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**РОЛЬ СМИ ВО ВРЕМЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ НЕСТАБИЛЬНОСТИ:  
 ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ И ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ   
 (НА ПРИМЕРЕ СИРИЙСКОГО КОНФЛИКТА)**

**THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN TIMES OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY:  
 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS  
 (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE SYRIAN CONFLICT)**

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**Аннотация.** Настоящая работа направлена ​​на исследование того, как психологическая война применяется одними из двух доминирующих средств массовой информации: ББС и Аль-Джазирой с точки зрения освещения сирийского конфликта. Автор констатирует, что британские и катарские каналы следуют своим собственным представлениям конфликта и имеют свою точку зрения о происходящем. Поэтому и ББС, и Аль Джазира распространяют собственную пропаганду событий, направленную на воздействие общественного сознания, используя определенные приемы и стиль изложения, которые раскрываются во второй и третьей главах диссертации. Сравнительный анализ демонстрирует ключевые сходства и различия западных и арабских СМИ, а также причины предвзятости новостей или искажения реальности. На основе проведенного анализа автор определил, что новостное освещение явно зависит от внешней политики страны, а также ее собственных предпочтений.

**Ключевые слова:** ББС, Аль-Джазира, психологическая война, пропаганда, внешняя политика, сирийский конфликт, журналистика.

**Abstract.** The present thesis aims at investigating how psychological warfare is applied by one of the two dominant media: British Broadcast Company and Al Jazeera in terms of Syrian conflict coverage. The author states that British and Qatari channels follow their own agenda to present a conflict in a certain light. Therefore, both BBC and AL Jazeera spread their own propaganda of events aimed at influencing public consciousness, using certain methods and style of reporting which are revealed in the second and third chapters of the thesis. The comparative analysis demonstrates the key similarities and differences of Western and Arabic media as well as the reasons for biased news or distorted reality. Based on the conducted analysis, the author determined that the news reporting clearly depends on the foreign policy of the country as well as its own preferences.

**Key words:** BBC, Al Jazeera, psychological warfare, propaganda, foreign policy, Syrian conflict, journalism.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The media has always been an essential part of conflict. Since World War I it has been used for political purposes where government authorities coordinated mass-persuasion strategies for an effective impact on the public. The usage of newspapers, magazines and production of movies managed to get a large audience while political figures offered national support and unity (Bratic, n.d.). Since that time, the media has been through a dramatic transformation: 24-hour rolling news stations and the Internet have been presented on the ground as new broadcasting and interacting platforms. However, even in the modern era, the role of media still remains as the tool of persuasion where winning the information war becomes equally important as fighting the enemy in the battlefield (Payne, 2005).

The ongoing Syrian conflict has been a subject of scrutiny bringing into focus the relationship between media and the response to greatest human disaster, occurring in the 21st century (Doucet, 2018). The outcome of the Arab Spring brought not only new political challenges to Syria but also the strict and total control over the media professionals’ activity within the state (Salama,2012). As in the majority of Arab countries, the mass media in Syria is owned by the government authorities who have set a certain censorship of the content which may lead to damaging the reputation or threatening the regime. The examples of such taboos are the discussion of the president and his family, sectarian issues, military troops, and the ruling Ba`ath party (Ghadbian, n.d.). As the result, media professionals had three options to distribute information and spread awareness to the audience: use official channels of Damascus, negotiating with those who oppose the government’s activity; conduct the reporting outside of Syria and have journalists within the state to spread the news; or put themselves into danger by illegally entering through Turkey or Lebanon (Salama, 2012). Syrian people appealed to the media, trying to make sence of traumatized content and reduce uncertainty regarding the instability in the state (Kozman et. al., 2021).

Even though the Syrian government has succeeded in maintaining control over the state media, international satellite stations and the Internet have become a challenge for politicians over the dissemination of information (Ghadbian, n.d.). This thesis is covering 2 major broadcasting channels, BBC and Al Jazeera, as well as the analysis of their coverage of Syrian conflict conducted in English language. **The practical significance of the study** is that the strategy of the conflict coverage will be identified between the two popular media outlets along with the specification of methods being used. The study can be beneficial for the professionals in the media field as well as for those willing to conduct the research about the international perception of Syrian conflict through the lens of the media. The results identified in the research can be also used by the active audience of this media, so the individuals will gain the ability to look at the news from different perspectives.

**The scientific novelty of the research** outcome is based on theoretical discourse, usage of methodology which examines the news production of BBC and Al Jazeera to identify what image the media intends to build and transmit to the public concerning the warfare. The focus of analysis will be determined by the strategies these broadcasting companies apply to disseminate the information and “reality” of events. The main points to be paid attention to would be the angle from which the news is covered, how actors involved in the conflict are viewed by channels as well as what language is applied to describe their presence in the region.

The choice of media outlets in this thesis is related to their popularity and usage on national and international level. BBC is one of the world’s leading public service broadcasters, known for its objective coverage and is always in demand for selling its programs outside of the United Kingdom. Al Jazeera is mostly known in the Arab world for its professionalism of news coverage and spreading the newsworthy footage and information that explain the issues from an Arab perspective. Since these channels are considered to be one of the dominant trustable sources for acquiring information, the competition where each ‘keen to carve a niche in the others’ is inevitable. This is the reason why BBC seeks to reach the Arab audience by conducting news in Arab language and, in turn, Al Jazeera extends its services by reporting in English (Mohamed, 2015). Comparative analysis of these broadcasting channels will allow the author to construct an image containing similarities and differences of the coverage of Syrian conflict, which will let the author comprehend what aspect of the story is being told or silenced.

The news production of BBC and Al Jazeera plays an important role in shaping the reality of the conflict as well as the reporting and publishing strategies. **The research question of the thesis** is what techniques do these media outlets apply for coverage of Syrian conflict and what reality they are trying to transmit to the public? In order to get a better understanding of media’s activity, and what content goes viral in order to feed the needs of the public, the author analyzes publications of channels in question.

**Relevance of the topic** is connected to the fact that nowadays channels are actively involved in the mass competition over the coverage of ongoing conflicts, where Syrian warfare is one of them. The transmitted “reality” is aimed to satisfy the public’s needs and expectations. Moreover, the coverage of events in the region directly depends on the current foreign policy of the country which channel belongs to.

The research of this thesis will be based on the analysis of online social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook\* and Twitter\* (\*forbidden in the Russian Federation) which belong to BBC and Al Jazeera. On social media these broadcasting companies aim to diversify the production of the content and such digitalization also allows them to carry an instant message to the public. In this case, the majority of information being told is unchecked, taken from an unreliable source and not properly filtered because of the lack of time. As a result, such publications clearly demonstrate the certain agenda of the channel and highlights the particular angle of story that affects people’s opinions regarding current events.

**Object of the thesis** is the process of the coverage of the Syrian conflict from a particular angle.

**Subject of the thesis** is the strategies of 2 dominant broadcasting channels in the news production regarding the ongoing warfare.

**The aim of the work** is to identify key features of information dissemination of BBC and Al Jazeera content and conclude how the language of news is structured and why by determining differences and similarities applied in comparative analysis in terms of coverage of Syrian conflict.

**The objectives of the research** are:

1.to examine the policy of channels;

2.to reveal the main methods of reporting the conflict;

3.to classify framing of events;

4.to interpret publications on connotative and denotative level;

5.to determine key differences and similarities between BBC and Al Jazeera.

**Literature review.** The literature gap is defined by the use of language in one of the most demanded channels, BBC and Al Jazeera, in terms of Syrian conflict reporting. However, the role of journalism during political instability has been studied by various researchers as well as challenges to cover the conflict within the totalitarian regime.

The term “psychological warfare” and its usage in literature is mentioned in the works of Pashencev (2017), Petrenko (2014), Manoylo (2003, 2009) and Bazarkina & Lasuriya (2019).

The fundamental studies of the role of media during political warfare is contributed by the following authors: Bratic (1987), Zaller (1989), Joseph (2014), Risso (2017), Allan & Zelizer (2004).

The transformation of journalism is mentioned in the work of Nohrstedt (2017), Johan (2003), Mchaughlin (2016).

The news in the digital era published on social media platforms and the increased dissemination of propaganda are published by researchers Russo (2017), Hoskins (2021), Hochwald (2013), Morozov (2011).

**Methodology.** Qualitative method will be applied in this thesis to interpret and analyze data in a theoretical way (Fields, 1988). Author will choose publications by BBC and Al Jazeera and will analyze the content related to key events of the Syrian conflict dated from 2014 to 2016 in English language. Author chose this timeline since it highlights the rise of Islamic groups and presence of US, Turkey, Russian troops and Iran. The strategy of qualitative analysis will be defined by the following approaches: framing and comparative analysis.

*Framing analysis.* Framing approach is commonly used in news analysis by various researchers for reading the media text on the connotative level as well as identifying the hidden meaning the author intended to apply. The media content of BBC and Aljazeera will be classified by the following categories which were formulated after the data was retrieved::   
a) human interest framing: announcement of death toll or injured people within the state; migrants and refugees;  
b) victory: the destruction of enemy and obtainment of advantage over the situation;  
c) threat: potential capabilities of the enemy for prospective attacks.

*Comparative analysis.* The goal of this analysis is to reveal key differences and similarities in BBC and Aljazeera in terms of framing the same key issues concerning the Syrian conflict. For example, which channel chooses the victory of one over the military loss of the other and if civilians are prioritized more than damage made by mass destruction. Moreover, the outcome will reveal which actors involved in the conflict are given more priority by the channels and which are identified as aggressors or enemies within the region. The certain pattern of coverage along with that the results of the research will be indicated at the end of the chapter.

**CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**1.1. Psychological warfare**

Psychological warfare is the area of activity of modern state and non-state actors in the fields of mass unemployment, the low rates of development of the world economy, growing property and social polarization, domestic political confrontation, combined with a dangerous aggravation of the situation on the international arena and inefficiency and corruption of the state apparatus. As a result, psychological warfare is the tool to achieve dominance and superiority over the enemy without the usage of military force (Pashencev, 2017).

According to Russian researchers, means, instruments and methods of handling psychological warfare are either information, or information influence, or information technology. Some studies claim that psychological warfare is a "qualitatively new type of war," in which information is used to control changes in public consciousness; others define "non-military" psychological warfare as the impact of one side's information technologies on the other side's power, management, and information systems, as well as the consciousness of its population, with the goal of forcibly imposing their spiritual, moral, and cultural values, possibly without involvement of military activities. Meanwhile, the Russian Foreign Ministry's experts correctly point out the violent nature of psychological warfare measures, which is an unavoidable indicator of war in the absence of an open armed battle. Psychological warfare, which is carried out by employing psychology, mass media, and diplomatic technologies to affect the mind, opinions, and intentions of the enemy, is also considered riskier by British specialists than the usage of a military-political leadership (Monoylo, 2003).

The activity of individuals involved in psychological warfare can be offensive (aggression, war) or defensive. The policy of psychological warfare at the stage of the enemy’s implementation of his aggressive intentions or of an immediate threat of war takes certain measures to detect, prevent, and suppress aggression, as well as actions to suspend means of rapid reaction and sudden aggression of forces. As a result, the policy of psychological warfare is an important tool in prevention, detection, and suppression of external information-psychological aggression (war) (Petrenko, 2014).

The majority of Russian and international experts correctly regard the information-psychological confrontation as a battle of parties, with the purpose of restricting the opposing side's capabilities until it is destroyed. In fact, the winner is the one who not only eliminates the opposition, but also produces something new and more innovative in the end. At the national (regional) level, deviations from this trend have been rarely addressed or corrected in a larger area of action. There will be a universal decline of mankind if this pattern stops working. This is a decline that is associated with worldwide threats which can soon turn into death (Pashencev, 2017).

The United States now employs information and psychological warfare technology extensively in foreign conflicts, such as in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, and relations with Iran. That is why the term "information-psychological warfare" originated in the United States and was brought to Russian land from the US military lexicon. Information warfare is a vector of foreign policy formulation, according to American professionals in the field of psychological operations. This is why there are disagreements about whether it is appropriate to refer to modern information-political conflicts as "information wars" or to use the term "information confrontation" to describe them (Manoylo, 2009).

Despite their differences, Russia, China, the United States, and the European Union should devote more expert attention to debating not just the grave consequences of the nuclear weapons race, but also the technological issues of cybersecurity, as well as the challenges of the current digital world. Due to the use of new technologies, it is becoming increasingly easier, in an unstable dynamic social balance, to provoke (implicitly) a dangerous mistake by top military leadership, politicians, and representatives of an extremist "third party" that seeks global destabilization by any means necessary, despite the devastating results around the world (for example, terrorist organizations, etc.).

It is impossible to talk about an effective system for protecting society and individuals from information and psychological threats without first developing a person as a harmonious personality. To defend digital freedom and empower citizens, civil society, or voluntary associations of citizens on the Internet, must be utilized. Although it is difficult to identify these actors in most circumstances, the mass consumer is readily a victim of both selfish business companies and terrorist organizations, geopolitical games, and so on. Because of easily predicted and clear reactions, the mass consumer becomes a victim. The growth of a fully formed and productive personality that lives in balance with social interests is a reliable guarantee for the development and strengthening of democracy, as well as the creation of an accurate barrier to the dissemination of destructive influence campaigns, coming from state or non-state actors (Bazarkina & Lasuriya, 2019).

**1.2 The role of mass media in psychological warfare**

Objectivity, fairness and balance have caused numerous debates in journalism, and, moreover, such arguments still remain relevant in covering conflict and war. McLaughlin (2016) compares journalism with history and explains that their objectivity depends on “attitude of clarity”. Author mentions E.H. Carr, the supporter of such philosophy, and states that as the history is never transparent, the facts in reporting also have to be in question since the presentation is purely dependent on the mind of the reporter.

Since there were no major conflicts among nations in the postwar period, the connection between war and journalism was avoided in mass communication research. The Vietnam War was a turning point in renewing this issue, causing the application of different methods of analysis where journalism was seen not only as a watchdog but as a means to fight government propaganda. However, Hallin (1986) and Strobel (1997, as cited in Bratic, n.d.) stated that, even though the media seems to be free from propaganda, it coordinates accordingly with administration, following specific set agenda and has no influence on government policy.

Even though Zaller's (1999) study was primarily done in the late 1990s when broadcast TV along with the cable news started to challenge traditional media but before the Internet gained popularity, the study can be used to demonstrate general function of media channels for political communications. Zaller’s theory is based on the argument that the essence of political communication is primarily dependent on the competing interests of reporters, politicians and the public. In his article, Zaller explains that the attempt of journalists to ask provocative and uncomfortable questions signifies their willingness to reassert control over the content of production. However, such a negative and contradictory attitude needs to be justified and match with the mood of the audience at the particular time. In turn, people are not rational beings and they already know in advance how they prefer to think and deny information that does not match with their expectations. The public does not prefer their assumptions to be incorrect or questioned (Hamelink, p.73-74, 2010). In addition, Zaller states that objective reality is constructed by the cooperation and interaction of different groups of people, so that political communication can be considered as the result of strategic and goal-oriented activity (p.1-19).

Similarly, Joseph (2014) concludes that the coverage of international conflict is made with the consideration of economic, social, and political concerns, along with the interests of the state itself. Therefore, the production of news is conducted by applying certain parts of reality which leads to perception of events only from a particular angle. As a social institution, media serves predominant interests of state, formulating the “propaganda model” for “cultural purpose” that stands for protection of the advantaged bunches ruling the general public and state.

Throughout history, journalists used to cross the line between their profession and military, by voluntarily joining forces and being always ready to provide data for support. Also, Risso (2017) points out that in turn, some political authorities along with the army had no choice but to cooperate with war correspondents as well. Although such a relationship was considered to be dubious, the consequences varied from laissez-faire approach, to absolute control over the content and involvement of reporters themselves into the military troops. Moreover, oftenly audience demands to know whether the reporter takes their side and, therefore, individual journalists choose their own role, realizing that their decision may affect the interpretation of the public regarding the nature of war and the consequences followed after (Allan & Zelizer, p. 5, 2004).

Throughout the years, war coverage has been through the transformation and acquired a new direction of news content. First, civilian populations and the victims of the conflict became a major focus of attention. Second, the propaganda strategies have been revealed and became a news material, encouraging the public to be media literate and critical towards the received information. Third, visual materials, unlike text, are the most popular source of information which are not critically scrutinized by the audience or lead to doubts of unreliability (Nohrstedt, 2017).

The term “peace journalism” was coined by peace researcher Johan Galtung and was promoted by various scholars as a tool to dilute the conflict. The difference between conventional and peace journalism is that the first portrays war as the field of winners and losers, evil and good, us and them; meanwhile peace journalism promotes the effects of violence, transformation of the conflict and highlights options for peace agreement. Peace journalism is also considered as “journalism of attachment” to all people suffering in the conflict (Johan, 2003). BBC’s journalist, Mark Urban, explains that in the war reporting the the man with a gun cannot be portrayed as a hero, instead, modern coverage is now connected with “how high you can crank the emotionometer” by sharing the touching stories of victims within the instability. Journalism of attachment is conducted voluntarily and passes through the self-censorship ( McLaughlin, 2016). Literature suggests challenges for peace journalism, explaining that such form of reporting can be seen as biased, threatening professional integrity (Hamelink, p.61-62, 2010).

Television news releases of 24/7 broadcasting during the Iraq war, were considered to be the most trustable and reliable source for audiences in the US and Britain(Allan & Zelizer, p. 6, 2004). These channels influenced global news flows and set their own agenda for journalism. However, in order to reach a large audience and maintain a leading role in mainstream coverage, the journalists, working for 24/7 broadcasting, were constantly under pressure since their editors required instant and dramatic content to be transmitted. The information provided in news was not researched properly before going live and, as one commentator mentioned: “ By making live and exclusive into primary news values, accuracy and understanding will be lost” (Thussu, p.120, 2003).

In our digital world, the content posted on social media can be compared with 24/7 broadcasting where the priority is given to speed and immediacy rather than to accuracy since the public constantly requires for updates. As a result, the nature of such journalism receives criticism and loses its value. whereas balanced journalism is necessary more than ever. The audience is bombarded with images, videos and information which make it extremely challenging to distinguish between true facts and fake news (Russo,2017). Hoskins (2021) explains that "digital war" creates a blurry vision of the actors involved in the conflict since fighting forces, citizens, reporters, government authorities and NGOs spread the images and videos of the conflict zones, resulting in the competition of content and information.

The capability of internet innovations and modernization to cause social uprisings and influence the course of war, prompted the debate from a variety of scholars (Yerlikaya & Aslan, 2021). Hochwald (2013) mentions “Arab Spring”, the biggest series of anti-government protests in the Arab world that occured due to the publications that went viral on social media. Facebook and Twitter were actively used for communication and organization of campaigns and protests on the streets. The outcome of the revolution varied from country to country: in Syria it brought the civil war that is still ongoing; in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia it managed to bring the elections and replace the old government. Hochwald claims that the role of media should not be under or over estimated. Even though the media sparked revolution in these states, it did not have the ability to carry it alone from the beginning till the end. Hochwald adds that most likely it were demographic and cultural factors of the states which created the unity of the nations for political change and demand to overthrow the totalitarian regimes.

Meanwhile, some researchers propose the idea that the Internet has been mistreated and can be considered as a potential risk and a challenge to democracy (Yerlikaya & Aslan, 2021). “The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom” written by Evgeny Morozov contains events which demonstrate that dictatorial governments have learned how to adopt a technology and use it against protestors. Morozov argues the information we obtain through the internet will not set us free but rather may prevent the revolution from occurring in real life. Here, he supports his argument by providing an example of Egypt, where the government uses social media to diffuse propaganda and catch protesters. He also mentions the Iranian protests in 2009 when the government sent threatening messages to Iranians living abroad by collecting information from Facebook and urged the public within the state to stay at home to avoid demonstrations (Morozov, 2011, p. 24-27).

**CHAPTER 2. FRAMING ANALYSIS**

**2.1 Human interest framing**

Human interest framing is often included in the news packaging of the majority of channels. The civilians, trying to survive in a war-torn country, cause the compassion from the public and call for action to governmental and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, media professionals focus on human suffrage because such content is easy to produce and quite accessible to cover.

**BBC often refers to humanitarian crisis while talking about Syrian conflict:**

Syria is witnessing the "worst humanitarian crisis of our generation", the UN warns. More than 4,000,000 people have now fled the conflict in Syria, one sixth of the country’s population (BBC News, 2014).

Syria's civil war is the "biggest humanitarian crisis since 1945", Gordon Brown claims, ahead of a conference (BBC News, 2016).

Civilian casualties are probably the most tragic part of any war, including the Syrian one. Each of parties trying to blame their opponent in the murder of civilians, in terror in relation to the population, and in every possible way denies his participation in these cruel events (Smirnov, 2015). There has been a parallel development in the Western world that the gross violation of human rights and the oppression of entire groups should attract the attention and concern of the international community, even if this is contrary to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the state. One of the reasons why today's military conflicts have become an international problem is to some extent related to the media. (Roshin, 2021).

“My wife and daughters are out in the sea”. Refugee family split in half. #Syria #Refugees #Migrants #MareNostrum #EUmigrants #MigrantLivesMatter #SOSEurope #Immigration (BBC News, 2015).

Not afraid anymore. Last year 16-year-old Nujeen Mustafa, who uses a wheelchair, fled the conflict in Syria. #Migrants #MigrantCrisis #Refugees #Germany #Syria #Aleppo #BBCShorts #BBCNews (BBC News, 2016).

The dissemination of fake news among civilians and refugees does not occur rarely in the conflict coverage. The example with five-year-old Omran Danqneesh demonstrated how the media is capable of manipulating reality during the crisis. On August 17, 2016 when the Syrian government and Russian military struck on the rebel occupied area, 3 individuals were killed and twelve more injured, among them was Omran and his family:

Syrian activists have released striking pictures of a young boy rescued from a destroyed building after an airstrike in the divided second city of Aleppo, the UN says.#BBCSnapshot #photojournalism #Aleppo #Syria #airstrike #rescue #boy (BBC News, 2016).

Citizen-turned-journalist Mustafa al-Sarout of the Aleppo Media Center (AMC) documented the iconic image which soon became the fixation of America and was reissued by New York Times and Associated Press to other media outlets including BBC. His clothes, that were once colorful, were covered in a gray dust; eyes were fixed on the distance and the boy seemed to be so traumatized that his eyes had lack of expression, prompting that the child was completely disconnected from reality. According to the media, he became a victim of his government’s games beyond its own comprehension and experienced the cruelty of this world at such a young age (Brooks, 2017). The comments under the post were the following:*”Very very sad to see this, what is the world coming to*” , *“ I'm very sorry and sad what happened to this young boy. Asad and Russia are responsible for the war. They always kill civilians, let Allah help Syrian victims”*. This clearly demonstrates that the media succeeded in getting the feeling of compassion from the public by framing the conflict in a certain way.

Such a tool of propaganda was focused more on visual rather than on linguistic aspect and managed to cause emotions from the public, necessary for persuasion. Each image of civilians from the conflict elicits the desired emotions but this feeling intensifies even more when the children are involved. The image signifies the sadness, fear and as long as Assad rules the country, more children like Omran will suffer from casualties. The image was transmitted not only by broadcasting channels but also shared by many politicians and celebrities via social media as a symbol of the young generation’s suffrage in Assad’s regime. However, the image of Omran was proclaimed to be fake. His father claimed that Omran was not as wounded as media transmitted and accused White Helmets for filming his son instead of providing him with necessary medical help. Media used such manipulative language to tell the narrative about Syria and Assad to influence the audience's perception towards the conflict(Pigram,n.d.).

When BBc talks about civilian casualties and refugees, in the majority of articles, people are represented in numbers:

Up to 16,000 civilians have been displaced by the Syrian government's advance into besieged rebel-held areas of the city of Aleppo, the UN says (BBC News, 2016).

Some 15,000 Syrians have massed at the Turkish border after fleeing a government offensive in Aleppo, UN and Turkey say (BBC Breaking News, 2016).

According to the news leads, the statistics provided in the coverage are referred to the official source, United Nations, that publishes statistical information regarding the civilians and refugees within the conflict. However, once casualties are mentioned due to the Syrian and Russian attacks, no such reference is provided:

Fleeing Aleppo. Up to 16,000 civilians have been displaced by the Syrian government's advance into besieged rebel-held areas of the city of Aleppo #Aleppo #Syria #SyrianConflict #BBCShorts ( BBC News, 2016).

Bombing Aleppo’s children. Nearly 100 children have been killed by Russian and Syrian government bombing in eastern Aleppo over the past week. #Syria #Aleppo #SyriaWar #UN #UnitedNations #BBCShorts #BBCNews ( BBC News, 2016).

In this case, the reader is not provided with the explanation of where the accompanied statistics were retrieved from and whether the source of information can be reliable or unofficial.

Moreover, the content mentioned above does not indicate the liberation from terrorists, but the fact that both Syrian and Russian troops are attacking local residents, bombing humanitarian convoys (Egoshin, 2017). When the casualties were mentioned on the US side, BBC was carefully choosing words:

Syria crisis: “Children died” in a US air strike. Air strikes on Syria likely to have killed two children, US says - its first acknowledgement of civilian casualties (BBC Breaking News, 2015).

“There had been no indications prior to the strikes that children were present, officials said”. This implies that the losses were unintentional and that the necessary measures will be taken to decrease risks to non-combats. Such a post highlights that the United States is a world leader, which means that it is forced to take the responsibility for the events taking place in the world. This technique can only be called praise through criticism. Even though US failed to detect its actions and respond effectively to them, it does not mean that it loses its dominant role to maintain control over the events worldwide (Muratova, 2017)  
 The media to the operations themselves was determined by which side initiated them. If government forces were to blame for the deaths of civilians, then the channels brought down fierce criticism on them (Dorar, 2016).

Gas attack? The UN is to look into allegations that the Syrian government dropped at least one barrel bomb containing chlorine gas on a rebel-held area of the city of Aleppo.#Aleppo #Syria #Chlorine #Gas #ChemicalWeapons #UN #BBCShorts (BBC News, 2016).

The situation became fundamentally different when civilians died due to the fault of the opposition forces: in these cases, the losses were most often perceived by the press as “insignificant” (Dorar, 2016).

Improving Russia's image in the West as the main peacekeeping force in the Syrian conflict is difficult to solve, since the successes of the Russian armed forces, the general strengthening of its political positions in the Middle East region were supported by negative publications of Western media, which serve as the main source of information for a wide foreign audience:

Syria conflict: Russian air strikes 'killed 200 civilians'. Amnesty International publishes a report into civilian deaths caused by Russian airstrikes in Syria over the past two months (BBC News, 2015).

The Western media, covering Russia's humanitarian operations and its participation in the conflict as a whole, practically do not mention the positive contribution it makes to the settlement of the situation and the fight against terrorism, for the most part they focus on covering the suffering of civilians, the mistakes of the Russian military, on such possible reasons for Russian involvement in the conflict itself as distraction Russian society from internal problems (Rustamova, 2018).

**Al Jazeera**, in its turn,is mostly known for “putting human stories at the forefront of the news agenda”. This is the reason why numerous posts published by Al Jazeera were dedicated to the human side of the conflict which was put as the focus of their journalism work.

The data retrieved contained several posts which were written not in the news format with the headings and leads where the facts are presented, but with the narrative style where the reporter or journalist was directly talking to the public. The conflict was explained by media professionals as by ordinary human beings which helped to establish connection with the audience and catch the major essence of the warfare.

Whenever I photograph children who were displaced by war, I always think of my only daughter, placing myself in a situation where any father watches his children suffer from hunger, the cold and homelessness. I always strive to convey the situation to the world through a photograph and that's the most I can offer as a photojournalist (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

Nour showed us he can run, even on his crutches. His mother was in tears when she ran after him yelling at him to stop running before he fell and hurt himself. Nour lost his leg in an air strike after years of siege and hunger…I reassured him not to lose hope because he is one of the bravest, strongest little men I have ever met. I told him the world cares ... I feel I lied (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

According to the previous research, refugees can be framed in the news in a sense of humanization or threat to national security. Therefore, the majority of media outlets use mostly intruder and victim frames while mentioning refugees in the reporting. Intruder frame describes refugees as criminals, constantly engaged in illegal activities as a means of survival, putting in danger the individuals of the host country and destroying cultural values. Humanization frame, in its turn, means that refugees are portrayed as victims who flee their homes due to political instability and who are in need of flexible refugee policies in democratic nations where they can settle and find new homes. This frame is emotional and personalized where even success stories of fleeing the crisis are mentioned. It clearly demonstrates that individuals who escaped the crises, are still helpless and are deeply in need of humanitarian and international intervention to improve the conditions affected by warfare. The frame can be conducted to highlight personal stories of refugees and their journey towards better conditions where the audience views individuals as passive and helpless (Ramasubramanian & Miles, 2018).

However, according to the data retrieved, the goal of Al Jazeera is not only to demonstrate the poor conditions of Syrian refugees but also to empower them, showing their potential and prove that Syrian refugees can fit any community and can be beneficial to host countries as well. The Syrian refugees in Al Jazeera are also portrayed as individuals with their own ambitions, hopes and dreams for a better future and life. Moreover, Al Jazeera conducted interviews with the citizens of host countries who speak highly of refugees and who believe that refugees can make positive contributions to the community.

# Meet the Syrian refugees turned entrepreneurs living in Turkey.For the millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey, finding work is a process riddled with difficulties, but there are success stories (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

Manvinder Kaur Virdi and her husband, Baljit Singh Virdi, own and manage Rothesay's Londis convenience shop on Montague Street, a five-minute walk from the harbor. At the back of the shop, the Virdis have created a world food section, which they have recently expanded to include essential ingredients for Syrian cooking. "We bought in Arabic bread and Arabic coffee, as well as coal for shisha pipes," Both the islands councilors have said that if the refugees were to put down roots on the island, they would have an incredibly positive impact on the community. The same could be said for other parts of Scotland where population decline is becoming an issue for remote communities (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

She is an amazing sketch artist. The shy young girl came to us as we were leaving an orphanage on the Turkey Syria border. Unlike many other orphans I have met, this one wants to travel to Korea and become a professional artist. She says her dream may never become reality but that doesn't stop her from enjoying what she is good at (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Among civilian stories, Al Jazeera spoke about the “women’s issue” in the countries of the Middle East and became the first media outlet that openly and successfully raised the problem of gender inequality in Arab society to the world level. A separate section is devoted to the "women's issue" on the Arabic and English versions of the channel's website, and publications on a given topic collect the largest number of comments, after topics on terrorism and military conflicts. In the media, the world learned about the culture of the Arab countries, the peculiarities of the mentality of their inhabitants, the problems of such a distant and "closed" society. A woman on Al Jazeera is, first of all, a person who has suffered as a result of an unstable political situation in a number of countries, but at the same time is ambitious, promising and developing, exactly the same as women in Western countries. It is also noteworthy that publications that talk about women are always emotional, humane, and in most cases the “women's issue” is described by women journalists who approach the coverage of this topic with special “female” competence, solidarity and understanding (Podpletko, 2017).

An elderly Syrian woman cooks breakfast on a gas heater in Za’atari camp, in Jordan. Small children wait for the food in the family tent… Despite the difficult conditions they live in, refugee women are demonstrating strength and resilience, finding creative solutions to the issues they face and providing support to their families, friends and even strangers. Everywhere in the developing world, women are at the center of traditional family life. Their importance is without a doubt crucial to the very concept of family, but while we look upon them with great admiration we should also see that the greatest responsibility falls upon women. They form and influence the next generation…May 5,2014 (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

Bdroun says that legally she is not allowed to work in the country. "The men smile and laugh when they see me working at the gas station," she said. "When you practice this kind of job, you have the feeling you are empowered. When I left Syria, I was so scared about how I would live alone, sleep alone in the garage at night with my kids; now I don’t care. I can work and walk around and I don't worry." (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Bushra, 34, is currently living in Baalbeck with her mother, her brother and his family. Bushra keeps herself busy by fixing electronic products for her family. "I like to discover what is inside electric devices and so on," she says. "I find myself with free time and nothing to do, so when things break at home, I immediately begin working." She is thinking of opening a workshop. "Why not? The role of an electrician is mostly for men, but it shouldn't be exclusively for men. Why should it be them only?" (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Approximately 11.5 million civilians have fled the country and over 220,000 lives were claimed. Bashar Al Asad aspires to get control over the Syria population and proclaim himself as the only legitimate power within the state. In his interviews, Assad stated numerous times that Syrian people are the ones who experience the most critical impact of the war. His policy is explained in his interview with Foreign Affairs: “Before talking about winning territory, talk about winning the hearts and minds and the support of the Syrian people. That’s what we have won. What’s left is logistical; it’s technical. That is a matter of time.”

In reality, civilians, settled in opposition control areas, experience mass punishment by Syrian government forces that constantly cut off supplies and repeatedly conduct airstrikes making thousands suffer from hunger and flee the bombarded zones. As a result, the humanitarian crisis caused by the regime makes the majority of the Syrian population to settle in the territories, controlled by Assad, one of the few places to access the basic needs necessary for survival (Kozak, 2015).

Syria: gas attack: “We found bodies all over the floor”. Syrian opposition groups and activists blamed the attack on the government of [Bashar al-Assad](http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/people/bashar-al-assad.html). But the Syrian military rejected the accusation, saying it “denies using any toxic or chemical agents in Khan Sheikhoun today, and it did not and never will use it anywhere”.Khani, however, believes the attack was intended to target civilians (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

Abu Nidal Abed, a 43-year-old fighter in the Free Syria Army (FSA), his wife and two children have been sleeping in a hastily constructed bomb shelter for months.Located in the Saqba town in the Ghouta area of Damascus' countryside, their home has been damaged by air strikes launched by the Syrian government throughout the five-year civil war. "I spent 45 days building the bomb shelter to protect us from the rocket fire and air strikes," he tells Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Attacks on Syrian schools: “It was a calculated assault, to strike fear in the hearts of the children & the parents”. “They [Russia and the regime] know that no one will be punished for those crimes. They are war criminals, because they killed children in the holy place – school.” (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

The posts above indicate that the Russian military and Syrian government army are the reason why there are casualties and death toll among civilians in Syria. In the Arab world, Russia also has a negative image and is portrayed as an aggressor, whose airstrikes make the Syrian community suffer.

Nowadays the majority of cultures and nations that do not belong to the Western region, resist the values shared by the US and Arab community is not an exception. They have a negative attitude towards US policies in the Middle East which express the support towards authoritarian Arab leaders and Israel’s activity within Palestinian territory. According to various studies such negative perception of the US in the Arab world is caused not by its values but policies and their interpretations in the Arab region. Communities in the Middle East view globalization in the US as a threat to their states and as a successor of European colonialism and imperialism, which aims to weaken their countries and maintain control over their resources (Kraidy, 2008).

“What are you doing in my country?” Syrian civilians confront US troops in northeastern Syria. (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

**2.2 Threat framing**

**Threat framing of BBC is formulated by three stages: a) Russia and Syrian government; b) so called Islamic State; c) Europeans involved in ISIS and d) Iran**

Particular attention in BBC social media is paid to the formation of the position of the international community in relation to the military and political actions of Russia in the course of the development of the Syrian conflict. Europe reacted rather ambiguously to the news about the beginning of Russia's fight against ISIS in Syria. Russia's desire to eliminate the global terrorist threat is confronted by a number of European countries that, through the media, initiate an information war against Russia (Muratova, 2017).

Syria’s government says it has made an offer to rebels.Speaking in Moscow, Syria's foreign minister Walid Muallem said he had proposed a prisoner exchange with rebels and presented a ceasefire plan for the second city Aleppo to his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov (BBC News, 2014).

Syria’s new ground war. Following Russia's recent rocket launch into Syria - NATO Defense Ministers meet in Brussels to discuss concerns about Russia's escalating military campaign in Syria. #Syria #Russia #Nato #UnitedNations #BBCShorts (BBC News, 2014).

The military goal of Russia in the Syrian conflict, which is of paramount importance for the security of mankind, is interpreted in a different political perspective, although it must be recognized that Europe has suffered considerable losses from international terrorism and is faced with the problem of mass migration of refugees. But, despite the obvious presence of motives for combating the international threat, European countries not only do not support Russia in this, but also resist. The reason for such an attitude towards Russia seems obvious: a number of European countries predict that Russia's possible military success in the fight against terrorism will lead to an increase not only in its influence in a particular region and control over it, but also in the strengthening of Russia's international authority, which may subsequently have a strong impact on alignment of political forces in the international arena (Muratova, 2017).

Along with Russian authorities, Syrian government is also identified as a threat in the conflict coverage:

Assad: barrel bombs denial. Syria’s Assad denies to BBC his army has used “barrel bombs” in the country's four-year civil war. #Assad #PresidentAssad #BasharAlAssad #AlAssad #BasharAssad #Syria #HumanRightsWatch (BBC News, 2015).

Syria report: thousands executed.A new report by Amnesty International has accused the Syrian government of secretly executing thousands of prisoners at one of its prisons.#Syria #Saydnaya #Prison #SaydnayaPrison #Assad #AmnestyInternational #Humanrights #BBCShorts (BBC News, 2016).

However, most of the posts were published about ISIS as a direct threat to the international community. ISIS is the English acronym that stands for Islamic State in Iraq and Levant. Once this jihadist group captured Mosul in Iraq, new crisis has been spead across the world, urging that the group encouraging new volunteers and soldiers to join the army (Kumar, 2015).

Jihadist hymns for recruiting. Religious songs have become an integral part of jihadist culture and media, and are used as a tool to attract new young fighters.#BBCShorts (BBC News, 2014).

Nowadays, the exact quantity of fighters is unclear but according to the research, the group includes approximately thousands fighters. However, ISIS managed to expand the territories and maintain control within Iraq and Syria which demonstrates their competitive military abilities (Kumar, 2015).

Syria conflict: Islamic state committed war crimes. UN investigators have issued their latest report into human rights violations in Syria (BBC News, 2014).

The brutal activity of ISIS attracted international media outlets which unconsiously started promoting jihadist brand and involve more fighters into the group. Unlike criminal actions and other war strategies, terrorism act has the potential to be mentioned by mass media and news coverage. especially by individuals who have limited or absolutely no access to domination of media, desperate to be noticed. Meanwhile, terrorism is considered as a psychological warfare tactic.

Besides international media, terrorist group has their own secret media for spreading agenda and attracting new members (Melki & Jabado, 2015). BBC covered such issue, demonstrating wifes of so-called ISIS militants who joined the group through secret media and urging community not to believe the shared jihadist propaganda:

I.S. wifes. The BBC’s Shaimaa Khalil spoke to some IS wives who escaped about why they joined, and what life was like in ‘the caliphate’ (BBC News, 2015).

The primary goal of religiously inspired groups such as ISIS is to design their attacks in a way to make the society be afraid, knowing that the media will unintentionally assist them with that. Therefore, this implies that ISIS members use international media as a tool to spread fear within the society. However, various researches claim that besides the fear, media is capable of disseminating a distance suffering within society through the coverage of terrorism (Melki & Jabado, 2015).

James Foley's beheading was 'shocking and depraved' – PM. UK PM David Cameron returns to Downing St for talks on Islamic State threat following video of James Foley"killing" (BBC Breaking News, 2014).

After the beheading videos published by ISIS, American and British policies passed through radical transformations. “Humanitarian situation” was replaced by “national security” and ISIS was proclaimed as an “imminent threat” which takes place not only in the Middle East but also can occur in the US and UK. For this reason, both the UK and US started to carry out military actions in Iraq with the US extending its strikes in Syria in September 2014 (Friis, 2015).

US: pursue IS in Syria.US calls IS the most dangerous threat it has faced in recent years.#Hagel #Dempsey #Syria #Iraq #BBCShorts (BBC News, 2014).

The videos made by ISIS served as visual facts for policy transformations of British and American government authorities who called jihadist group “embodiment evil”, standing against the whole world and humanity. The language they used in press conferences and interviews, clearly indicate that political leaders divide themselves from ISIS by superior morality and tactics. According to David Cameron, British Concervative party leader,: “Anyone in any doubt about this organization can now see how truly repulsive and barbaric it is” (Friis, 2015).

Britain is ready to "play its part" in fighting Islamic State.UK Prime Minister David Cameron spoke as US and Arab jets continued bombing Islamic State targets in Syria, after attacks began on Tuesday (BBC News, 2014).

UK air strikes in Syria against IS approved. The British government wins support for airstrikes against IS in Syria. #SyriaVote.December 3, 2015 (BBC News, 2015).

The terrorist attacks broadcasted by media demonstrated that ISIS declared a war on the United States as well as the entire world. Therefore, beheading videos of ISIS were a solid reason for the UK and US to establish an emergency situation with the threat of national security. The conflict in Iraq and Syria started to be viewed as a humanitarian crisis, requiring military action to be taken against terrorrism activities. This allowed to legitimize military involvement and adopt some policy amendments in the UK such as 1) ban from entering and coming from Iraq and Syria; 2) monitoring suspicious individuals within the UK (Friis, 2015).

BBC posted multiple articles about British and European citizens being involved in ISIS. This demonstrates that even though the islamic group conducted activities in the Middle East, the threat was still very close and can be concerning to everyone, urging citizens to be careful and conscious. Since the two great powers like United States and United Kingdom were concerned about jihadist group, the threat was proclaimed on international level as well, disseminating panic and fear within world community:

Australia raises terrorism threat level. Australian leader Tony Abbott raises terrorist threat level to high: the move which, comes in response to growing concerns over the impact of militant conflicts in Iraq and Syria on Australia (BBC News, 2014).

Jihadi John Named. BBC names IS militant known as "Jihadi John.#JihadiJohnNamed #Security #Syria #Iraq (BBC News, 2015).

One more member of the Syrian conflict which is identified as a threat to BBC is Iran.

# Iran quietly deepens involvement in Syria's war. The new offensive launched by Syrian government forces in the countryside south of Aleppo has shed light on Iran's growing role in Syria's civil war (BBC Breaking News, 2015).

Iran has the image of an enemy and foreign aggressor which the international community is in charge of punishing severely. The audience sees Iran as a country that can attack first which represents a threat that has to be immediately dealt with (Youssefi et al., 2013). The language used in the BBC post proves that. The country is described as a possible arms supplier in the eyes of the public: “hundreds of Iranian troops had arrived in Syria in preparation for an imminent assault on rebel-held areas”.

**Threat framing of Al Jazeera in covering Syrian conflict is divided into several categories: a) Russia b) Syrian government c) US d) ISIS and e) Israel.**

Al Jazeeradoes not present Moscow to the broad Arab public as a peacemaker or as a reliable partner of the countries of the region, on the contrary, its image in Arab media is connected with “closest ally” of the enemy or a supplier of weapons to individual states. Syrian writer Munzer Hallum, stated: “Russia should find a point which could cause an interest from the Arab audience”.

Syria: Under Russia's fist - Life underneath the Kremlin's bombs (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

# Syria’s war: What went wrong in east Aleppo? When the Russian intervention into the Syrian conflict accelerated in mid-2016, many analysts and partisans declared the “Battle of Aleppo” to hold the key to the future of the Syrian conflict (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Such phrases as “Kremlin’s bombs” and “Russian intervention” imply negative connotation of Russian image to the public, emphasizing that Russian precence in Syria is accompanied by damage and casualities and can never bring stabilization in the region but, on the contrary, make it worse. There are several reasons why the majority of publications in Arab media show Russia in a negative light or pay absolutely little attention to it . First, the sponsors of two major channels, Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera, which largely shape Arab public opinion, have unfriendly relations with Moscow. Secondly, Russia is deeply involved with collaboration with Israel which is perceived as hostile in the Arab world. Thirdly, Russia is not actively involved in the regional agenda and demonstrates the low dynamics of Russian-Arab contacts. Mainly, Moscow's engagement in the region is related to the development of military-technical issues and the ordinary Arab audience has very little interest in that. In addition, Arab media pays close attention to political instabilities which continue to occur within the most Arab states where Moscow could be mentioned as an ally, making an effort to resolve them. However, throughout the whole crisis in Gaza, the Russian Foreign Ministry only expressed regret over the numerous victims and called for the restoration of peace. Such a position cannot satisfy the Arab audience (Tyukaeva, 2014).

# Syria and Russia pressed to end the Aleppo onslaught. European foreign ministers, as well as their counterparts from Qatar and Saudi Arabia, also demanded on Saturday that Syrian government and Russian forces stop their onslaught (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

# Syria: Deadly aid convoy bombing as ceasefire ends. Syrian or Russian warplanes bombed aid trucks near Aleppo after a fragile week-long ceasefire ended and it appeared that the bloody five-year war was fully back on late on Monday (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

These published posts demonstrate the involvement and concern of the international community regarding the Syrian conflict. Russian and Syrian forces in the posts are associated with words “onslaught” and are accused of “indiscriminate bombing”, “war crimes” and “crimes against humanity”. Sometimes, Al Jazeera prefers to ignore the presence of other actors within Syria since Russia and Syrian troops are always the ones to blame. “Syrian or Russian warplanes” implies that Al Jazeera does not have reliable information regarding the attack but just throws random accusations on purpose to put Moscow and Assad in a bad light.

Meanwhile, the image of the United States in the Middle East acquired a negative interpretation in the eyes of Arab media in the past decade as well, especially after September 11, 2001, which is proved by various surveys and polls. This proposed a suspicion towards the economic, cultural and political motives of the US, creating a challenge to integrate in the Arab region, where the community accuses the US of being duplicitous actor with double standards. US diplomacy has consisted of unilateral policy and action with the slogan "you are with us or you are against us" that has turned the Middle East and many other parts of the world into a minefield. The United States promises to bring democracy to the Middle East, as well as the acquisition of "civilization" in the region, but at the same time it reminds of the past experience of European colonialism and imperialism, which undermines the confidence of the population and contradicts the stated goals and current policies (Kraidy, 2008).

Syria conflict: Will US expand air strikes? The UN says the crisis is the biggest humanitarian emergency of our time as the number of refugees tops three million (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

# Civilians killed in US raid in Syria. Six children and four women among 13 people killed as US special operations forces launch raid in Idlib province, first responders say (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

The United States is closely associated with the "global war on terrorism", which has led to a negative attitude of the rest of the world, and also undermined their communication ties. (Kraidy, 2008). Following ISIS's significant military victories, as well as the activities carried out by its militants, including citizens of the United States and the European Union, the United States and its allies formed the International Coalition in 2014, which included more than 60 countries under the banner of fighting ISIS. However, the coalition's military actions were restricted to airstrikes on ISIS locations, which did not deal the Islamists any serious damage. Furthermore, there have been instances where weaponry delivered by Coalition aircraft to Kurdish forces fighting ISIS have ended up in the hands of militants. As a result, the military operations of the US-led Coalition against ISIS have not only not been defeated after one year, but also led to dramatic expansion of their influence over the region. As a result, the US-led Coalition's efforts may be seen as a pretext of the war against ISIS, but the US and its partners' true objectives remained the same: using all the necessary means, including extremist Islamists, to overthrow Bashar al Assad's regime. The achievement of these objectives would theoretically allow the US to accomplish strategic goals such as undermining Iran, especially its impact in Iraq and Lebanon, and destabilizing Russia's position in the Middle East (Dolgov, 2021).

# Russia, Turkey: US supporting Syria ‘terrorist’ groups. Turkish president lashes out at US-led forces as Russia says new Washington defence policy would empower “jihadists” (Al Jazeera English,2016).

Although, throughout the world states agreed to apply the term “terrorists” while referring to ISIS group, Al Jazeera is not willing to confirm this fact and uses the term only during quoutation. On the contrary, ISIS is described by Al Jazeera as Islamic State, militants, fighters, and State organization. Al Jazeera prefers not to include the brutal activities of ISIS such as besieging, suicide bombers, taxation, extortions, beheadings of innocent citizens long with the crimes against civilians. Almost all negative acts conducted by ISIS are silenced in Al Jazeera reports while mentioning the territories under their control (Albadri, 2019).

# ISIL: Rising power in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has outgrown even al-Qaeda as it seeks to establish a new caliphate (Al Jazeera English, 2014)

# Islamic State’s support spreads into Asia. As the Islamic State group, formerly the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, continues its armed campaign in Iraq and Syria, its notoriety is drawing fans and fighters from as far as Asia and the Pacific (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

According to the retrieved data, it can be assumed that Al Jazeera promotes the activity of ISIS instead of accusing terrorist group in mass murder and torture of civilians. So called ISIS is described by Al Jazeera as a “rising power” which directly implies the presence of a new powerful actor in the region that represents the potential dominance it can acquire over the territories throughout the warfare. The second post mentioned a former Catholic of Irish-Italian background but converted to Islam at 17, [Robert “Musa” Cerantonio](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/07/philippines-arrests-australian-imam-2014711134919534455.html), who was arrested by Philippine and Australian police for trying to incite Muslim men in the Philippines to fight in the Middle East. Al Jazeera mentioned “Cerantonio has over 6,700 followers on Twitter, and several videos on YouTube” and added “Cerantonio’s Twitter account, emblazoned with an Islamic State banner, has thousands of followers” unconsciously encouraging the audience to check the accounts and view the content.

Arab media expresses its broad and constant support in the news coverage of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, portraiting Israel as an agressor whose millitants kill thousands of innocent civilians. In the case of the Syrian conflict, Israel’s bad reputation in the Arab world is not an exception.

# Golan Heights: New flashpoint in Syria war? Syrian residents say they fear a spillover of violence as, Israel has bombed the Syrian military positions several times (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

This post refers to Golan heights, Syrian territory occupied by Israeli forces since 1967.The post emphasizes that Israel is also one more potential aggressor in the Syrian conflict which presents a direct threat to Syrian civilians. Israel’s goal is to destabilize the influence of Iran next to Israel's borders. Israel’s intention is to deploy Iranian troops and prevent its supply to Hezbollah. This is the reason why throughout the Syrian conflict Israel launched several air strikes to the target troops and Hezbollah fighters. However, such attacks were considered to be minor and limited which allowed them to avoid direct contact between Israel and Iran. Therefore, Israel’s strategy remains to be the passive actor which monitors carefully the events, avoids conflict with Moscow and takes very few direct actions until the Syrian conflict dramatically changes course, putting in danger Israel’s citizens and territory (Hanauer, 2016).

**2.3 Victory framing**

**According to the provided data, victory framing of BBC coverage of Syrian conflict is formulated by two countries: United States and Turkey.**

The United States and United Kingdom are close political allies whose foreign policies are based on the establishment of coordination between each other. The two nations have a lot in common: ideals, goals and of course, the common language. The relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom in the defense sphere has had a leading role throughout history since the Second World War (Pitts-Tucker, 2020). Bilateral cooperation between the US and UK was strengthened during such events as World Wars, Persian Gulf War, Korean conflict, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan and formulation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Nowadays, the US and UK continue to maintain close ties by consulting on global issues and share common policy and security goals. The two great powers share the highest place in the rating of countries’ economies in the world. The nations have free market values and exchange various goods and services every year which are worth over $260 billion. The direct investment between 2 nations is worth $1 trillion. State jobs in the US are linked to UK companies, providing opportunities for employees to get an advantage of both firms. On the international arena, the United States and United Kingdom are members of the UN Security Council (P5), G20, G7, Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization and World Bank (US embassy/consulate in the United Kingdom). During 2015 UK Strategic Defense and Security Review (SDSR) two nations agreed on formulating the global collaboration concerning international stability, combat terrorism and rule of law and free trade. Bilateral Data Access Agreement was signed to retrieve data crimes from both countries (Pitts-Tucker, 2020).

The activities mentioned above allow the BBC agenda to be favorable to US presence in Syria.

US-Arab strikes against IS in Syria.The action expands the US-led campaign against Islamic State from Iraq into Syria.#Syria #SyriaAirstrikes #Pentagon#CENTCOM #Raqqa (BBC News, 2014).

Battle rages on Syria-Turkey border.The US has mounted air strikes on Islamic State militants as they battle Kurdish fighters in the Syrian border town.#Kobane #Syria #Turkey #USCentcom #BBCShorts (BBC News, 2014).

Strike against Syria. The US has launched missile air strikes against Syria in response to Tuesday's 'chemical attack' that killed dozens of people, including children. #Syria #Strike #US #DonaldTrump #Chemical #Military #Assad #Idlib #BBCShorts #BBCNews (BBC News, 2016).

Pentagon: 50 Tomahawk missiles fired at Syria air base. The US has carried out a missile strike against a Syrian air base in response to a suspected chemical weapons attack on a rebel-held town (BBC News, 2016).

When the UK was a EU member, it expressed its support towards Turkey’s integration in the European Union. In 2016 UK provided support to Turkey against domestic demonstrations and in 2017 concluded a deal to build a fighter jet for Turkey’s military air force. London has always been flexible regarding the political domestic situation in Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan used to receive less criticism from British media outlets. Unlike other NATO allies, the UK was more favorable to Turkey in its intentions to conduct military operations in Syria (Lowe & Scazzieri, 2020). Moreover, such support can be explained by preventing Russia from expanding southwards when USSR was trying to spread territorial and political influence in post-Second World war time (Bi̇lgin&Morewood).

Turkey downs Russian jet. Turkey downs Russian warplane near Syria-Turkey border.#Turkey #Russia #Syria #Su24 #RussianPlane (BBC News, 2015).

Russian helicopters are searching for pilots after a warplane shot down by Turkey over Syria (BBC News, 2015).

Turkey downs Syria military jet “in air space violation”. A Syrian military jet has been shot down near the country's northern border with Turkey, activists and local reports say (BBC Breaking News, 2014).

Meanwhile, Russia’s victory or superiority over its enemies is mentioned with casualties and injuries:

Russian air strikes against Assad enemies. Russia has begun carrying out airstrikes in Syria against opponents of President Bashar al-Assad. which hit rebel-controlled areas of Homs causing casualties. [#Russia](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/russia/) [#Syria](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/syria/) [#Putin](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/putin/) [#Assad](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/assad/) (BBC News, 2015).

**In the victory framing, Al Jazeera represents the following actors: a) rebels, b) Russian and Syrian government with casualties, c)ISIS and d) Iran**

Sunni soldiers within Syria suffered from the regime's brutality but it did not stop them from fighting for their rights. They turned their weapons against the Syrian government which led to the establishment of armed rebel groups. Civilians also had a chance to formulate their own rebel group or join the existing ones. During the formation process, several officers founded the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in 2011 for the establishment of communication among other rebel groups within Syria to coordinate actions and spread information (Baskan, 2017).

Despite denials of Qatari government officials, Qatar was actively engaged in supplying weapons and supporting such anti-government rebels in Syria. Anti-Assad groups were supported by Qatar and had to fight and compete against groups backed by UAE and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Turkey has been a close partner to Qatar in supplying rebel groups . This is probably the reason why Turkey was allowed to establish a military base within Qatar (Katzman, 2016).

Various groups were backed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia in order to undermine certain opposition groups and maintain control over prospective governments. The weaponry and finances from Qatar were delivered by middlemen in Turkey. The amount of money and quantity of supply depended on how many groups were in total, people included in the group, and the quantity of competing groups that needed to be beaten in order to increase the ratings ( Baylouny & Mullins, 2017).

# Turkey confirms special forces operation in Syria. Announcement comes as the Turkish military says it killed ISIL fighters in northern Syria on Saturday (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Syrian rebels backed by Turkey say they have captured the town of Saraqib in Idlib (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

A rebel commander presented in the video, stated: “I want to reassure our people that we will liberate all the cities in Syria and defeat the dictator”. By posting this, Al jaeera directly gives hope to Syrian civilians and emphasizes that the opposition groups are the only ones who they can rely on and who can save them from the regime.

Russia’s victory over the rebels, and the victory of Assad’s government forces in its turn, is accompanied by accusations with casualties:

# Syria says 175 fighters were killed near Damascus. Syrian army troops have killed 175 opposition fighters, many of them linked to al-Qaeda-linked groups, in an ambush described as one of the deadliest attacks by government forces near Damascus (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

# Russian raids kill prominent Syrian rebel commander. Death of Zahran Alloush, head of Army of Islam, reported in Damascus suburb along with attack on a hospital in Aleppo (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

The post contained such phrases as “prominent Syrian rebel”, “ the commander of the best organized and best armed opposition group” which was “seen as the immediate threat of President Bashar al-Assad” . This directly implies that Russian fighting forces can never be seen as a stabilizer within the region. Russia’s victory is portrayed in relation to the damage and threat to the whole Syrian nation fighting Assad’s regime. The post about Assad, in its turn, stated that regardless his victory over opposition fighters linked to terrorist group, the casualities among civilians trying to survive the warfare still occured which makes the regime itself take the responsibility for death toll within the nation. “The agency posted several photographs on its website showing dozens of bodies of men…but most wore civilian clothes and appeared to have been carrying bags of clothes and bottles of water that were scattered on the ground”

Qatar provided not only weaponry to Sunni Arab factions but also guaranteed financial support along with humanitarian aid. The supporters of opposition also became private donors, non-state entities, including members of Syrian expatriate communities and Salafi or puritanical Islamist charities. Besides supporting individual groups and intervening with the potential future Syrian government, Qatar decided to take a side of Islamist groups as well, whether radical or not. Regardless of these groups being funded by various donors, Qatar became the most dominant donor by providing billions of dollars between 2013-2015 ( Baylouny & Mullins, 2017).

According to this statement, this can be assumed the reason why Al Jazeera very rarely reports or even ignores the presence of terrorists and al-Qaeda fighters in the Egyptian opposition groups, despite the fact that many journalists around the world report on this. Many of Al Jazeera's newscasts do not rely on meticulously crafted reporting, but solely on "eyewitness" and "citizen journalist" stories, YouTube videos, reports and photographs published by opposition organizations (Slman, 2018)

# ISIL ‘recaptures’ areas from Syrian forces in Raqqa. ISIL fighters launch a counter-offensive in the northern province of Raqqa, retaking large areas they recently lost (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

# From the rubble of Aleppo, ISIL rises. Through distraction, rival elimination and fears of the Sunni population, ISIL seizes opportunities of Aleppo’s war (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Al Jazeera in these posts indirectly shows the superiority and dominance of ISIS in the region. The channel aims to demonstrate that ISIS cannot be beaten and gains a strong capability to fight enemies and opponents in warfare. “ISIL has been under pressure in Iraq, Syria and Libya in recent weeks, but the gains in Raqqa show it is still able to take on Syrian troops backed by Russian warplanes”. This sentence can be understood in a way that Al Jazeera is mocking Syrian and Russian troops, challenging them and warning about the coming threat.

The last actor which Al Jazeera portrays in the victory frame is Iran.

# US forces in Syria attacked after air raids on armed groups. Iran-backed armed groups launch rockets at US troops in eastern Syria causing no casualties, says war monitor (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

Iran and Qatar have been partners for a long time with bilateral relations in the economic sphere. Diplomatic agreements between two states were also established concerning the extraction of gas from the North field. Tehran and Doha give a crucial importance to this cooperation since both countries share the largest independent gas field which emphasize mutual economic and commercial interests. Moreover, Qatari companies and their partners see a profitable opportunity to invest in Iran’s antiquated hydrocarbon infrastructure and the South Pars.

Outside the Gulf region, Doha and Tehran have different aspirations and goals. In the Syrian conflict, states took completely different sides: Iran provides material, financial and military support to Bashar al-Assad’s regime while Qatar supplies a range of opposition groups. However, Iran is perceived as one of the major powers in the Middle East region, including Syria where along with Russia it managed to regain lost territories from jihaddist (Boussois, 2019).

**CHAPTER 3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

This chapter of the thesis will be dedicated to comparative analysis in order to identify the key similarities and differences of social media platforms of BBC and Al Jazeera in terms of Syrian conflict's coverage. Moreover, the main comparison and contrast features of actors involved in the conflict will be briefly analyzed as well. Since there was a framing analysis made during the work, the author will clarify whether there is a big difference in transmitting the “reality” of the warfare to the public. The format of comparative analysis is “binary opposition” since there are only social media platforms of two elements: national broadcaster of the United Kingdom, BBC and news organization of Qatar, Al Jazeera.

It is worth noticing that both BBC and Al Jazeera publish numerous posts dedicated to the **human side** of the Syrian warfare. Individual stories of civilians, statistics of death tolls, civilian casualties and hardships of refugees were all covered by British and Qatari news channels.

“More than 4,000,000 people have now fled the conflict in Syria, one sixth of the country’s population, UN warns” (BBC News, 2015).

Seven-year-old Bushra is the sole survivor of a bomb that struck her home in Homs and killed her family. With her grandmother, she made the long journey to Lebanon, mostly on foot, with nothing but the clothes on her back…'I like French. I want to be a French teacher.' …The children discuss their hopes and dreams as they struggle to make sense of their new, fragile and confined worlds (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

The only difference was the way news was presented. BBC used an ordinary news format with indicated facts but Al Jazeera presented information in a narrative way, where journalists themselves were telling a story of every civilian, choosing the words that caused compassion from the public: “The children discuss their hopes and dreams as they struggle to make sense of their new, fragile and confined worlds”. This tactic was used to establish a close connection to the audience, and draw a line of similarities between surviving civilians and the public.

Generally speaking, framing civilians in warfare is used by multiple channels for several reasons. First, such a message turns out to be more persuasive, attracts more attention and is easily comprehended by the public than interviews with politicians. Second, the audience associate themselves with civilians since they speak from the heart and do not have a certain political agenda. Third, since civilians face the hardships of war on the every day basis, they are seen by audience as more experienced in the issue than politicians. So, the human interest framing is important for every news agenda to transmit the reality of the conflict and form opinions of political figures (Boukes, et al., 2015).

Another factor that both BBC and AL Aazeera are similar in is the coverage of **Russian troops and Syrian government**. After the launch of the Russian Aerospace Forces operation, foreign media gained a biased attitude towards B. Assad and his government, regularly publishing disinformation articles based on fabricated or taken out of context facts, discrediting Russia's actions. The Syrian conflict is demonstrated as a struggle between an oppressed people and a bloody despot who holds power solely due to the support of Russia. As a result, in general, Russia in the Syrian conflict is not presented either as a country that occupies a leading position in the eyes of the world community or as one of the main fighters against ISIS (Burykin, 2019).

Most often, the word "Russia'' can be found in a context related to military operations. Russia strengthens its army, creates chaos in another country, and invades foreign territory. Russia bombs are always the ones to blame for the deaths. Russia’s image in the foreign media is a conflicting party that constantly participates in scandals, which is not always possible to reach an agreement with. Russia acts as an invader country that other countries compete with and “gain scores”. The actions of the head of state are not spontaneous decisions, but a well-thought-out tactic, strategy (Gorskaya, 2017). So, Russia is often mentioned in the military context and is associated with words such as “military troops”, “military action” and “threat”

Syria conflict: Air strike on refugee camp 'kills 28'. Dozens of people have reportedly been killed at the camp near the Turkish border by Syrian or Russian warplanes (BBC News, 2016).

Dozens killed in wave of air strikes in Syria’s Aleppo. The Syrian government carries out more than 40 strikes in Aleppo leaving at least 30 dead, according to sources in the city (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

Both BBC and Al Jazeera provide statistics with no proof while blaming Russia troops and Syrian government for the death of civilians: “dozens of people have reportedly been killed”, “at least 30 dead”. The audience just sees numbers but does not pay attention where such numbers really come from. In this sense, the media wants the public to rely on the first impression since it is the strongest one and challenging to change afterwards. “Syrian or Russian warplanes” emphasizes that journalists do not have accurate information and rely on not reliable sources or purposely misinform the public with the aim to disregard the Russian and Syrian government’s image. As a result, the social media publications of both BBC and Al Jazeera form a negative informational background around Russia's actions and the Syrian government troops. Foreign media do not focus the audience's attention on the importance of the victory of the Syrian army and the role of the Russian armed forces in the fights against terrorists.

The opinions regarding the presence of **Iran** in the region, however, differ between channels. The state was presented to the western public, firstly, as a military, and then as a nuclear threat. Consequently, in the media, the country is characterized as a dangerous and uncontrollable enemy, which is capable of forcing other countries bordering it to gain its own values. Iran was then not only accused of secretly developing nuclear weapons, but also of harboring and aiding terrorists, in particular the al-Qaeda group. The Western media covered Iran alog with the Islamist military movement Hamas operating in the Gaza Strip, as well as the paramilitary Lebanese Shiite organization Hezbollah, which are recognized as terrorist organizations in Israel, the USA, Canada, Japan, Great Britain, Egypt, the League of Arab States, and others. Iran is presented as a country that is not liberal and closed to democratic reforms. Moreover, such statements create an image of a country that is not safe or recommended for Western tourists to visit (Silina, 2016).

Most likely, the negative attitude of Western media towards Iran was related to dissatisfaction with Iran's position on the Syrian conflict, Tehran's rapprochement with Moscow in connection with the support of the current Syrian President B. Assad in the fight against ISIS. The main reason why West policy is aimed to put pressure on Iran is because of the discourse of Tehran's foreign policy and its disagreement with the West's attempt to dominate the Middle East. Syria has become a political victim, mainly because of its close ties with Iran. The removal of the current regime is part of a plan to isolate Iran. Thus, Iran’s nuclear power position will contribute to the imbalance of power in the region in favor of Tehran which is not desirable either for the West or for its regional allies (Alireza, 2015).

Syria crisis: Iran cannot go to Geneva peace talks – US. The spokesman of UN chief Mr Ban said Iran's subsequent public comments have been "disappointing" (BBC News, 2014).

US: Iran can help in Geneva talks on Syria. Secretary of State John Kerry says Iran could play a role on the sidelines of the peace conference even if not formally invited (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

According to the data retrieved, Al Jazeera, in its turn, restrains itself from criticism of Iran and represents it in positive or neutral light. The relations between Qatar and Iran are determined by six agreements signed in May 1992, which provide partnership in such spheres as economic, customs, transport and information. In addition, Qatar and Iran cooperate in oil production on the fields belonging to both countries and which is carried out by Qatari and Iranian companies. (Borisov, 2012). Even though Iran and Qatar support different sides of the Syrian conflict, after the Arab Spring the relationships and cooperation between both countries were renewed by representatives of trade and economic departments and a Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation was established (Zinin, n.d.). Moreover, Qatar pursues a policy against Saudi Arabia as the main rival in the region as well as opposes other Persian Gulf countries, applying political propaganda, as well as through a loyal attitude towards the policy and activities of Iran. As a result, Al Jazeera hardly mentions the negative developments related to Iran in the Syrian region, which in turn indicates an attempt to avoid creating a negative image for Iran (Mirasrarov & Ahmetkarimov, n.d.)

The coverage of the so-called **ISIS** threat is presented in different angles from BBC and Al Jazeera. For BBC, it was important to demonstrate the involvement of British as well as European citizens into the terrorist organization. The content is amed to warn its citizens about the potential danger and the fact that the threat is very close regardless of the location of the conflict. Europe still remembers mid-1990, when an armed Islamic group carried out a series of terrorist attacks in France. In 2014, the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIS) declared itself and from 2014 until 2018, terrorist attacks within Europe were linked in one way or another to the Islamic State.

According to the statistics, up to 6 thousand terrorist fighters arrived from Europe to Syria and Iraq. Approximately 75% of them began to fight on the side of ISIS. About 40% of them died, and 10-15% ended up in places of detention in different countries of the world. Those militants who have military experience and authority and who managed to return from Syria and Iraq, are capable of being instructors and organizers of terrorist operations in their countries of permanent residence within European region. Even though, the conflict zone is located in Muslim countries, a significant amount of international volunteers and contributors were citizens of European countries who either took a direct part in the armed struggle or provided logistical support (Novikova, 2020).

BBC stresses the importance of the fact that the Islamic State's abilities and skills should never be underestimated by the international community since ISIS has already managed to recruit young people from almost 80 different nationalities. Another risk is that the idea of establishing a caliphate is quite popular among Muslims. Jihadists from all over the world are actively engaging in the Syrian crisis, including Arabs, Americans, Europeans, and even Australians. Terrorists inspired by Islamic extremists are perfectly capable of unleashing jihad over Western Europe, given the extraordinary flow of migration to Europe. As a result, the Islamic State's activities have the potential to destabilize the situation not just in the area, but also around the world, especially in Europe (Adamova & Sergeev, 2017).

"3,000 Europeans join Islamist militants".The EU's anti-terrorism chief says they are fighting in Syria and Iraq.#IraqDebate #IraqVote #BBCShorts (BBC News, Instagram).

# Syria prison attack shows ISIL ‘absolutely’ growing stronger. The armed group continues to gain strength in the war-torn country (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

While talking about ISIS, Al Jazeera avoids mentioning the term “terrorism” and refers them as an islamic group. The content, created by the Qatari news outlet emphasizes the superiority, dominance of ISIS as well as threat to its opposition actors. It can be assumed that the reason for such an attitude towards islamic group can be the Al-Nusra Front. The group was actively supported by Qatar and was made up of Syrian and international jihadists. Moreover, it was considered ISIS' main ally in Syria. The Al-Nusra Front, which is proclaimed as an official Qaeda's branch in Syria, has had a tense relationship with ISIS. However, challenged with external opponents, they used to quickly find a common language. Many al-Nusra fighters joined ISIS after a series of triumphs in Iraq (Dobrov, 2014). In the late August 2014 on the border with Israel, Jabhat Al-nusra terrorists kidnapped 45 UN peacekeepers from the UN Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights (UNDOF), whom they planned to trial under Sharia law. However, after negotiations with Qatari agents, all of the prisoners were shortly released. (Krylov, 2017). As the result, Qatar is benefiting in some way to cooperate with ISIS and directly avoid criticizing terrorist group for their activities.

The image of the **United States** is viewed as positive by BBC’s audience and as negative by Al Jazeera’s public. BBC positions the US as a defender that is making attempts to maintain balance in the region and put an end to the suffering of civilians. The content produced by BBC demonstrates the role of the US as the world power. According to the BBC, the United States has the most important and challenging mission in Syria: to establish peace within the region, fight jihadist groups and overthrow Basad’s regime. Military achievements of the United States are highlighted in BBC reporting as well as its superiority over opposition actors. “With the world's most powerful military, a huge economy, and a leading role in international institutions such as the UN and NATO, the USA is a superpower. The rise in power and importance of China and re-emergence of Russia will continue to challenge the global dominance of the USA” (The USA’s international influence, n.d.).

US plans open-ended military presence in Syria. The US will maintain an open-ended military presence in Syria to ensure the enduring defeat of the jihadist group Islamic State, counter Iranian influence, and help end the civil war (BBC News, 2015)

How do US supply weapons get to rebels in Syria and sometimes even into the hands of ISIL? (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

US arms exports in Syria. This is how US arms exports to rebel fighters in Syria can end up in the hands of ISIL (Al Jazeera English, 2016).

However, according to the data provided above, Al Jazeera has a different position regarding the US and its purpose in the Syrian region. The channel accuses United States of sponsoring ISIS and providing military help to jihadist group. Moreover, according to the data above, Al Jazeera repeated the same information on different dates in order to make the message more persuasive to the public and make the audience pay close attention to the specific fact.

The international coalition to counter ISIS includes Western (USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Poland) and Arab states (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Jordan). It is important to emphasize that the US and the coalition as a whole did not achieve any significant victories in the war against the Islamic State (Adamova & Sergeev, 2017).

As reported by Conflict Armament Research, anti-tank missiles that turned out in the hands of ISIL were made in Bulgaria but sold to the American company Kiesler Police Supply. According to the laws, the request for an export license had to be supported by an end-user declaration from the US Air Force, which was expected to guarantee that the US military wouldn't transfer weapons to a third party. The Americans, on the other hand, broke the rules, and, as the result, weaponry began to appear in the Middle East

Furthermore, in 2016, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) collaborated on a joint investigation that revealed a thriving arms trade between eight Central and Eastern European countries along with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey. A total of 1.2 million euro worth of Kalashnikov assault rifles, machine guns, missile systems, and missile defense systems ended up in the hands of Syrian rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad, and eventually ISIS terrorists. Such investigation provided further evidence that Eastern European and American governments are actively involved in the delivery of weapons to Syrian rebels via Saudi Arabian territory. If the weapon has already been discovered in the location, it is difficult to predict who will eventually take possession of it (Hayn & Elkina, 2018).

Both BBC and Al Jazeera have their own actors that they constantly promote throughout the coverage of Syrian conflict by representing them as victims, showing their victories and highlighting the importance of their presence in the region. BBC prefers to stress the significance of **Turkey** while Al Jazeera gives its airtime to **opposition groups**.

The significant asset on the bilateral agenda between Britain and Turkey was British support for Turkey's plans to join the European Union. The Turkish leader called the United Kingdom "a valuable strategic ally that enjoys the trust of Ankara." At the bilateral level, cooperation is conditioned by common interests in a number of areas: the fight against international terrorism, the interaction of border agencies, combating organized crime, human trafficking, illegal migration, etc. Subsequently, the parties plan to sign a full-scale trade agreement, which would not only copy earlier agreements, but also provide for trade in agricultural products, services, investment cooperation and interaction in the digital economy.

For the international agenda of "Global Britain", aimed primarily at strengthening its position outside the EU, relations with Ankara are of paramount importance. London hopes to benefit from interaction with an ambitious regional player that occupies a strategically important geographical position between Europe and Asia. Friendly relations with Ankara are important for the United Kingdom and in connection with plans to gain a foothold in the Black Sea region, creating a counterbalance to Russia. To this end, both Britain and Turkey rely on military-technical cooperation with Ukraine (Godovanyuk, 2021).

Syrian war: Turkey to play more active role.Turkey says it will take a more active role in efforts to end the war in Syria and accepts President Bashar al-Assad as an interim but not long-term player (BBC News, 2016).

Photographing Ali, Aleppo, and the ‘mother of all battles’. A photojournalist who covered Syria’s civil war tells the story of a young rebel fighter he met (Al Jazeera English, 2015).

Qatar has been already accused of supporting opposition groups before and during the Arab Spring where Al Jazeera was focused mostly in telling the story from the side of rebels.. For example, Libyan Islamic fighting groups, which became one of the most combat-ready rebel groups, were deployed from Qatar to Cyrenaica. Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula were sent to Libya on Qatari planes. Doha plays an equally significant role in relation to the civil war in Syria, acting there according to the same template as in Libya. Qatari military transport planes take off from Al-Udeid to deliver weapons intended for the rebels located in Turkey and Jordan, and who, in turn, transport it to the Syrian Arab Republic (Borisov, 2014).

Although no data was retrieved about **Israel** from BBC, Al Jazeera portraits this state as one more aggressor and threat within Syrian land:

# Israel carries out air strikes in Syria, killing 10. Israeli warplanes bombed a series of targets inside Syria killing at least 10 Syrian troops and destroying an army command center (Al Jazeera English, 2014).

Even though Qatar is the only country in the Middle East that has cooperated with Israel since 1991, Al Jazeera still does not restrain itself from criticizing Israel's activity in Palestine as well as in the Syrian region. During times of high tension between Israel and the Palestinians, Qatar not only publicly criticized Israel, but also encouraged anti-Israel protests to take place in the country. The intifada of 2000 resulted in a significant deterioration in Qatari-Israeli ties. Despite this, relations between the two countries did not completely break off. For example, in May 2003, at Qatar's request, a conference of Israel's and Qatar's foreign ministers was arranged in Paris to discuss a "road map" for creating an Arab-Israeli peace. By maintaining connections with Israel, Qatar maintains its independence in the Arab world while simultaneously attempting to establish itself as a new regional political force (Tupov, 2009). However, criticism towards Israel in Al Jazeera can signify about the intentions of the channel not to lose its target audience and continue to maintain its status as one of the dominant media outlets in the Arab world.

**CONCLUSION**

In essence, information warfare never stops functioning; it is usually hidden and has no time limits. The ultimate goal is total control over the consciousness and behavior of vast groups of individuals, as well as the impact on the political system. The world's "cold wars" have grown in size and its political effectiveness has increased. At the same time, it's crucial to remember that the conflict and the tensions that preceded it are the outcome of more than just current politics." They are driven by political and historical background, customs, traditions, ethno-psychological and religious aspects of people's lives, as well as natural and climatic factors.

Information-psychological tactics of influence are becoming increasingly large-scale and politically efficient, which is why countries are increasingly applying them instead of physical wars to achieve their political goals. The role of mass media in psychological warfare also signifies the direction of the state's foreign policy and its perception of other states along with international issues worldwide. In other words, information warfare is a set of connections in which certain subjects aim to establish superiority over the opposing side by actively influencing the information sphere of other subjects with the aim to achieve their political goals (Gorbenko, 2008).

Answering the research question set out in the beginning of the work, it can be said that both Al Jazeera and BBC transmit “the reality” of the Syrian conflict according to the states’ foreign policies. The expectation of the channels’ target audience is also another factor which impacts the angle of news coverage. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, BBC and Al Jazeera presented actors involved in the conflict in the certain frames of coverage which were revealed by the author throughout the thesis. The usage of such methods help to comprehend the channel’s agendas and their position towards each actor engaged in the warfare. As the result, BBC is aimed to share the western values to the world community and remind once again about the importance of the great powers on international arena. Meanwhile, Al Jazeera challenges the superiority of these great powers and suggests the possibility of the rapid shift of powers in the future.

In its coverage of the Syrian war, the BBC frequently employs tactics of information blockade. The method supposes to conceal the vital information from the public. In this context, the media professionals perceive themselves as the primary supervisors and controllers of information dissemination. They have the authority to selectively present information, focusing primarily on the issues that they can take advantage of and the political forces that support them. The BBC can use metaprogramming technology - the manipulation of consciousness - to "fill the gap" in the dominant concepts and shift people's attitudes toward their country and leadership, thanks to the authority it has gained over many years of hard work. After examining a number of BBC news releases related to Syria's long-running conflict, it was discovered that the BBC reports also reveal one-sided coverage of the crisis (Katorgina, n.d.)

According to the data retrieved, it can be easily noticed that Al Jazeera frequently presents multiple points of view. Al-Jazeera, as a global Middle Eastern media outlet, pays close attention to what is going on in the region and, at times, launches an information confrontation based on its own or other preferences. The manipulation of consciousness is a method of information-psychological impact that this media actively applies in its coverage. Destructive criticism along with statements, combination of facts and assumptions, repetition of information are all examples of Al Jazeera's manipulation (Aksenov, 2016).

The comparative analysis conducted in the last chapter allowed the author to compare the two strategies of the Syrian conflict coverage between BBC and Al Jazeera and identify the key similarities and differences they have. The main outcome of the analysis indicated that the majority of actors involved in the conflict received different images of transmission from both channels. This was the result of political agendas with these countries that both BBC and Al Jazeera have on the international arena. As the data shows, both channels cover the human side of the conflict and blame the Russian troops and Syrian government for the deaths of civilians. While talking about the so-called ISIS group, Britain is concerned about British and European citizens involved in the terrorist organization; Al Jazeera on the other hand, does not apply the term “terrorism” to the group and avoids harsh criticism towards Islamic State. Iran is being criticized by the BBC while Al Jazeera builds a negative image of the United States in the eyes of its public. Britain gives privileges to Turkey while talking about victory and importance in the region; Qatar, on the other hand, prefers to give its space to opposition groups. While London says nothing about Israel’s involvement in the region, Doha portrays it as one more aggressor in the warfare.

To conclude, the "media language" is involved in the formation, expression, diffusion, and execution of specially produced opinions, judgements, assessments, stereotypes, and prejudices in the minds of representatives of the public, ethnic, social, and other target groups. As a result, media transmission is a powerful tool for manipulating public opinion, particularly during periods of increased armed conflict. Various ways of presenting information, careful choice of terminology applying negative or positive meaning to the context, photographic material, and suppressing issues that are unsuitable for publication are used to achieve the required cognitive effect. Reading such publications and viewing news programs causes a person to instinctively identify with one of the parties, portraying the other as an opponent (Esionov, n.d.).

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