

Media Coverage of Syria's Return to the Arab League – An Analytical Study of the Digital Edition of Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper from May 1, 2023 to June 1, 2023.

المعالجة الإعلامية لعودة سوريا إلى جامعة الدول العربية - دراسة تحليلية للنسخة الإلكترونية لجريدة القدس العربي

في الفترة الممتدة من 01 ماي 2023 إلى 01 جوان 2023

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Abstract:

This study examined the media coverage of Syria's return to the Arab League by analyzing the content of Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper's website during the period from May 1 to June 1, 2023. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and employed quantitative and qualitative content analysis of 58 articles. The findings revealed that the newspaper, in its strategic framing, emphasized the portrayal of Syria's reinstatement as a bold decision, while highlighting the divergence in Arab states' positions, particularly Qatar's rejection of the move without any change in circumstances. Within the conflict frame, the newspaper focused on the Syrian state institutions' efforts to end the presence of militias and foreign interventions. Economically, it addressed the issue of drug trafficking, especially Captagon, while on the humanitarian level, it shed light on the return of refugees and displaced persons. The study showed a dominance of a negative tone in the newspaper's coverage, reflecting its political stance and its implicit rejection of Syria's return to the Arab League—an attitude that can be attributed to the policy of the newspaper's ownership.

Keywords: Media Coverage, Media Framing, Syria's Return ,Arab League

المخلص:

تناولت هذه الدراسة المعالجة الإعلامية لعودة سوريا إلى جامعة الدول العربية من خلال تحليل محتوى موقع صحيفة القدس العربي في الفترة من 1 ماي 2023 إلى 1 جوان 2023. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، واستخدمت أداة تحليل المضمون الكمي والكيفي لـ 58 مقالة.

كشفت النتائج أن الصحيفة ركزت في أطرها الاستراتيجية على اعتبار قرار استعادة سوريا لمقعدها خطوة جريئة، مع إبراز التباين في مواقف الدول العربية، لا سيما رفض قطر دون تغيير في الظروف، كما تناولت الصحيفة في إطار الصراع دعم مؤسسات الدولة السورية لإنهاء وجود الميليشيات والتدخلات الخارجية، وركزت اقتصادياً على قضية تهريب المخدرات وخاصة الكبتاغون، بينما سلطت الضوء إنسانياً على عودة اللاجئين والنازحين، وأظهرت الدراسة هيمنة الاتجاه السلبي في تغطية الصحيفة، ما يعكس توجهها السياسي ورفضها الضمني لعودة سوريا إلى الجامعة العربية، وهو ما يُعزى إلى سياسة الجهة المالكة للصحيفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المعالجة الإعلامية، الأطر الإعلامية، عودة سوريا، جامعة الدول العربية.

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Methodological Framework of the Study

Introduction:

Since the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, the Arab world has witnessed a sweeping political movement known as the "Arab Spring," which brought about major and significant political changes in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Syria. These movements had a clear impact on transforming the nature and structure of ruling regimes, starting as peaceful political protests driven by accumulated political, economic, and social pressures. However, these movements eventually escalated into violence, revolutions, and ongoing upheavals whose repercussions persist to this day.

In the Syrian context, military and political developments accelerated remarkably. The Syrian protests began as a peaceful uprising on Tuesday, March 15, 2011, sparked by Facebook activists in an unprecedented challenge to the Syrian regime, inspired by the sweeping wave of protests across the Arab world. These protests soon led to confrontations between Syrian citizens and security forces, which quickly escalated into armed clashes spreading across most of Syria. These confrontations evolved into a full-blown armed conflict between opposition forces and the Syrian regime, leaving deep and multifaceted consequences¹.

In response to the continuation of the Syrian revolution and ongoing demands for freedom, dignity, and justice, several Arab countries reacted, and the Arab League took numerous measures against the Syrian regime. These included suspending Syria's membership, issuing decisions calling on the regime to refrain from using excessive force against protestors, and attempting to mediate the crisis. Despite rejecting most Arab initiatives, the Syrian regime accepted the Arab League's observer mission protocol.

As part of ongoing efforts by the Arab League Secretary-General Nabil El-Araby, the Arab Ministerial Committee, headed by Qatar's Foreign Minister and including representatives from Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, and Oman, visited President Bashar al-Assad in Syria on October 26, 2011, to present the League's decisions. On November 2, 2011, the Syrian government agreed to an Arab League action plan, developed during the October 30 meeting in Qatar, which called for an end to violence, the release of political prisoners, dialogue with the opposition, and access for observers and international media.

However, the regime failed to implement the plan within the designated timeframe, prompting debates about further actions against Assad's regime. These ranged from suspending Syria's membership to imposing diplomatic and economic sanctions. With rising casualties, estimated by the United Nations at around 3,500 deaths between March and November 2011, the Arab League officially suspended Syria's membership during an extraordinary session on November 12, 2011. The decision was passed by 18 countries, with Yemen and Lebanon objecting, and Iraq abstaining. The suspension of a state historically regarded as a bastion of Arab nationalism had profound implications across the region.

¹ Al-kmayan, chibli, Nawach. The Treatment of Syrian Refugee Issues in Jordanian Newspapers – An Analytical Study. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Media, Department of Journalism and Media, Faculty of Media, Middle East University, Jordan, 2021, p 2.

Syria's membership remained suspended for over a decade¹. On May 7, 2023, the Arab League decided to reinstate Syria's participation in its meetings and affiliated bodies. While the initial suspension in 2011 was due to Syria's rejection of the Arab peace initiative, the 2023 decision came without a new formal initiative, apart from Syria's expressed willingness to engage with the Amman and Jeddah statements.

Despite the absence of a clear Arab initiative—which indicates ongoing disagreements among member states—certain conditions and commitments seemed to have led the regime to respond cautiously to the Arab League's decision. The Syrian government issued only a brief statement expressing interest in participating, without reference to any obligations.

Reactions to Syria's return were divided, with some supporting the move and others opposing it. This division was reflected in the media landscape, with each outlet reflecting its editorial stance—some in favor, others against. Consequently, Syria's return to the Arab League became a widely covered topic, especially by digital newspapers.

Thus, the research problem centers on monitoring and analyzing how Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper addressed the issue of Syria's return to the Arab League, through an analytical study of its digital edition during the period from May 1, 2023, to June 1, 2023.

Research Problem: The core research problem focuses on the journalistic coverage provided by the selected media outlet, which serves as a clear reflection of the political orientation of the newspaper's ownership or the policy of its funding entity. Accordingly, the main research question that guides this study is:

- What is the nature of the media coverage regarding Syria's return to the Arab League in the digital edition of Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper?

This overarching question branches into several sub-questions:

- What are the media framing strategies employed by Al-Quds Al-Arabi in covering Syria's return to the Arab League?
- What are the key themes and content areas emphasized by the newspaper in its coverage?
- What are the newspaper's orientations or stances in addressing Syria's return to the Arab League?
- What sources of information did the newspaper rely on in its coverage?
- What journalistic genres and formats did the newspaper adopt in its treatment of the topic?
- What types of images were used in the newspaper's visual representation of Syria's return to the Arab League?

Significance of the Study: This study draws its significance from the importance of the topic itself—namely, Syria's reintegration into the Arab League—and the implications this development carries across various key issues. These include the return of refugees, the fate of detainees, the drug trafficking file (especially regarding Captagon), and the potential revival of the stalled political process to resolve the crisis.

Syria's reintegration into the Arab League symbolizes an Arab and regional need to reconcile internal divisions and move beyond a phase of mutual exhaustion—particularly in

¹ ssa Ahmed Al-chalabi, Nawaf Kaid Jarad Abu Tayeh. "The Arab League's Policy Toward the Syrian Crisis and the Dimensions of Arab, Regional, and International Intervention", *Dirasat wa Abhath Journal, The Arab Journal for Research in Human and Social Sciences*, Vol. 9, Issue 27, June 2017, pp 9–10.

the wake of the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, the Turkish-Egyptian and Turkish-Gulf reapproachments, and amid growing Chinese-American rivalry in the region. This new direction will undoubtedly shape Syria's regional role and alignment in the emerging geopolitical order.

However, pursuing this path is unlikely to be straightforward, as Arab states will face significant Western—particularly American—pressure opposing normalization with Syria. Convincing these powers of the viability of this new approach is essential in order to ease or lift sanctions and kickstart the reconstruction process.

Objectives of the Study: The primary objective of this study is to explore how Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper covered Syria's return to the Arab League by analyzing the content of related articles published on its website. The study aims to:

- Monitor, analyze, and interpret the key media frames adopted by Al-Quds Al-Arabi in covering Syria's return to the Arab League.
- Identify the main topics and issues emphasized by the newspaper in its digital coverage of this event.
- Determine the newspaper's editorial orientations in addressing the topic.
- Explore the sources of news and information used by Al-Quds Al-Arabi.
- Analyze the journalistic formats and genres employed in the newspaper's digital coverage.
- Examine the types of visual content (images) used in the coverage of Syria's return to the Arab League.

Research Method and Type: This study adopts the survey method, specifically using sample-based surveying, to cover the relevant period required for the analysis. The survey method is defined as “a systematic scientific effort to collect data, information, and descriptions of the elements that constitute the research population over a sufficient time span, either to build a foundational database for a specific field of study or to evaluate the efficiency of existing conditions by comparing gathered data with pre-established benchmarks or standards.”¹

The survey method offers several advantages, including its wide applicability, ease of implementation, and capacity to cover large segments of the study population. It also provides valuable insights into current societal phenomena, and often involves the use of sampling techniques.

The researcher selected the topic of Syria's return to the Arab League due to its significant relevance in the Arab region and the wide-ranging debate it has sparked among intellectuals and writers. Accordingly, the researcher collected all articles and content related to Syria's reintegration into the Arab League—from the initial Arab calls and international efforts up to the convening of the Arab Summit in Saudi Arabia in May 2023.

The researcher chose the digital edition of Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper as the case study and gathered all relevant content published between May 1, 2023, and June 1, 2023, encompassing the period before and after the summit. A total of 58 articles on the topic were published on the newspaper's website during this time.

¹ Badr, Ahmed. Principles and Methods of Scientific Research, 5th ed., Publications Agency, Kuwait, 1981, p 2.

For the purpose of analysis, the researcher adopted content analysis as the primary research tool. A structured analysis form was developed, incorporating analytical categories focused on the questions: What was said? and How was it said?

This study relied on the thematic unit (i.e., the article's subject matter) as the unit of analysis, as it best aligns with the study's title and objectives. The thematic unit is also one of the most widely used units in media and communication research. In its simplified form, a thematic unit refers to a simple sentence, phrase, or paragraph that encapsulates the central idea or issue under discussion.

Scope of the Study:

1. Spatial Scope: The researcher selected Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper due to its strong focus on contemporary Arab issues. Al-Quds Al-Arabi is an independent daily Arabic newspaper, currently edited by Sanaa Aloul, and was established in London in April 1989. It is considered one of the most widely circulated Arabic newspapers, with its website attracting hundreds of thousands of daily readers from around the world—placing it among the leading Arabic news platforms online.

The newspaper is distributed across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and has earned a solid reputation both regionally and internationally as a pluralistic and reliable platform. It is known for its professional and objective journalistic standards, offering in-depth analysis of Arab and global affairs, supported by a broad network of correspondents worldwide.

Moreover, the newspaper features contributions from prominent writers, academics, and commentators from across the Arab world, representing a wide spectrum of political and cultural perspectives. This diversity allows it to present balanced viewpoints without favoring any particular side. Al-Quds Al-Arabi also actively engages with its readers by publishing their feedback and opinions across its print edition, website, and social media platforms.

2. Temporal Scope: The temporal scope of the study is limited to the period from May 1, 2023, to June 1, 2023. This specific timeframe was chosen because it marked the peak of discussions and calls for Syria's return to the Arab League, culminating in the Arab Summit held during that month, followed by subsequent reactions and developments that revealed divergent perspectives and interpretations.

Defining the Terminology:

Defining the concepts is an essential and fundamental step in any scientific research, as it represents the link or intersection between theory and fieldwork. Without this, the connection between the two would be non-existent¹.

First: Media Coverage

1. Linguistically:

a. Coverage (in Arabic): The verb 'ālaḡa (to treat) is a transitive verb that carries several meanings, including: taking care of a patient, acting toward someone in a certain way, describing someone dealing with a topic cautiously, or the process of transforming the substance of material.

¹ Daliou, Fadhel, Gharbi, Ali. Foundations of Methodology in Social Sciences, 2nd ed., Laboratory of Communication Sociology for Research and Translation, Mentouri University, Constantine, 2012, p 55.

b. Media (in Arabic): The term i'lām (media) is of Western origin (information in Latin), derived from the verb a'lama (to inform). It is used interchangeably with other verbs conveying the same meaning, such as: informed, notified, all aiming to deliver information and news to a person.

2. Terminologically: Media refers to the process through which news and accurate information are disseminated, based on truthfulness and transparency, addressing both the intellect and elevated emotions of the audience, and aiming to elevate public opinion. Media functions as a means of enlightenment and education, using methods such as explanation, interpretation, and logical argumentation. It also entails providing the public with the maximum amount of objective, accurate, and clear information¹.

3. Operationally: It refers to the way the newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi, through its website, addressed the topic of Syria's return to the Arab League, following a specific editorial policy determined by the newspaper's political orientation and ownership. The focus is primarily on how the newspaper handled the information and data, how issues and ideas were presented, which aspects were emphasized and highlighted, and which were neglected or ignored.

Second: Syria's Return to the Arab League

This refers to the approval by the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers in an emergency session held in Cairo on May 7, 2023, to reinstate the Syrian regime's seat in the Arab League, which had been vacant since November 2011. This decision came after more than a decade of suspension, following various Arab and international efforts calling for Syria's return to the League.

Subsequently, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia extended an invitation, delivered by its ambassador in Amman, to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to attend the 32nd Arab Summit, which was held in Jeddah on May 19, 2023, in his capacity as the official representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. In doing so, the Arab isolation of the Assad regime was effectively lifted, despite no significant changes to the original conditions and reasons that led to Syria's suspension from the Arab League in the first place.

Previous Studies:

1. Study titled: **"Frames of Journalistic Coverage of Syria's Return to the Arab League: An Analytical Study of the Online Platforms of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspapers"** by researcher Mohammed Samir Ali Mahjouba (2024)²

This study aimed to identify the journalistic framing used by the websites of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspapers in their coverage of Syria's return to the Arab League. The researcher sought to uncover the main topics that both websites focused on regarding this issue, and to determine the most commonly used frames.

The study adopted the descriptive-analytical approach, using content analysis as a tool. Among its most important findings: Al-Sharq Al-Awsat primarily adopted the strategic frame, and did not use the security frame, whereas Al-Quds Al-Arabi ranked the security frame first and did not use the economic consequences frame. Additionally, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat adopted a biased approach in favor of Syria, attempting to highlight the positive aspects of Syria's

¹ Al-Far, Mohammad Jamal. Media Dictionary, Osama Publishing House, Jordan, 2010, p 27.

² Mahjoubah, Mohamed Samir Ali. "Framing the Reinstatement of Syria to the Arab League: An Analytical Study of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Al-Quds Al-Arabi News Websites", Adab Al-Rafidain Journal, Issue 97, Iraq, 2024.

return to the Arab League from all angles. On the other hand, Al-Quds Al-Arabi adopted a propagandistic approach aimed at opposing Syria's return and justifying its position.

This study is similar to ours in that it addressed the same issue—Syria's return to the Arab League. However, our study was limited to an analytical examination of Al-Quds Al-Arabi's online platform, while the aforementioned study analyzed both Al-Quds Al-Arabi and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat. The two studies aligned in their findings regarding Al-Quds Al-Arabi's position on Syria's return to the Arab League.

2. Study titled: **"The Coverage of Arab Digital Newspapers on the War on Gaza in 2021: An Analytical Study"** by researcher Noor Mohammed Zaki Hatamleh (2022)¹

This study aimed to explore how Arab digital newspapers, represented by Egypt's Youm7, Qatar's Al-Raya, and Algeria's Echorouk, covered the 2021 war on the Gaza Strip. It focused on the content types and framing methods used by these newspapers during the period from May 10 to May 21, 2021. The study falls within descriptive analytical research, and used the survey method, specifically content analysis. The researcher used a content analysis form to extract data, analyzing 230 articles published during the war across the three newspapers.

Key findings included: Youm7 published the highest number of articles on the war, followed by Al-Raya, then Echorouk. Political topics ranked first (50%), followed by military topics (19%). The newspapers primarily relied on Palestinian actors (31.7%) as sources, followed by official international bodies. The results showed a neutral stance was most common in coverage, followed by an anti-war stance, with the political frame being the most used. The main sources cited were journalists and columnists, followed by local news agencies. The study emphasized the importance of interpretive and analytical reporting, especially on wars and conflicts, and recommended the use of multimedia elements to better attract and engage readers.

This study shares similarities with ours as it tackled a major Arab issue—Palestine, which is no less important than the Syrian crisis. It also focused on digital newspapers, excluding print editions, and adopted both the survey method and content analysis, just as our study did.

3. Study titled: **"The Treatment of Syrian Refugee Issues by Jordanian Newspaper Columnists: An Analytical Study"** by researcher chibli Nawash Al-Omayan (2021)²

This study aimed to identify how Jordanian newspaper columnists addressed Syrian refugee issues, highlighting the nature of the topics tackled in the newspapers under study (Al-Rai, Ad-Dustour, Al-Ghad, and Al-Arab Al-Yawm), along with the journalistic styles and persuasive techniques used.

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach, using content analysis. The sample covered the period from February 1, 2013, to February 1, 2014, and included 957 articles that

¹ Hatamleh, Nour Mohammad Zaki. The Coverage of the 2021 Gaza War in Arab Digital Newspapers: An Analytical Study. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Media, Department of Journalism and Media, Faculty of Media, Middle East University, Jordan, 2022.

² Al-Omayan, Shibli, Nawash. The Treatment of Syrian Refugee Issues in Jordanian Newspapers – An Analytical Study. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Media, Department of Journalism and Media, Faculty of Media, Middle East University, Jordan, 2021.

addressed the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan and its effects: humanitarian, social, economic, security, and financial.

Key findings: Columnists mainly focused on financial consequences (79.17%), which ranked first among other topics. The most common journalistic style was the opinion column (70.11%). Visual elements (images related to the article topic) were also used for emphasis. The study found a tendency toward balanced presentation, offering multiple viewpoints to reach a well-rounded opinion on the topic of Syrian refugee implications on Jordan.

This study aligns with ours in that it dealt with a specific aspect of the Syrian crisis, shedding light on it through content analysis in terms of both "what was said" and "how it was said." Additionally, this study provided valuable information on the early stages of the Syrian crisis, which helped deepen our understanding of the issue.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Media outlets of various types monitor the topics and issues that impose themselves strongly, particularly in the political arena. They exploit such crises and issues by framing them within a specific media narrative that aligns with their goals and interests, as part of their overall coverage. These outlets exert considerable effort to build and shape a particular mental image among their audiences regarding these topics in a way that serves their editorial policy and communication strategy. Since the subject under study — the return of Syria to the Arab League — fulfills these conditions, we chose to rely on this approach. Hence, it became necessary to shed light on the theory of media framing adopted by media institutions in their treatment of various issues¹.

The general idea behind media framing is that it is an intentional process wherein media outlets and communication professionals reorganize the news content and present it within the framework of audience interests and awareness — aiming for the public to perceive or become convinced of the intended meaning or implication after the content has been restructured. The framing theory indicates that events, regardless of how similar they may appear, do not inherently carry a specific meaning that can be generalized to all comparable occurrences. Rather, they derive meaning through their placement within a frame that defines, organizes, and lends coherence to them².

This is achieved by emphasizing certain aspects of the topic while neglecting others. Framing theory is closely linked to the shaping of public opinion, as it concerns forming and altering the reader's perspective by interpreting events and instilling a specific viewpoint through the manner in which news coverage is presented. Veers states that framing is one of the influential methods employed by media institutions to shape public opinion by portraying events and issues in a specific, structured way³.

an interactive process among the elements of communication, aiming to highlight specific aspects of an issue while neglecting others, in line with the communicator's ideology.

¹ Al-Khatib, Fatima Zahraa Abu Al-Fotouh. "Media Framing of President Barack Obama's Policies: A Comparative Study of Al Jazeera and Al Hurra Channels", Ain Shams Arts Journal, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Issue 39, Cairo, 2011, p 300.

² Makawy, Hassan Emad, El-Sayed, Laila Hussein. Communication and Its Contemporary Theories, 1st ed., Egyptian Lebanese House, Cairo, 2002, p 348.

³ Al-Taeiya, Thuraya bint Mohammad. News Framing of the 2011 Protests and Sit-ins in Omani Arabic-Language Press, Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman, 2014, p 5.

The goal is to interpret events, define problems, diagnose causes, explore potential solutions, and frame them in accordance with the editorial policies of the media institution¹. significantly affects how the audience perceives it. This frame is often biased, as it involves selecting one particular aspect of reality while ignoring or marginalizing others and diverting attention away from them. The frame does not construct the external determinants of the issue; rather, it imposes a specific organization of the information related to the topic², by selecting certain aspects of the active reality, focusing on them, and making them more salient within the media text. This serves to define a particular problem, provide causal interpretations, and offer evaluative judgments³, handling the proposed solutions to the discussed issue. The importance of media frames lies in their role in measuring the power of journalism — they attract attention and lend legitimacy to certain aspects of the truth⁴, other media aspects. Media frames are closely tied to current events, political issues, and politicians. The framing process shapes public debates and political discourse among individuals interested in political topics⁵. It also helps in acquiring information about political life. The theory presents interpretive models that are employed in qualitative analysis to cover the prominent features and dimensions of the media message. These models define the patterns of media coverage for various issues and events.

Theoretical Assumptions of the Framing Theory:

Events derive their meaning through the frame in which they are presented, which structures and organizes them, and gives them a degree of coherence by emphasizing certain aspects of the issue while neglecting others.

The media frame determines the salient features of an issue and assigns it a specific meaning. The news frame gives significance and relevance to a news item for the audience and defines the angle or perspective through which the news is viewed. Media outlets, therefore, exert a significant influence in shaping public opinion and knowledge regarding various media-related⁶ issues over a specific period of time.

Types of News Frames: Sumiko and Valkenburg identified several prominent news frames that are frequently employed in framing studies. These include⁷:

¹ Al-Mousa, Bara'a bint Hamad. News Framing of Crime Issues in Saudi Print and Electronic Newspapers: A Comparative Analytical Study of Okaz Newspaper and Sabq News Website, Arab Journal of Media and Communication, King Saud University, Saudi Association for Media and Communication, Issue 21, Saudi Arabia, 2019, p283.

² Hassan, Khaled Salah El-Din. The Role of Television and Newspapers in Shaping Public Information and Attitudes Toward Foreign Issues, PhD Dissertation, Faculty of Media, Department of Radio and Television, Cairo University, 2001, p 73.

³ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," Journal of Communication, Vol. 43, No. 4, Autumn 1993, p 51.

⁴ Regin G. Lawrence, "Game Framing the Issue: Tracing the Strategy Frame in Public Policy News," Political Communication, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2000, p 93.

⁵ McQuail, Denis. McQuail's Mass Communication Theory, 4th ed., London: Sage Publications, 2002, p25

⁶ Bakir, Mohamed Abdo. "Media Framing of Social Issues in News Stories Broadcast in Bulletins and News Programs: A Comparative Study Between Egyptian and Saudi Satellite Channels", The Egyptian Journal for Public Opinion Research, Faculty of Media, Public Opinion Research Center, Vol. 17, Issue 2, Cairo University, 2018, p 93.

⁷ Ghaben, Youssef Abdulrahman. News Framing of the Jerusalem Uprising in the Online Editions of American Newspapers: A Comparative Analytical Study, Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts, Department of Journalism, Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine, 2019, pp 38–39.

Strategic Frame: This frame is used in covering issues whose strategic context impacts national security. It is typically suitable for military and political topics, such as wars, conflicts, and international rivalries.

Conflict Frame: Widely used in news coverage, this frame highlights the element of conflict between opposing parties—whether individuals, groups, or entities.

Human Interest Frame: Focuses on the humanitarian and emotional dimensions of the issue. It seeks to personalize the topic and emphasize the human side of the story.

Economic Consequences Frame: Concentrates on the economic impacts of the issue, whether those affecting individuals or society as a whole.

Responsibility Frame: This frame links individuals, groups, or governments to the responsibility for resolving the issue and outlines the expected solutions.

The researcher adopted framing theory in this study with the aim of identifying the specific news frames used by Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper in its coverage of Syria's return to the Arab League.

Applied Framework:

The researcher conducted an analytical study of the Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper's official website, with the aim of identifying the framing strategies employed by the outlet in its coverage of the issue of Syria's return to the Arab League. The study covered the period from May 1st, 2023 to June 1st, 2023.

The researcher adopted a dual-aspect content analysis approach, focusing on both "what was said" and "how it was said." During the study period, the website published a total of 58 articles addressing the topic of Syria's reintegration into the Arab League.

Table 1: Illustrates the use of strategic frames in the coverage of the topic by Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Rankings
The Arab Foreign Ministers' emergency session approval for Syria's return to its vacant seat in the Arab League.	14	16.86%	First
Emphasis on advancing a political solution to the crisis, particularly highlighted by Qatar, which made it a condition for normalization with the regime.	14	16.86%	First
Intensification of Arab efforts to normalize relations with Damascus and reintegrate it into the Arab League.	14	16.86%	First
Divergence in Arab countries' positions and interests regarding normalization with the Syrian regime — between rejection, reservation, and enthusiasm.	10	12.04%	Second
Syrian opposition's rejection of Assad's participation in the Arab Summit and his representation of the Syrian people.	9	10.84%	Third

Affirmation of the importance of continuing and intensifying Arab efforts to help Syria out of its crisis.	9	10.84%	Fourth
Renewed commitment to preserving Syria's sovereignty, territorial unity, stability, and regional integrity.	6	7.22%	Fifth
Initiatives by some Arab countries to reopen their embassies in Damascus.	5	6.02%	Sixth
Absence of a unified Arab initiative, indicating ongoing disagreements among member states.	2	2.40%	Seventh
Total	83	100%	

The results of Table (1) reveal that the Al-Quds Al-Arabi website primarily focused on the category: "Approval by the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers in an emergency session for the Syrian regime to regain Syria's vacant seat in the Arab League," as well as the category: "Emphasis on advancing a political solution to the Syrian crisis, particularly with Qatar's insistence on making it a prerequisite for normalization." These two categories received the highest level of attention, alongside another prominent category: "Intensified Arab efforts toward normalization with Damascus and attempts to reintegrate it into the Arab League." Each of these three categories represented 16.86% of the strategic frames used, with 14 occurrences each.

In second place came the category: "Divergence in Arab states' positions and interests regarding normalization with the Syrian regime — ranging from rejection to reservation to enthusiasm," accounting for 12.04% with 10 occurrences.

Third place was shared by two categories, each representing 10.84% with 9 occurrences: "Emphasis on the importance of continuing and intensifying Arab efforts to help Syria out of its crisis," and "Rejection by the Syrian opposition of Assad's participation in the Arab Summit and his representation of the Syrian people."

In fourth place, the category "Some Arab states taking the initiative to reopen their embassies in Damascus" appeared with 6.02% and 5 occurrences.

Finally, fifth place went to the category: "Absence of a unified Arab initiative, indicating persistent disagreements among member states," with a percentage of 2.40% and 2 occurrences.

Table 2: Conflict Frame in the Coverage of the Topic on the Al-Quds Al-Arabi Website

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Supporting Syrian state institutions to extend control over its territory and eliminate armed militias	7	35%	First
Emphasizing that Syria's return to the Arab League is a means to end the conflict in the	7	35%	First

region			
Enhancing security and combating terrorism in all its forms and organizations	6	30%	Second
Total	20	100%	

the conflict frame, both ranking first with an equal share of 35% and 7 occurrences each: "Supporting state institutions in asserting control over their territories in order to eliminate the presence of armed militias," and "Emphasizing that Syria's return is a means to end the conflict in the region."

In second place, the category: "Enhancing security and combating terrorism in all its forms and organizations" appeared with a frequency of 30%, totaling 6 occurrences.

Table 3: Economic Consequences Frame in the Coverage of the Topic on the Al-Quds Al-Arabi Website

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Cooperation in combating drug smuggling and trafficking	29	59.18%	First
Emphasis on the necessity of financially supporting Syria for reconstruction	20	40.81%	Second
Total	49	100%	

The results of Table (3) show that the Al-Quds Al-Arabi website focused on highlighting the category of "cooperation in combating drug smuggling and trafficking," which accounted for 59.18% with 29 occurrences. The second most frequent category was "emphasizing the need to provide financial support for Syria's reconstruction," which represented 40.81% with 20 occurrences.

Table 4: Shows the Human Interest Frames in the Coverage of the Topic in Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper.

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Creating the necessary conditions for the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their regions	26	74.28%	First
Expressing solidarity with the Syrian people in facing challenges to their security and stability, and the serious violations threatening their lives and the unity and integrity of Syrian territory	5	14.28%	Second
Emphasis on the need to take humanitarian steps for all those in need	4	11.48%	Third
Total	35	100%	

The results of Table (4) show that the category "Creating the necessary conditions for the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their areas" ranked first with a percentage of 74.28%, appearing 26 times. In second place came the category "Expressing

solidarity with the Syrian people in light of the challenges threatening their security and stability, as well as the serious violations endangering their existence, the lives of innocent civilians, and the unity and integrity of Syrian territory," with a percentage of 14.28% and 5 occurrences. The third place was occupied by the category "Emphasizing the need to take humanitarian steps for all those in need" with 11.48% and 4 occurrences.

Table 5: Shows Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper's Attitudes Toward the Topic of Syria's Return to the Arab League.

Category	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Negative Attitude	38	65.51%	First
Positive Attitude	13	22.41%	Second
Neutral Attitude	4	6.89%	Third
Undefined Attitude	3	5.17%	Fourth
Total	58	100%	

Table 5 shows that Al-Quds Al-Arabi website focused on the category of "negative attitude" with a percentage of 65.51%, occurring 38 times. The "positive attitude" category ranked second with 22.41% and 13 occurrences. In third place came the "neutral attitude" category with 6.89% and 4 occurrences, while the fourth and final place was occupied by the "undefined attitude" category, with a percentage of 5.17% and 3 occurrences.

Table 6: Shows the Information Sources Used by Al-Quds Al-Arabi in Covering the Topic.

Information Sources	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Journalistic Correspondents	30	50%	First
Volunteers and Columnists	16	26.66%	Second
News Agencies	14	23.33%	Third
Social Media Platforms	0	0%	—
Anonymous Sources	0	0%	—
Total	60	100%	

Table 6 shows that the Al-Quds Al-Arabi website relied primarily on "journalistic correspondents" as the main source of information, accounting for 50% with 30 occurrences. In second place came "volunteers and writers" with 26.66% and 16 occurrences, followed by "news agencies" in third place with 23.33% and 14 occurrences. The website did not use social media platforms or anonymous sources in its coverage.

Note: In some cases, a single news article may rely on more than one source of information.

Table 7: Shows the Journalistic Genres Used by Al-Quds Al-Arabi in Its Coverage of the Topic.

Genres	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Opinion Article	28	48.27	First
News Report	21	36.20%	Second
Investigative Report	9	15.51%	Third
Total	58	100%	

Table 7 shows that the Al-Quds Al-Arabi website primarily used the "opinion article" in its coverage of the topic of Syria's return to the Arab League, ranking first with 48.27% and 28 occurrences. In second place, it relied on the "news article" with 36.20% and 21 occurrences, while the "news report" came in third and last place with 15.51% and 9 occurrences.

Table 8: Shows the Types of Images Used by Al-Quds Al-Arabi in Its Coverage of the Topic.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
News-related Images	23	39.65%	First
No Images	20	34.48%	Second
Personal Portraits	15	25.86%	Third
Expressive Illustrations	0	0%	—
Total	58	100%	

Table 8 shows that the Al-Quds Al-Arabi website used "news photos" in its coverage of the topic of Syria's return to the Arab League most frequently, ranking first with 39.65% and 23 occurrences. In second place, 34.48% of the posts were "without images", totaling 20 occurrences. The site ranked third in its use of "personal photos", which appeared in 25.86% of the cases with 15 occurrences. Notably, the website did not use any illustrative or symbolic images in its coverage of Syria's return to the Arab League.

Study Findings:

1. The Al-Quds Al-Arabi website, within the strategic framing, focused on the Arab foreign ministers' approval during an emergency session to reinstate the Syrian regime's seat in the Arab League. This was portrayed as a bold step by the Arab states. The Council held an emergency meeting in Cairo where the ministers unanimously agreed—without a vote—on Syria's return, marking the first step toward reinstatement. The website also heavily emphasized the divergence of Arab countries' interests and their differing positions on normalizing relations with the Syrian regime. For example, Qatar remained opposed without any change in the conditions that led to Syria's suspension, making a political solution to the crisis a precondition for normalization—reflecting, to some extent, the political orientation of the newspaper.
2. In the conflict frame, Al-Quds Al-Arabi focused on supporting Syrian state institutions to reassert control over national territory and end the presence of armed militias and

- foreign interventions. The site also highlighted efforts to enhance security and combat terrorism in all its forms and organizations.
3. Regarding economic consequences, the website concentrated on the need for cooperation in combating drug trafficking and smuggling, particularly Syria's growing role as a major producer of narcotics such as Captagon. Various parties have accused the Syrian regime of producing and trafficking drugs as a financial lifeline amid international sanctions, posing serious challenges—especially to neighboring countries. This emphasis coincided with Syria's reintegration into the Arab League, as the regime committed to cooperating in anti-narcotics efforts.
 4. Under the humanitarian interest frame, Al-Quds Al-Arabi stressed the importance of creating favorable conditions for the return of Syrian refugees and displaced persons to their home regions—a concern increasingly pressing for neighboring countries like Jordan and Lebanon.
 5. As for the newspaper's editorial stance, the “negative” position overwhelmingly dominated its coverage compared to other orientations. This appears to be an attempt to highlight the drawbacks of Syria's return to the Arab League and justify opposition to it—stemming from the political agenda of the publication's ownership.

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