of the fall of the regime in Syria. The content analysis was carried out both quantitatively and qualitatively. [10]

The researcher selected 92 topics related to the fall of the regime in Syria over the course of one full month, from 11/08/2024 to 12/08/2024.

Results:

A comprehensive analysis of the Al Jazeera Net website was conducted over a one-month period, from November 8, 2024, to December 8, 2024, focusing on the topic of the fall of the regime in Syria. The specific research problem and questions included in the study were taken into account, and the following results were obtained:

- The study found that the topics related to the fall of the regime in Syria were most prominently featured in the fourth week, which coincided with the first week of December, accounting for 42.39%. This was due to the increased focus on the subject, particularly regarding the fall of the Syrian regime led by the Assad family, which had been in power for over 50 years.
- Given that the Al Jazeera website provides daily news and coverage of events, the journalistic report emerged as the primary category, constituting 46.73% of the total. This was followed by news articles, accounting for 38.04%. This allowed the editorial team to cover the topic comprehensively, emphasizing the individual perspective in narrating the details.

- The Al Jazeera Net website predominantly relied on its own internal sources, as nearly all the news and reports published were authored by Al Jazeera journalists from various countries worldwide, ranging from correspondents to envoys. As a result, the correspondents category became the primary source, accounting for 34.78% of the total.
- All the reports and news converged on the central theme of the study, namely the fall of the regime in Syria, which made up a significant 90.21% of the data. In terms of subject categories, the category concerning the conflicting parties was the most prominent, accounting for 30.43% of the data.
- To investigate the factors leading to the deterioration of the situation in Syria and the eventual fall of the regime, the Al Jazeera News website focused on the daily news and information it circulated about the current situation in the region, including its political and military implications.
- The website also dedicated significant attention to the various active parties involved in the conflict, providing detailed coverage of each, particularly those engaged in the military and political dimensions of the situation..

Discussion:

Table (01): This table displays the distribution (location) of media material pertaining to the fall of the Syrian regime.

Rank	Week	Date	Repts	Per (%)
3	First week	From 08Nov to 15 Nov 2024	14	15.21%
2	Second week	From16 to 23Nov 2024	16	17.39%
1	Third week	From 24 to 01Dec 2024	23	25.00%
4	Fourth week	From02 to 08 Dec 2024	39	42.39%
Total	**4**	**From08 Nov to 08 Dec2024**	**92**	**100 %**

Source: Prepared by the researchers

By extrapolating the results from Table (01), which illustrates the distribution of media content on the topic of the fall of the regime in Syria and its developments, it can be concluded that the largest percentage of media content appeared in the fourth week, with an estimated percentage. This was followed by the third week, with a percentage of 25%, the second week with 17.39%, and finally the first week with 15.21%. The placement of media content is of significant importance in the media landscape, as it reflects the level of interest the media outlet places on the topic. For example, the Al Jazeera website dedicated substantial attention to the issue of the fall of the Syrian regime, with media materials in the fourth week occupying the leading position in terms of addressing the subject. This was the week in which the website provided substantial details for the first time regarding both the

diplomatic and military aspects of the situation in Syria. This period was particularly significant as it coincided with the fall of Aleppo, the Syrian capital, to the opposition forces led by al-Julani. This development occurred against the backdrop of escalating tensions in the region, driven by the involvement of various external actors, including Turkey, Russia, the United States, and the Gulf States, among others. Notably, the Al Jazeera website also highlighted the potential arrest of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a development that could have profound and far-reaching implications for the region. This included concerns about Syrian prisons, which elicited diverse responses from both governmental and non-governmental human rights organizations regarding the humanitarian crisis in these prisons. Additionally, the international community's reactions to the crisis in Syria, especially from neighboring countries and those with common interests, as well as the fate of the Syrian government, became pivotal in shaping the coverage. The website's initial headlines concerning the fall of the Syrian regime spurred significant developments and reactions on the international political stage. The researchers assert that the placement of materials related to the fall of the regime in Syria on the front page of Al Jazeera's website serves as clear evidence of the website's high level of interest in this subject. Furthermore, the researchers contend that the extensive use of prominent media outlets to cover and discuss the issue reflects the sensitivity and importance of the topic for the Al Jazeera website. This is especially significant given the political, economic, military, and international security dimensions at play in the region.

Table (02): This table illustrates the journalistic templates employed in the coverage of the Syrian regime's fall.

Journalistic Formats	Repts	Per (%)
News	35	38.04%
Report	43	46.73%
Analytical article	06	06.52%
Press Interview	08	08.69%
Total	**92**	**100%**

Source: prepared by researchers

As shown in Table (02), the Al Jazeera News website employed a range of journalistic formats in its coverage of the fall of the Syrian regime. The website utilized four distinct journalistic types, each addressing different aspects of the topic and its consequences. The report emerged as the most prevalent format, accounting for 46.73% of the total, followed by news, which accounted for 38.04%. The third most prevalent format was the press interview, which made up 8.69% of the total. The analytical article ranked fourth, representing 6.52% of the content, and is considered the most direct form of communicating media policy. It can be concluded that the news website did not limit its coverage to news and report-based content but diversified its approach by including articles, which are regarded as more intellectual in nature. The researchers attribute the quantitative results in Table (02) to the fact that the Al Jazeera website presented the issue of the fall of the Syrian regime through a variety of journalistic formats. These included neutral and objective news reporting, as well as analytical pieces that aimed to explore different perspectives on the

subject. Additionally, expressive formats were used to engage viewers or followers with the intent to persuade. The website showed a strong reliance on reports, which suggests that Al Jazeera provided thorough and comprehensive coverage of the issue. The second-place ranking of news also indicates that the website offered exhaustive explanations and analyses of topics related to the fall of the Syrian regime and its repercussions, particularly the fall of the capital, Aleppo, to the opposition forces led by Al-Julani, as well as the news of President Bashar al-Assad fleeing to an undisclosed location, along with the reasons for his flight and the international reactions to it. The press interview, ranked third, is a format that monitors public opinion, thus supporting the diversity of journalistic formats adopted by the Al Jazeera website. The press article, ranked fourth, had a moderate representation but was still significant, allowing the website to monitor the opinions of experts. Military, political, and media specialists were consulted on the general situation in Syria, and these findings align with the study by researchers Nabil Madi & Khadidja Hadef (2024). [11]

The researchers believe that the Al Jazeera news website's reliance on four diverse journalistic formats was not arbitrary but rather a strategic approach aimed at enhancing the quality of coverage and keeping pace with developments, ensuring that the viewer and follower remain fully informed of all the details surrounding the topic.

Table (03): the subject categories encompassed in the discourse on the dissolution of the Syrian regime are delineated.

Category of Topic	Repts	Per (%)
Conflict parties	28	30.43%
Official statements	12	13.04%
International reactions	22	23.91%
Reaction of international organizations	12	13.04%
Military and security statements	10	10.86%
Diplomatic efforts	8	%08.69
Total	**92**	**100%**

Source: Prepared by researchers

As illustrated by the data presented in Table (03), the issue of the parties to the conflict accounted for the largest proportion, estimated at 30.43%. This is due to the escalating situation in Syria, which has posed an international threat to the region. The issue of international reactions ranked second, accounting for 23.91% of the total, driven by the fall of the Syrian regime, which was identified as a direct cause of the deterioration of the situation, escalating fears among the conflict parties, and influencing the overall trajectory of the crisis. The reaction of international bodies and official statements followed in third place, with an equal rate of 13.04%. This was due to the necessity of resolving the conflict in Syria between the disputing parties and prioritizing the public interest in Syria, which could be achieved through constitutional protection to avoid further problems that may lead to a regional crisis after the fall of Aleppo to the Al-Julani group. Finding new solutions that

contribute to resolving the conflict permanently was also a key issue. In fourth place came the issue of military and security statements, at 10.86%, through which leaders of major countries and heads of neighboring nations emphasized the need for a peaceful solution and self-restraint. During this challenging period for the region, characterized by high tensions and reciprocal accusations between the Syrian army and the Al-Julani group, the topic of diplomatic efforts emerged at a rate of 8.69%. The majority of neighboring heads of state affirmed their commitment to re-establishing international legitimacy and prioritizing the paramount interests of the Syrian populace. The researchers attribute these findings to the significant attention given to the subject by the Al Jazeera news website, aimed at monitoring opinions and perspectives on the event, its political and economic ramifications in the region, and its future implications. The study's findings emphasize the pivotal role of international public opinion in shaping the narrative, particularly in the context of the region's prolonged political and military tensions. As highlighted by the study's author, Manel Redaoui (2024) [12], this aspect has been extensively covered by major international media outlets and websites, underscoring its importance in global discourse.

Table (04): This table illustrates the sources that Al Jazeera.net has utilised in its coverage of the Syrian regime's fall.

Sources	Repts	Per (%)
Al Jazeera reporters	21	% 22.82
Special envoy	13	14.13%
Correspondents	32	34.78%
Personalities	8	8.69%0
Military experts and officials	10	10.86%
Other media	8	%08.69
Total	**92**	**100%**

Source*:* prepared by researchers

By extrapolating the data presented in Table (04), it is evident that the Al Jazeera website extensively relied on the channel's own news journalists in its coverage of the fall of the Syrian regime, with over 34% of the content being attributed to press correspondents. This observation significantly enhances the credibility of the website, suggesting the presence of effective mechanisms for accessing information and thereby reinforcing the media value of the Al Jazeera platform. The website also drew heavily on its own journalists to cover the event and present the international reactions to the issue from various countries, especially in light of the escalating tensions in the region over the past seven years. The category of special envoys ranked third, contributing 14.13% of the coverage, while experts and military officials accounted for 10.86% of the total. The remaining sources, including personalities and other media outlets, collectively accounted for less than 9% of the total, as reported in the study by Nabil Madi & Taleb Kihoul (2023) [13], These findings align with the conclusions of our study regarding the sources that the Al Jazeera website relied upon in its coverage of the issue. The researchers suggest that Al Jazeera's preference for relying on in-house sources for covering the fall of the Syrian regime, particularly at the hands of Al-

Julani and his group, can be attributed to the channel's extensive journalistic resources available through its global network of offices. This infrastructure facilitates efficient information gathering, enabling the channel to maintain a competitive advantage in the field of journalism. The timely acquisition of information ensures the delivery of instantaneous, exclusive, and highly relevant news coverage of the Syrian crisis. Furthermore, the channel's strength and its ability to manage the situation are enhanced by its capacity for in-depth analysis, drawing on the expertise of political analysts, security experts, military officials, and media specialists. The analysis is further enriched by contributions from renowned international media outlets, such as CNN America, BBC World, RT (Russia), Reuters, Turkish media, and several local Syrian newspapers, all of which have provided extensive coverage of the fall of the Syrian regime. This diverse range of sources greatly bolsters the credibility of the analysis, offering comprehensive insights into the complexities and context of the Syrian crisis.

Table (05): This table illustrates the trend category of the Al Jazeera - Net website concerning the fall of the Syrian regime.

direction	Repts	Per (%)
Supporter	83	90.21%
Opponent	02	02.17%
Neutral	07	07.60%
Total	**92**	**100%**

Source: Prepared by researchers

As shown in Table (05), the analysis material exhibited a predominantly pro-trend, occupying the first position with a percentage of 90.21%. The neutral trend came second, accounting for 7.60%, while the opposing trend secured third place with 2.17%. According to the findings reported by the researchers, the Al Jazeera website displayed a dominant pro-trend sentiment, estimated at 90.21%, while the opposing trend represented 2.17% and the neutral trend accounted for 7.60%. These results align with those presented in the aforementioned study by Farq & Bin Tarad (2023) [14]. However, these findings contrast with those from a different study by the same researcher, Manel Redaoui (2024) [15].The pro-trend on the Al Jazeera.net website can be attributed to the multifaceted nature of the crisis, which saw Syrian President Bashar al-Assad retain his grip on power despite considerable international opposition. This opposition was particularly pronounced among the Gulf States, the United States, Turkey, and a significant number of European countries. Additionally, the involvement of new parties aligned with the opposition led by Al-Julani, which received substantial backing from Western nations such as the United States, France, and Gulf States like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, contributed to heightened regional tensions. These tensions led to political interventions at the highest levels, though these efforts ultimately failed to resolve the crisis. Researchers also highlight the economic impact of the crisis on internal security and the worsening humanitarian situation. This prompted the Al Jazeera News website to offer more realistic explanations and analyses of the crisis, aiming to inform global public opinion with timely, honest, and credible information. This approach reflects the website's neutrality in its treatment of the subject. In contrast, the

opposing trend emerged through certain opinions and viewpoints that the Al Jazeera website used to analyze the crisis, particularly focusing on the perspectives of political officials worldwide, as well as security and military experts specializing in Syrian affairs.

Conclusion:

The present study aimed to investigate how the Al Jazeera news website covered the Syrian war, specifically focusing on the fall of the Syrian regime. This topic is of significant importance due to the critical questions it raises about the future of the region, in light of the growing tensions and political and military conflicts between the various parties involved in the conflict. Al Jazeera's website has consistently demonstrated a commitment to providing comprehensive coverage of the ongoing crisis, actively seeking solutions and promoting dialogue by addressing key issues on a regular basis. The site has upheld a strong commitment to objectivity and neutrality in its reporting on the crisis, presenting a range of perspectives on its developments since the beginning. It is crucial to recognize that the implications of this issue are still unfolding, and further developments are expected in the coming days. The question of whether neighboring countries will be able to reach a peaceful resolution in Syria without the involvement of external actors with military and economic interests in the region remains unresolved.

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