Masterproef aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van het diploma Master of Arts in het **vertalen**

The Discourse of a Conflict: Critical Discourse Analysis of the Ideological Representation of the *Other* in Online News

Aljazeera and *Alarabiya* on the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*: a case study

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ACADEMIEJAAR 2017-2018

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Preface

First of all, I wish to explain a number of references that have been made in the *Literature Review*. As the present research discusses a current development in the Gulf region, i.e. the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, references have been made to a number of news reports. However, as this study intends to investigate the role of ideology in the news reports by *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya*, I decided to limit references to news reports by those two, yet selected the following networks: *BBC*, *Le Monde*, *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, *The New York Times*.

References to these networks have been made in the *Literature Review* and to verify the factual information offered by the corpus, as will become clear in the *Results* chapter. In addition, I consulted reports by independent organization such as *Freedom House* and the *Committee to Protect Journalists*. References to *Aljazeera* or *Alarabiya* in the *Literature Review* have been made only to discuss superficial and rather factual information.

Moreover, when referring to the blockading quartet in the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, I only used Saudi Arabia at times, for Saudi Arabia is regarded as one of the leading countries in the conflict and in the region. Furthermore, its state media network *Alarabiya* is the topic of investigation.

Concerning the corpus, I included the references to the selected articles at the end of the research. I did not refer to the articles in the *Results* or *Discussion* chapters, for that would occupy too much space and would be rather uncomfortable for the reader. In addition, I must add that all translations in the *Results* chapter are my own and indicate that translation is implied in the present research.

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ABSTRACT NEDERLANDS

Het Midden-Oosten is een onrustige regio die al decennia getroffen wordt door verschillende interregionale en internationale conflicten. In die conflicten botsen verschillende ideologieën voortdurend. Bovendien is het een regio waar de persvrijheid onder druk staat en waar veel mediakanalen gecontroleerd, gefinancierd of bestuurd worden door de staat.

In dit onderzoek wordt de rol van ideologie in het nieuwsdiscours van *Aljazeera* en *Alarabiya* onderzocht. De case die daarvoor werd gekozen is de online berichtgeving rond de *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, een diplomatiek conflict tussen Qatar enerzijds en Saoedi-Arabië, de Verenigde Arabische Emiraten, Bahrein en Egypte anderzijds. Aangezien zowel *Aljazeera* als *Alarabiya* gesponsord worden door respectievelijk Qatar en Saoedi-Arabië zal de analyse van de berichtgeving inzichten verschaffen in het conflict, als ook in de ideologie van beide kanten.

Die analyse gebeurt op drie verschillende niveaus: linguïstisch, discursief (naar de mechanismen achter de tekstproductie en -consumptie) en sociaal (naar de representatie van de sociale actoren). Daarvoor werd de *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) volgens Richardson gehanteerd, zoals uitgelegd in *Analysing Newspapers* (2007).

Centraal in het onderzoek staan de vragen hoe het conflict wordt voorgesteld door beide nieuwsnetwerken en in het bijzonder hoe de sociale actoren van het conflict worden voorgesteld (met de nadruk op de *andere*). Het corpus van de *critical discourse analysis* bestaat uit een selectie van acht artikels van beide nieuwsnetwerken over hetzelfde thema.

Uit het onderzoek kan worden besloten dat beide nieuwsnetwerken verschillende strategieën gebruikten in hun berichtgeving over de crisis, zoals: *hegemonisering*, *negatieve weergave van de ander*, *positieve weergave van zichzelf*, *roltoebedeling*, … De analyse geeft inzichten in de ideologie van beide kampen in het conflict en toont hoe beiden het conflict en elkaar anders voorstellen, in lijn met de ideologie van hun land.

Trefwoorden: ideologie, discours, *critical discourse analysis* (CDA), *discours van een conflict*, Qatar, Saoedi-Arabië, Midden-Oosten *Aljazeera*, *Alarabiya*, de *2017-18 GCC Crisis*.

ABSTRACT ENGLISH

The Middle East is a troubled region affected by various interregional and international conflicts for decades, in which different ideologies continuously clash. Moreover, it is a region where press freedom is at stake and many media are controlled, financed or managed by the state.

This research investigates the role of ideology in online news discourse by *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya*, concerning the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, a diplomatic conflict between Qatar on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt on the other. As both *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* are sponsored by respectively Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the analysis of the news reports will offer insights in the conflict and the ideology of both sides.

That analysis will cover three dimensions: linguistic, discursive (concerning the text production and consumption) and social (concerning the representation of the social actors). Therefore, the *critical discourse* (CDA) method according to Richardson was used, as explained in *Analysing Newspapers* (2007).

The representation of the conflict by both news networks and in particular the representation of the social actors of the conflict, are key to the present research. The corpus of the *critical discourse analysis* consists of eight articles by both news networks. Each set covers the same subject.

It can be concluded that both news networks used various strategies in their news reports on the crisis such as: *hegemonisation*, *negative other-presentation*, *positive self-presentation*, *role allocation*, … The analysis offers insights in the ideology of both sides in the conflict and shows how both sides construct the conflict and each other, in line with the ideology of their country.

Key words: ideology, discourse, *critical discourse analysis* (CDA), *discourse of a conflict*, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Middle East, *Aljazeera*, *Alarabiya*, the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*.

1   INTRODUCTION

When on the 5ᵗʰ of June 2017 Bahrain, Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates severed diplomatic ties with neighbouring country Qatar, a seemingly unresolvable crisis (the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*) started between these Arab countries threatening their cooperation within the Gulf region and the Middle East. The four countries accused Qatar of among others financing and supporting radical Islamist movements in the region. Consequently, several demands were imposed on Qatar which refused to accept them. As a result of a land, air and sea blockade, Iran and Turkey, among other countries, came to help by supplying food, medicine, etc.

In the bloc of Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be regarded as the major leader of the accusing party. As has been witnessed over the last two decades, the relations between Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been troubled for a longer period. Both countries have had previous non-military conflicts, such as in 2002 and 2014, which have illustrated that they have different agendas when it comes to regional politics.

A short glance at other recent developments shows that the Middle East, including the Gulf region, is a complex region, in which ideology and image creation play a key role between the various social actors. A number of conflicts have threatened and are threatening the whole region's stability and news media contribute to the (ideological) representation of these conflicts, which is of course not only the case in the Middle East. It is important to investigate the news media's role, for the news genre is considered "the primary language genre," as stated by Bell (1993, p. 1).

So far, Deslypere (2016) and Carpentier (2008) have, among others, investigated how conflicts in the Middle East have been constructed and represented by Western news media, especially concerning ideological elements. However, up to now little research has been conducted into the discursive construction of conflicts in the Middle East by Arabic news networks in Arabic.

The aim of the present qualitative research is to investigate how on the one hand Qatari and on the other Saudi online news media represent the *other* in their discursive construction of the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*. Two news networks with similar profiles were selected, one for each country: *Aljazeera* for Qatar and *Alarabiya* for Saudi Arabia.

The chosen methodology is *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) which aims to investigate how ideology influences the reports on the relation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. In order to give a representative comparative analysis of the media coverage on the relation between both, a considerable number of articles were selected. The next research questions have been formulated:

    A. How is the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* constructed in online news discourse?
        a. How is it constructed by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
        b. How is it constructed by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

B. How is the discursive construction of the *other* represented in online news covering the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*?
   a. How is Qatar represented by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
   b. How is Saudi Arabia represented by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

In such research on the discursive construction of a conflict, the representation of the *self* and the *other* play an important role in what is called the *ideological square*.

This research is subdivided into five chapters. In the first, a literature review on the various subjects of this paper is given covering the background of the GCC and the present crisis, the news genre, CDA and ideology. Subsequently, the methodology of the research is explained. In the third chapter, the results are being presented followed by the discussion and interpretation in the fourth. Finally, the conclusion will be given.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to fully understand the context of the present study, the background of its methodology and its main concepts, this *Literature Review* is composed of two main sections. The first section is concerned with discourse analysis, power and ideology in the news media. The second section provides a literature review on the *Gulf Cooperation Council*; its establishment, developments and former crises. Also, the media landscape of the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA region) is discussed in the second section, as well as the profile of *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* and their role in the media landscape of the MENA region.

2.1 Ideology in discourse

First, a number of concepts concerning discourse and ideology will be discussed in detail. These concepts are necessary to discuss the *discourse of a conflict*, which will be explained at the end of this first part of the *Literature Review*.

2.1.1 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a relatively new domain in the analysis of text, discourse and language. It is not in the scope of the present research to discuss the roots and origin of CDA (the reference list can be of use for further reading), however what follows is a brief overview of the major concepts of CDA.

In *Discourse, of course*, Van Leeuwen (2009) indicates that CDA "is based on the idea that text and talk play a key role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice and oppression in society" (p. 277). In that definition, there are a number of concepts that will be expanded on later, yet first and foremost it is important to investigate the name of the discipline in order to understand it better. It can be said that CDA is the analysis of a certain type of discourse aimed to express critique at the discourse, the producers of the discourse or the social change it brings about.

2.1.1.1 Discourse

First of all, the "object of critique" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 7) of CDA is discourse. As this is a rather abstract concept, some more concrete features of discourse will be discussed. In *Discourse studies: a multidisciplinary introduction*, Van Dijk (2011) gives a brief overview of the essential properties of *discourse*, of which the ones most relevant to this study will be discussed.

Van Dijk (2011) regards *discourse as a social interaction* as one of the most essential features of discourse. He argues that "it is this fundamental interactional dimension of discourse that defines the basis of the social order of human societies" (p. 3). Also Fairclough (2015), who describes discourse as language as "a social practice determined by social structures" (p. 8), states that discourse has a certain place in and influence on society. That is because language is a "socially conditioned process,

conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic) parts of society" (p. 56). However, the relationship between language and society is not external, which means that there is not a relationship between them; Fairclough (2015) states that there is a dialectical relationship. That means that discourse (partly) constructs society, while it is itself constructed by society.

> Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are* (in part) linguistic phenomena. (p. 56)

Van Dijk (2011) links the first feature with *discourse as power and domination*, stating that while discourse constructs the social order, which is controlled by power and power abuse, the discourse itself is also controlled by power relations and power abuse.

The third fundamental property of discourse is *discourse as communication*, with which Van Dijk (2011) describes that "one of the main goals of interaction by text and talk is the expression and communication of beliefs among language users" (p. 4).

Furthermore, he states that "discourse is contextually situated", "part of a social situation", and describes it as a "complex, layered construct", "integrating the three major dimensions of natural languages: Form or Expression (sounds, visuals, words, phrases, etc.), Meaning and Action" (p. 4).

The three first mentioned properties of discourse (i.e. social interaction, power and domination, and communication) are of great significance within the study of media discourse in particular. In addition, the sociolinguistic character of these features indicates the relevance of the study of CDA and media discourse to the field of sociolinguistics. If we have a look at the description of sociolinguistics by Encyclopaedia Britannica we find that sociolinguistics "concerns itself with the part language plays in maintaining the social roles in a community". In research, "sociolinguists attempt to isolate those linguistic features that are used in particular situations and that mark the various social relationships among the participants and the significant elements of the situation" (Sociolinguistics, n.d.).

As there are numerous types of discourse it is important to investigate the characteristic features of media discourse, for the present research investigates the role of ideology in that type of discourse.

In *The Language of News Media*, A. Bell (1996) states that media discourse is probably our main source of language. Media discourse is a discourse that addresses mass audiences, produces millions of words every day and can thus exert a substantial influence. That is particularly the case for the news genre, which is considered by Bell (1996) as "the primary language genre" (p. 1).

For this reason of influence media discourse proved to be an important aspect of discourse studies, as Kong (2009) discusses in *Discourse, of course* by Renkema:

> The first reason is the easy accessibility of media discourse. Second, the use of media
> "influences and represents people's use of and attitude towards language in a speech

community." (Garret & Bell, 1998) Third, many social and cultural stereotypes and meanings are projected and constructed through language. (Kong, 2009, 253)

It becomes clear that media discourse and news media in particular have an undeniable social and cultural influence, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.1.1.2 Critical

Secondly, CDA intends to be critical; to approach a certain type of discourse in a critical way, to express critique. Furthermore, it intends to express critique on the institution responsible for the discourse. In that prospect, as Fairclough (2015) writes, CDA is "not just critique of discourse, but also explanation of how it relates to other elements of the existing reality" (p. 6), again indicating the value of CDA within the field of sociolinguistics. The critical analysis of a discourse and its explanation can form the base for the discourse to change.

2.1.1.3 Analysis

Thirdly, CDA is an analysis of discourse in a critical way. There are various ways in which CDA is being done and foremost, there are various domains with which CDA is being practised, as can be seen in Wodak's definition of CDA. She defined it as a "problem-oriented interdisciplinary research programme, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agendas" (2013, p. 38). Critical linguistics, social semiotics, the relational-dialectic approach, socio-cognitive studies and discourse-historical approach are a number of the various domains to which CDA relates in its analysis of discourse.

Now that the domain of CDA and discourse has been introduced, there still are a number of concepts that have not yet been touched upon. However, they deserve to be discussed in greater detail for they are of major importance for the study of CDA and the present research.

2.1.2 Power, identity politics and social change

To explain and situate the above concepts in the study of CDA, a description of CDA by Ruth Wodak will be expounded. Wodak (2013) stated that there are various approaches to CDA and that "what unites [them] is a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, identity politics and political-economic or cultural change in society" (p. 38). In this description a number of interesting concepts concerning CDA can be found which will be discussed next in the context of media discourse.

First of all, there is the concept of *power*. CDA focusses on "unequal relations of power which underlie ways of talking in a society, challenging socio-political dominance", as stated by Bell and Garrett (1998, p. 6). Thus, the producers of a certain discourse are proven to be in a position of power over the consumers.

Mass-media are the outstanding example of a discourse in which "the nature of the power relations enacted in it is often not clear, and there are reasons for seeing it as involving *hidden* relations of power" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 78). Fairclough (2015) substantiates that by stating that the *one-sidedness* of media discourse – the fact that there is only one producer in contrast to for example conversational discourse – makes that "there is a sharp divide between producers and interpreters" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 78). Also, the fact that the target audiences of mass-media are large audiences makes sure that the power relations constructed in media discourse are different from other power relations in discourse. The media producers produce media discourse for an *ideal subject* which represents their intended audience the most. Consumers, as Fairclough (2015) says, "have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject" (p. 78). Moreover, the producers can decide what to include, what to exclude and how to represent the events, as Fairclough (2015) indicates. Yet, who are the players that exercise the power in a media product? As is known, "journalists work under editorial control" (p. 79), so the news network/newspaper/news agency actually defines which content is included and excluded, which sources are being referred to and how the reports are being framed.

Secondly, CDA investigates the relation between media and politics which interpenetrate, according to Weischenberg (1995). With regard to that relation, two concepts deserve more elaboration: on the one hand identity politics (national imagery and propaganda), and on the other the representation of political crises in news discourse.

The media have become one of the ways for politicians, political parties and the state, to spread their ideas, beliefs, stances and opinions. In most Western countries, the media – in general – attempt to be a platform for all voices in a society. However, in the case of *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya*, which are both state media, the news network can be used as a platform for the state to spread its ideas and national image. A well-known strategy of state media is *hegemonisation*: the state media attempt to construct a hegemonised, stable image of the state in contrast with an unstable image of other entities – such as antagonistic entities. Therefore, the concepts *self* and *other* can be used. Carpentier (2008) reasons that one of the major strategies for (partly) creating hegemony within the own identity and constructing dichotomy between the *self* and the *other*, is propaganda. Taylor (1995) gives a definition for propaganda in his work *Munitions of the Mind* in which he states that propaganda serves the self-interests of the people spreading the discourse. This relation between media and politics will be investigated further later in the research.

Concerning the representation of political crises, Don, Lean and Fernandez (2013) state that the way in which "crisis events are represented provides a good insight into the values and preoccupations of a culture, and the kind of reality the newspapers are trying to construct in the minds of their readers" (p. 436). That is why in the present research the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* is the subject of research, so that it can be investigated which reality *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* try to construct.

Thirdly, the actual subject of research in CDA is political-economic and social change in society. CDA, which originated in Critical Linguistics, started to analyse language not only on a formal level, yet also

used it to express social critique. Van Leeuwen (2009) points out that "different uses of one and the same language can perhaps also encode different "patterns of experience" – and different ideologies" (p. 280). Furthermore, it is through discourse that political-economic and cultural change in society is being realized, as can be seen in political discourse, with politicians discussing policy on television, or in media discourse, with journalists and scholars discussing socially significant topics. These types of discourse can cause change in society.

However, the one concept that Wodak (2013) did not explicitly include in her description is the notion of ideology. Nonetheless, it is of considerable importance to the study of CDA, the news media and the present study.

2.1.3   Ideology

If one reads a news article or analyses a TV programme, he/she is likely to come across a number of opinions and ideologically based statements, maybe even without noticing. It is generally accepted that media discourse expresses opinions, yet it is important to understand how these opinions are being expressed and structured.

Ideology is omni-present in society, discourse and language. However, as Van Dijk (1998) points out, it is "one of the most elusive notions in the social sciences" (p. 23). Therefore, a number of essential features of ideology will be discussed in this section.

Ideology is frequently defined as "the common beliefs, assumptions and opinions of a determinate group" (Montgomery, 2013, p. 215). A concrete example of ideology can be found in previous research on ideology in news discourse by Carpentier (2008): one of the beliefs the US spread during the 2003 US-Iraq War was that Iraq belong to the "axis of evil" (p. 34). Also the assumption that Iraq was in the possession of weapons of mass-destruction WMD was part of the ideology at that time.

In *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Van Dijk (1998) discusses three main components of ideology: the social functions, the cognitive structures, and the discursive expression and reproduction.

The main social function of an ideology is, as assumed by Van Dijk (1998), "the co-ordination of the social practices of group members for the effective realization of the goals of a social group, and the protection of its interests" (1998, p. 24). In the case of this research, the groups are on the one hand Qatar and on the other Saudi Arabia. Other functions that are mentioned are sustaining, legitimizing and managing of group conflicts and relationships of power and dominance.

The cognitive structures of an ideology are the cognitive contents and strategies that are reflected in the ideology's social functions. "What people do as group members should reflect what they think as group members, and vice versa" (1998, p. 24). A significant aspect of these cognitive structures is the representation of the *self* and the *other*. In this construction, ideologies on the one hand "reflect the basic criteria that constitute the social identity and define the interests of a group" (1998, p.25), and on the

other reflect the basic criteria for not being part of a group. Some examples of these basic criteria are membership, activities, goals, values, position and resources.

Yet, how are the social functions and cognitive structures of ideology expressed in (news) discourse? Van Dijk (1998) explains the missing link between ideology and discourse as follows: "Ideologies organize specific group attitudes; these attitudes may be used in the formation of personal opinions as represented in models; and these personal opinions may finally be expressed in text and talk" (p.27). Van Dijk suggests some ways in which opinions and expressions of ideology occur in the various discursive dimensions. There is, among others, the choice of lexical items, propositions, implications and presuppositions. Also the choice of sources for references in the discourse can indicate the ideology behind the text production.

As this research investigates the news discourse, the next part will offer insight in the concrete role of ideology in the news. Moreover, the concepts discussed in 2.1.2. will be explained further.

2.1.3.1 Ideology in the news

As has been indicated earlier and as a result of the *hidden power* of mass-media (discussed in 2.1.), news producers dispose of a strong and useful tool in conveying ideological stances, views and opinions. Besides, previous research, by for example Carpentier (2008), has shown that ideology plays an important role in news articles, programmes and investigations.

When discussing the notion of ideology and its influence on news discourse, terms such as partiality, bias, framing and representation are frequently used. Most research in the field of media studies agree that all news is biased, which is a description of the situation and not necessarily a point of critic, as Fowler (1991) suggests. "What is being said is that, because the institutions of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle." (p. 10)

But why is the press and the news genre such a crucial factor in the (re)production of ideology? Fowler (1991) discusses this with regard to the newspaper industry, however it is assumed that the same applies to other news media such as online news articles. He assigns the important role the news genre plays to the fact that news is widely published and that "the economic and political circumstances of the newspaper industry give it a vested interest in mediating ideas from particular perspectives" (p. 122). I would like to add that nowadays, with the "internetization" of the news genre, news reports are also very easy to access, at low cost or for free, which makes that the media's role in (re)producing ideology and opinion only increased. As many people consult and use the news media on a daily basis, it becomes a fitting strategy to convey opinions and ideological interpretations.

However, in the present research the distributors of the news articles (*Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya*) are both media networks financially supported by the respectively Qatari and Saudi state. In that case, the cognitive structures and social functions represented by the news discourse are derived from the

opinions backed by the regime. Thereby, it is assumed that the stances of both countries on the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* and towards each other will be represented in the news articles covering the crisis. It is therefore important to understand the relation between the state and the media – in general and in the Qatari and Saudi case.

Witte (2002) explains that following the pluralist school in media studies, the media (so not only state media) are regarded as participating "in realizing a consensus, in maintaining stability and in operating the process of socialization and integration" (2002, p. 65). In this traditional view on the relation between media and the authorities, the media channels in a society are seen as a representation of all ideas, representations, behaviours and actions of all the groups in that society. However, does this also count for the state media?

In general, state media are required to represent all groups in society, in order to gain loyalty and trust from the authorities (Witte, 2002, p. 91). Yet it is self-evident in the case of *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera*, which are subsidized by the Saudi and Qatari state, that they (have to) represent the regime's stance, in order for the financial support to continue. That implies that news published by state media is even more well-considered, as described by Fowler (1991): "The media do not simply and transparently report events which are 'naturally' newsworthy *in themselves*. 'News' is the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories" (p. 12). That means that when a social actor is in conflict with another social actor, the *discourse of the conflict* will be constructed based on ideological considerations.

2.1.3.2 The discourse of a conflict

In *Discourse Theory and Cultural Analysis*, N. Carpentier (2008) discusses the construction of the *self* and the *other* or *enemy* in the context of the US-Iraq War in 2003. The discussion of the discourse analysis of this conflict – however different in nature – is in my opinion also applicable for non-violent conflicts such as a diplomatic conflict, an economic embargo, … The research by Carpentier mainly focusses on the construction of a *discourse of a conflict*, i.e. how the various parties and developments of a conflict are represented in (media) discourse. In 1986, S. Keen described this construction in *Faces of the Enemy* as the following:

> In the beginning we create the enemy. Before the weapon comes the image. We think others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them. (p. 10)

Hereafter follows an overview of the players, features and techniques of the *discourse of a conflict*. As the present research investigates two state-sponsored media networks, I will limit the discussion of the social actors to that case.

When a certain country, (political) organisation or group is involved in a conflict, media and news organizations are a vital tool for spreading information about the developments. That is because, as has

been said before, the news is considered to be "the primary language genre" (Bell, 1993, p. 1), and as such (one of) the main tool(s) to convey a message to a public.

Carpentier (2008) says that the state is one of the "groups of actors", which "tend to play a vital role in the hegemonisation of these discourses" (p. 31-32). The state "includes governments, parliaments, political parties, advisory bodies and, last but not least, the military" (p.32). In order to legitimaze hegemonic policies, the state must appeal to the "home front" for support (p. 32).

This means we can – in a simplified representation of the GCC crisis, i.e. one state against another, which both use one news network – distinguish at least four active players: state A, news network A, state B and news network B – i.e. Qatar and *Aljazeera*, and Saudi-Arabia and *Alarabiya*.

Next, N. Carpentier (2008) discusses the characteristics of the construction of a *discourse of conflict* and two or more conflicting social actors. First of all, it should be considered that the discursive entities, as counts for discourse as such too, "remain contingent, undecidable, and subject to practices of rearcticulation" (p. 30). During the conflict, discourse can change, omit certain aspects, emphasize other, in short: reshape and reconstruct the *discourse of a conflict*.

The second important aspect is *social antagonism*. "All actors involved attempt to destabilize the identity of "the other," but at the same time desperately need that "other" as a constitutive outside stabilizing their own identity" (p.30).

As a result of the second aspect, the third notion in the analysis of a conflict is *hegemony*. For in a conflict, both parties attempt to disorder the "other" discourse and to hegemonise the "own". "These discourses need to present themselves as coherent, almost impenetrable discursive entities" (p. 31).

Additionally, *dichotomy* is a key aspect of the construction of discursive entities in the analysis of a conflict, also called *binary oppositions* (p. 31). Carpentier (2008) states that "the construction of the enemy is accompanied by the construction of the identity of the *self* as clearly antagonistic to the enemy's identity" (p. 31).

Those four notions should be taken into consideration when investigating the construction of the *self* and the *other* in a *discourse of conflict*. Research in media studies so far has investigated this construction in several cases, as Carpentier (2008) – and many others – did with the 2003 US-Iraq War and Deslypere (2016) with the Syrian Civil War.

One of the central concepts used to concretely represent the ideological structure of conflicts is the *ideological model* (also called the *ideological square*) – of which an elaborate example can be found in *Discourse Theory and Cultural Analysis* by Carpentier and Spinoy (2008) on p. 35. In such a scheme, the ideological representation of both the *self* and the *enemy* is depicted in relation to other entities and

the links between them. Following is a simplified representation of the *ideological model*, and its key concepts.

	Self	Other
Foreground	Positive characteristics	Negative characteristics
Background	Negative characteristics	Positive characteristics

Richardson (2007) refers to Van Dijk who says that the *ideological square* is characterised by two main elements: *positive self-presentation* and *negative other-presentation*. Actions by one's own side of the conflict will be represented positively, and the positive characteristics will be emphasized. By contrast, the other side will be depicted negatively, and the negative consequences of its actions will be highlighted. Additionally – as suggested by van Dijk – two other techniques are used in constructing the *ideological square* of a conflict, namely *foregrounding* and *backgrounding*. With *foregrounding* is meant that the negative consequences of the actions of the *other* will be highlighted as well as the positive characteristics of the *self*. *Backgrounding* means neglecting any positive developments on the side of the *other*, and the negative aspects of the *self*. These concepts, however, are not incorporated in the *ideological model* by Carpentier (2008).

So far, the several properties of the entities in a *discourse of conflict* have been discussed, however it should be investigated which concrete techniques are being used to construct them. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss the chosen methodology. Before that, the next section of this *Literature Review* will give an insight in the context of this research – i.e. the *Gulf Cooperation Council* and its ongoing crisis. Additionally, the media landscape in the MENA region and the chosen news networks *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* will be discussed.

2.2   The Gulf Cooperation Council and its 2017 crisis

In the beginning of June 2017, a diplomatic conflict developed between Qatar and three other member states of *The Gulf Cooperation Council* (GCC), which is a union between Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The official name of this allegiance is *The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf*, however Gulf Cooperation Council, which is its original name, is still commonly used. On June 5th 2017, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (and Egypt) accused Qatar of financing terrorism. Another major cause for the present crisis is the enhancing Qatar-Iran relationship, the two countries that share the world's largest gas field ("Qatar crisis: what you need to know," 2017). Since the beginning of this *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, tensions have risen and few steps have been taken to settle the conflict. However, to understand the ongoing crisis it is important to comprehend the founding of the Council, its institutions, its aims and the developments in the conflict until this point.

2.2.1   Founding

The GCC was founded in 1981 as a reaction to several developments in the region including: the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Iran-Iraq war (between 1980 and 1988), Israel-Egypt relationships and Cold War developments. In addition, the failing of the Arab League and the similarity of the member states' economic, political and social nature are some of the reasons for the establishment of the GCC.

As mentioned above, it is a union of six countries located in the Arab Peninsula, which is, as Naheem (2017) states, "an important and integral part of maintaining economic and social stability in the Arabian Gulf" (p. 265). The British online Encyclopaedia Britannica states that the purpose of the union is "to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities, which are rooted in Islamic beliefs" (Gulf Cooperation Council, n.d.).

2.2.2   Objectives

The objectives of the GCC are formulated in Article 4 of *The Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council*:

The basic objectives of the Cooperation Council are:

- To effect coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them.
- To deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing between their peoples in various fields.
- To formulate similar regulations in various fields including the following:
  - Economic and financial affairs
  - Commerce, customs and communications
  - Education and culture

- To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; to establish scientific research; to establish joint ventures and encourage cooperation by the private sector for the good of their peoples. (The Charter, n.d.)

It can be concluded that the main objective (in a rather general way) is unifying Gulf countries' policies on a number of fields (economy, military, politics, infrastructure, culture, …). Yet how has this been achieved up to now? And how will the GCC continue to achieve the cooperation in the future? In order to understand the specific aims of the GCC better, the following overview will link the objectives to the main developments and achievements of the GCC up to now and attempt to give a rough sketch of its future aspirations.

Firstly, one of the main objectives of the GCC is of an economic nature. Part of this is the "close cooperation of trade" (Naheem, 2017, p. 271) between the GCC countries, which originated mainly in the 1990s oil crisis. This trade integration caused internal economic growth for both the member states and the GCC as a whole. Another positive development in this regard is the creation of a customs union in 2008, enhancing and empowering intra-GCC trade, which resulted in a stronger position for the GCC in the world economy, as explained by Naheem (2017) with statistics of the World Bank 2017.

As Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE possessed roughly 40% of the OPEC crude oil reserves (which is 81.5% of the world reserves) at the end of 2016, oil trade undoubtedly is the GCC's economy major product of export (OPEC Share of World Crude Oil Reserves 2016, n.d.). Nonetheless, it is part of the GCC's ambition to not depend solely on the oil industry.

Another major accomplishment is the creation of a free single market between member states. Moreover, since 2009 steps have been taken to introduce a common, single currency, similar to the Euro of the European Union. However, up to now, this has not been accomplished, as Oman and the UAE have withdrawn from participation in this goal.

In a study by EY (2016), a firm that offers professional service, it is suggested that the GCC might become the world's sixth' biggest economy by 2030, on the condition that it becomes a single market and maintains its annual GDP growth of 3.2% up until 2030 (Strength in unity: making the GCC the sixth largest economy in the world, 2016).

Secondly, the GCC forms a political union between six a-like states in a troubled region. Several conflicts have threatened the region and its stability since the GCC's foundation in 1981, including: the Iran-Iraq war, the war in Afghanistan, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, war or troubles in Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and Palestine, the Syrian civil war, the 2003 US-Iraq war, the Yemeni civil war, … This constant threat demands political cooperation to secure the member states' stability. The Arab uprisings in 2011 and later developments too urged the six member states to work together towards a stable Gulf region.

Thirdly, the alliance has defence aspirations, although they are not explicitly mentioned in *The Charter*. However, we can conclude, considering the developments so far, that the GCC attempts to establish a security and military alliance. There is for example the 1991 military support for Kuwait, as a reaction to Iraq's invasion of the member state, whose "speed and unanimity" was mentioned by Barnett and Gause (1998, p. 180). Also, Oman's proposal at the beginning of the establishment is a clear example of how it has been the GCC's initial objective to secure military cooperation. The proposal concerned the creation of a common naval force securing the Straits of Hormuz, between the UAE and Iran.

Other aspirations are cooperation on various fields, including: technology, infrastructure, education, culture, and the private sector.

2.2.3 Earlier crises or conflicts

For this growing economic, political and military cooperation institution, it is clear that internal crises will not only affect member states but also exert an influence on economic relations between the GCC (member states) and third parties, on political stability in an already troubled region and on the already established (military) alliances in the Middle-East.

So far, the GCC has known a number of diplomatic crises between two or more member states of the union, as for example in 2002 between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, when Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador from Doha until 2008, when the crisis was resolved. It can be said that the rivalry between Qatar and Saudi Arabia (and other Gulf countries) originated in the 1995 coup in Qatar by sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, ousting his father from the throne. The new Emir of Qatar started with the modernization of Qatar, which irritated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Miles (2005) explained: "With its new democracy and constitution, Qatar has underlined Saudi Arabia's backwardness" (p.20). It is suggested that this envy has led to a number of irritations on both sides.

However, one crisis in particular has been of a greater influence on the mutual relationships between the Gulf countries: the *2014 GCC Crisis*. The *2014 GCC Crisis* is rather similar to the present crisis, as will be indicated later on. In a dossier, published by *Aljazeera Center for Studies*, Hassan (2014) describes this crisis by saying:

> It seriously threatened the GCC's activities, adversely affected its functioning and could arguably even have led to its dissolution. (p. 79-80)

In March 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE (not coincidentally the same member states as in the present crisis), withdrew their ambassadors from Doha. This step was taken as a reaction to Qatar's support for uprisings and radical Islamist movements in Arab countries such as Egypt and Yemen in the aftermath of the Arab Spring protests across the Arab World. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, gained popularity in Egypt and was supported by Qatar. The three aforementioned states argued that this support severely clashed with the GCC states' interests in the region, and therefore withdrew their ambassadors from Doha, which, following Hassan (2014), "represented a kind of political censure,

urging Doha to stop acting in ways that conflicted with the interests of other GCC states" (p. 81). Also, Qatar was accused of "harbouring "hostile media", referring to the Doha-based Al Jazeera" ("Timeline of Qatar-GCC disputes from 1991 to 2017," 2017).

Doha subsequently stated it would attempt to maintain good relationships with the GCC states, although it continued supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. Steps between Saudi-Arabia and Qatar were taken to resolve the crisis, however the UAE maintained a rather hostile position towards Qatar and its alleged support for Islamic movements. Kuwaiti leaders attempted to settle the crisis, in order for the union not to fall apart.

After eight months of negligible progress in solving the conflict, an agreement, referred to as the *Riyadh Supplementary Agreement*, was reached issuing the return of the ambassadors to Doha. This agreement was achieved under pressure of regional conflicts (the rise of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the Yemeni War and developing negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 states), and the need for a strong, unified response to them.

Although there was an agreement, it became clear that "the GCC was probably already on the verge of a crisis linked to the emergence of distinct political blocs with conflicting interests", as Hassan (2014, p. 82) points out. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE on the one hand, and Qatar on the other, became distinctively divided on several issues, including the Mursi presidency in Egypt and the Houthi rebel uprising in Yemen. The two remaining member states, Oman and Kuwait, have been meddling between the two blocs, and therefore represent a non-aligned bloc.

This 2014 crisis was considered a possible threat to the peace and cooperation in the region, with the possibility of the collapse of the union or an exit of one or more of the member states from the union. Up to June 2017, the six member states have managed to work together, however a new crisis was not unthinkable.

2.2.4   The 2017-18 GCC Crisis

In the current crisis, we can remark several similarities with the 2014 crisis, however also a number of differences will be discussed. This section sets out the different players in the crisis, its causes, the demands imposed on Qatar and the role of the media.

2.2.4.1   Players in the crisis

As for the momentarily ongoing crisis, the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*, the same aforementioned blocs can be noticed: Qatar on the one hand; Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other hand; and the non-aligned bloc Kuwait and Oman mediating between the two main blocs. On June 5th 2017, the second bloc (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) severed all diplomatic ties to Qatar and enlisted a number of accusations. It imposed several other sanctions and boycotts, which will be covered later in this chapter.

However, in this crisis, even more neighbouring countries became involved, such as Egypt. Although Egypt is not a member state of the GCC, it also severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed a number of sanctions on the country, along with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Egypt's participation can be understood in light of the improving relationship between Cairo and Riyadh. After that, more than ten other countries such as Yemen, the Maldives, Senegal and Libya's eastern-based government followed.

Finally, there are three other players worth mentioning: Iran, Turkey and the US. Iran and Turkey have supported Qatar since the sanctions and boycotts were in force. Especially after the air, land and sea blockade was imposed on Qatar, Ankara and Tehran helped Qatar. The US finds itself in a troublesome position. The improving relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia since the Trump administration is considered to be one of the causes of the crisis. However, the US still has the strategically important Al-Udeid air base located in Qatar, from which it carries out its foreign policy and part of its military operations in the region, for example in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Gordon, Yadlin and Heistein (2017), explain that "the US does not have obvious alternatives to al-Udeid" (p. 4).

Also, the US stance towards the crisis is unclear, with various comments by President Trump, former US Secretary of State Tillerson and US Secretary of State Pompeo. Former US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited the Gulf region in an attempt to encourage the Gulf states to gather and discuss the conflict, according to an article by CNN (No breakthrough in Gulf crisis as Tillerson extends trip, 2017). President Donald Trump's reaction on the unfolding conflict was discussed by the BBC as follows: "Earlier, he [Trump] said the Saudis' move to isolate Qatar could mark the "beginning of the end to the horror of terrorism"" (Qatar row: Trump urges Arab unity in call to Saudi Arabia's King Salman, 2017). However, Trump also urged for unity in the Gulf region in a call to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. On the 10th of April 2018, the Emir of Qatar visited the White House and held talks with US President Trump, in which Trump expressed his support for Qatar. Also new US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, appointed in March 2018 after the dismissal of Rex Tillerson, visited the Gulf region in April 2018, stating that "enough is enough" (Pompeo's Message to Saudis? Enough Is Enough: Stop Qatar Blockade, 2018), and that he urges "the Saudis and their neighbors to resolve a festering dispute with Qatar" (Pompeo says US stands with Israelis, Saudis against Iran, 2018).

2.2.4.2 Causes

Not only the same blocs can be found, the present crisis is also similar to the earlier *2014 GCC Crisis* in terms of causes and accusations. After the crisis in 2014, it became clear that Qatar pursues a foreign policy different from the one of its neighbours, which again played a role in the present crisis. In *The Qatar Crisis: Causes, Implications, Risks, and the Need for Compromise*, Gordon et al. (2017) list up four major causes for the present crisis:

The first and main allegation made towards Qatar in this crisis, is "Doha's funding of and political support for politically active and sometimes violent Islamist groups, often affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood" (p. 2). This is the same accusation as has been made three years earlier, by the same bloc, which indicates that the GCC has not yet fully restored from the crisis in 2014. In an article from the BBC on the GCC crisis, Robbins (2017) describes that by using the following metaphor:

> Sometimes the recipe for a dispute says "leave to simmer". This one has been simmering for years. But then suddenly some of the cooks increase the heat substantially and dispute boils over into full-blown crisis. (9th of June 2017)

In light of the recent developments in the MENA region, it has become clear that the Qatari stance towards political Islam is fairly different from, for example, the Saudi stance, as could be seen during the popular uprising in 2011 and the power struggle in 2013 Egypt. Before and after the election of Muhammad Mursi, Qatar openly supported the Muslim Brotherhood, while Saudi Arabia backed "the traditional military-political establishment" (Gordon et al., 2017, p. 3).

The second major factor for this diplomatic rift is, as mentioned before, the growing diplomatic relationship between Qatar and Iran. Developments in this field are: Qatar "voting against a UNSC resolution calling on Iran to halt its nuclear enrichment program" (Gordon et al., 2017, p. 2), both countries' growing economic cooperation as the two share the world's largest gas field, and Qatari financial support for Iran-backed militant groups. Also, Iran and Qatar reached an agreement on counterterrorism. Not only the growing alliance with Iran, but also with Turkey is what concerns the Saudi-led bloc. Qatar and Turkey have alike stances on several issues in the region, such as their attitude towards Iran, which oppose the Saudi stance. Additionally, Qatar and Turkey have set up a number of trade deals over the past few years, including arms deals.

Thirdly, Gordon et al. (2017) discussed the Arab springs as being a cause of the tense relationship between Qatar and the other GCC member states. The different players in the MENA region backed different groups and this resulted in peculiar and risky power constructions. For instance, in Syria, Riyadh supported Jaysh al-Islam, while Doha backed its direct enemy Faylaq al-Rahman. Also in Egypt (with the Qatari support for the Muslim Brotherhood and the Saudi support for incumbent president al-Sisi) and Libya it became clear that both blocs have opposite interests and offer support to rivalling parties.

The fourth ground for the crisis is the influence Donald Trump's visit to Riyadh has had on the political situation in the region. The American president emphasized his "unqualified commitment to Riyadh and its allies in the region, with a focus on containing Iran and fighting against radical Islam" (p. 3). Gordon et al. (2017) argued that the three GCC members and Egypt regarded this commitment as a justification for their punishment of Qatar, while they could in the meantime "please their allies in Washington, and remove attention from their own shortcomings and challenges" (p. 4).

In general, it becomes clear that Doha's ambitions in the region diverge from those of Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the one hand, and meet with those of Iran and Turkey on the other. Next, the demands and sanctions of the crisis will be discussed, in order to understand the possible impact of this conflict.

2.2.4.3 Demands, boycotts and sanctions

In June 2017, the four accusing countries did not only sever ties with Doha, they also presented Qatar with a list of 13 demands. These demands, published in English by *Associated Press* (AP) of which a number will be discussed, match the accusations made against Qatar.

Saudi Arabia and its allies for example demand from Qatar to end military and diplomatic relations with Iran. Economic and trade relations can be maintained if they comply "with U.S. and international sanctions" (List of demands on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, other Arab nations, 2017). Also, it was demanded to end Turkish military presence in Qatar, and the relation with and funding of Islamist movements was to be shut down. Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood were to be officially recognized by Qatar as terrorist groups.

Concerning Qatari media networks; Manama, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Cairo demanded the "shut-down [of] Al-Jazeera and its affiliate stations" (List of demands on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, other Arab nations, 2017). As Gordon et al. (2017) state, "Qatar's use of the government-owned media outlet Al-Jazeera to magnify the Muslim Brotherhood's influence throughout the Arab world and criticize leaders in Riyadh, Cairo, and Abu Dhabi has long been a serious thorn in regional relations" (p. 2). The shutdown did not only target *Aljazeera*, but also the Qatari-funded news organizations *Arabi21*, *Middle East Eye*, *Al Araby Al-Jadeed*, and *Rassd*. However, *Aljazeera*'s case got more attention for it is (arguably) the region's most influential news outlet, as will be discussed further.

Other demands concerned the coordination of Qatari and Saudi, Emirati, Bahraini and Egyptian foreign policies and internal affairs. Qatar had ten days to comply with the list of demands, but refused to do so, which led to a stalemate in the contacts with its neighbours.

The refusal to comply with the demands led to (the maintaining of) a number of boycotts and sanctions imposed on Qatar by the Saudi-led bloc, such as the closing of their airspace to Qatari flights. As Qatar is surrounded by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia, and the UAE in the North, West, and South, it is beyond doubt that this has had a major impact on Doha's *Hamad International Airport* and *Qatar Airways*, which was forced to cancel or reroute flights to a great number of destinations.

In addition, Saudi Arabia has closed Qatar's only land border, which had consequences for Qatar's import, as an estimate of 40% of Qatar's food is imported via this border with Saudi Arabia. To solve this problem, Qatar could count on support from Iran and Turkey among other countries, which supplied Qatar's food market by sea and air. Moreover, diplomatic relations between the three have grown, as

well as economic and military cooperation, as "Turkey is considering enhancing its limited military presence in Qatar as a demonstration of solidarity and deterrent" (Gordon et al., 2017, p. 5).

For the present research, one particular demand requires further investigation; the demand concerning the shutdown of Qatari international news outlet *Aljazeera*. This media organization has long been a point of contention between Qatar and other countries in the region and has already played a role in former crises between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, like in 2002. However, in order to understand the case of *Aljazeera* in the present conflict, we first have to take a look at the greater picture of the media landscape in the MENA region.

2.2.5 News media in the Gulf and the MENA region

In general, the MENA region has a difficult relation with (news) media and journalism. In a number of countries, press freedom and freedom of speech are and have been threatened by government policy.

The MENA region has a long history of state-controlled media, starting with the printed newspapers. Radio and satellite television became increasingly popular during the 20th century, as a result of the high illiteracy rates. In addition, more local newspapers were established. However, the plurality of media in the MENA region does not imply that press freedom is respected, as Miles (2005) explains:

> The problem with this abundance of media was that it was all controlled either by a Minister of Information or by the financial backers. (p. 24)

As a result, a lot of the coverage was reserved for "the shaking of hands, kissing of babies and cutting of ribbons" with the Sheikh, Emir or President in a leading role (Miles, 2005, p. 24). Moreover, the images the state media spread about their respective financers or owners tended to be unrealistic and untruthful as happened in Egypt in 2004 for example. In 2004, Egypt competed in the bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, together with Morocco and South Africa. In a report on Egyptian state television, the Minister of Youth and Culture "gave the impression that the nation [Egypt] had indeed won enough votes from the FIFA Executive Board to become the host nation" (Miles, 2005, p. 26). It turned out Egypt finished last place in the election with zero votes.

Another major example of a press freedom scandal in the MENA region was the joint venture between BBC and Orbit, a media company backed by Saudi citizens. Miles (2005) discusses this cooperation between the British news company and the Saudi satellite television company established by a cousin of the then Saudi King Fahd. The initial aim in 1994 was to establish an Arabic version of the BBC World Service. Therefore, a ten-year agreement was reached in March 1994, with the BBC insisting that "the new channel should have the values as the rest of the World Service" (p. 30). However, the joint venture fell apart when Orbit censored first an interview and later a documentary. Orbit's president at the time commented on the documentary, which showed the moments before a decapitation in Saudi Arabia, as follows: "This programme was a sneering and racist attack on Islamic Law and culture" (p. 32). After the

closure of the new BBC channel, led numerous Arab journalists and media specialists to another new Arab media channel: *Aljazeera*. This will further be discussed in 2.5.3.

However also the present-day situation shows that press freedom and freedom of speech are difficult to realize in the Arab World and the MENA region.

Egypt, for instance, was the third biggest imprisoner of journalists in the world in 2016, according to research by the *Committee to Protect Journalists* (CPJ) (Beiser, 2016). In that same year, Turkey set the record of imprisoning the highest number of journalists in one year (81). The failed coup on 15th of July 2016 was followed by a shutdown of numerous media outlets and the imprisonment of tens of journalists by the authorities in an attempt to silence the opposition. Also other sectors were being targeted, such as universities, the army and the police. These events were preceded by a developing crackdown on press freedom in Turkey, with for instance the imprisonment of Can Dündar, an influential Turkish columnist.

Also in, among others, Bahrain, Iran, Israel, and Syria, freedom of the press is at stake, and that can not only be seen in numbers of imprisonment of journalists. Besides, the fact that in most MENA countries the majority of news organizations are somehow state-owned, indicates how the governments are able to utilize the media as a useful tool in the construction of ideology. The reason for the difficult position of the press and press freedom in the Middle East is possibly a result of the region's various ideological discrepancies. As stated earlier, most news outlets in the MENA region are state-funded and are used to express the governments' stance. In addition to this, most countries in the region are (sometimes unstable) dictatorships, in which it is believed that dissident voices should be silenced.

Yet, as in the present research news networks of Qatar and Saudi Arabia will be discussed, how is the situation in those countries?

In the State of Qatar, there have been some developments in limiting the press freedom in the last years: in November 2016 the Qatari authorities "blocked access to *Doha News*, a popular English-language news website with a history of covering sensitive political topics" (Freedom of the Press 2017 Qatar, n.d.), also certain reports on migrant workers are blocked. Moreover, *Freedom House* stated that media companies in Qatar are "subject to significant restrictions" (Freedom of the Press 2017 Qatar, n.d.), which results in self-censorship.

Regarding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the press freedom situation is worse, based on reports by *Freedom House*. "Saudi Arabia continues to have one of the most restricted media environments in the world," it says in the 2017 report by *Freedom House* (Freedom of the Press 2017 Saudi Arabia, n.d.). Media figures, journalists, bloggers and writers are faced with legal prosecution, possibly resulting in "lengthy prison sentences" (Freedom of the Press 2017 Saudi Arabia, n.d.).

In the 2018 World Press Freedom Index, published by *Reporters Without Borders*, Qatar is ranked 125th and Saudi Arabia 169th out of 180 countries. Numerous other Arab and Middle-Eastern countries too are ranked at the bottom end of the list, such as Syria, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, Libya, Egypt and Iraq.

As exemplified in 2.2.3., 2.2.4.3. and 2.2.5., media played a prominent role in the recent developments in the Gulf region, like the 2002 dispute between Qatar and Saudi-Arabia, the *2014 GCC Crisis* and the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*.

2.2.5.1 Alarabiya

The Saudi-funded *Alarabiya*, based in Dubai, aims to report on news mainly from the MENA region, for an international audience. It does so by broadcasting news on several channels and with a news site linked to other media platforms (social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter).

As mentioned earlier, profiles of both news networks are considerably alike, which was, among others, a reason for comparing both. Kraidy (2006) remarked on this similarity by saying that "Al–Jazeera's criticism of the Saudi royal family throughout the 1990s lead members of the latter to establish Al–Arabiya in Dubai in 2002" (p. 10).

2.2.5.2 Aljazeera

Aljazeera is one of the world's biggest media networks. It was funded in 1996 by the Qatari government, by which it is still owned today. Its aim is to "put the people back at the centre of the news agenda", as we can read in the *About Us* section on the website of *Aljazeera English* (Who we are, n.d.).

In the من نحن section on the website of *Aljazeera* in Arabic (من نحن, n.d.), the following sentence further describes the aim:

وإذ تسعى الجزيرة لنشر الوعي العام بالقضايا التي تهم الجمهور، فإنها تطمح إلى أن تكون جسرا بين الشعوب والثقافات يعزز حق الإنسان في المعرفة وقيم التسامح والديمقراطية واحترام الحريات وحقوق الإنسان.

Aljazeera Media Network grew relatively fast to become one of the world's biggest and most influential media networks, with one of the highest numbers of bureaus in the world. Moreover, *Aljazeera* claims to have the most diverse newsroom in the world with "more than 3,000 highly experienced staff from over 70 nationalities" (Who we are, n.d.).

However, *Aljazeera* has received a lot of criticism for distributing biased news, serving as a propaganda platform of the Qatari government and radical Islamic movements, as has been discussed earlier. Furthermore, *Freedom House* stated in its 2017 report on press freedom in Qatar that "while the country's flagship satellite television channel, Al-Jazeera, is permitted to air critical reports on foreign

countries and leaders, journalists are subject to prosecution for criticizing the Qatari government, the ruling family, or Islam" (Freedom of the Press 2017 Qatar, n.d.).

2.2.5.3 The case of Aljazeera in the 2017-18 GCC Crisis

As *Aljazeera* is one of the major players in the international media landscape and is arguably the most influential reporter of the developments in the MENA region nowadays, it has been criticized a number of times before. In the present crisis, the Saudi-led quartet claimed, after demanding its shut-down, that *Aljazeera* is a platform "for rebel and terrorist groups throughout the Middle East and North Africa region" (Naheem, 2017, p. 2).

However, there is more to be said about *Aljazeera*'s and, to a larger extent, the news media's role in this conflict than that. From the establishment of *Aljazeera* in 1996 onwards, the news network has been a matter of dispute between Doha and other Arab and Middle-Eastern countries. There are numerous examples, ranging from complaints by the Jordanian Minister of Information to the withdrawal of diplomats by the Kuwaiti regime. The causes were mostly controversial statements made by invited speakers. A major example is the international criticism *Aljazeera* received after broadcasting a ninety-minute interview with Osama bin Laden in 1999. Saudi Arabia had already restricted *Aljazeera*'s activities in the kingdom to a large extent, yet after the interview was broadcasted "the Saudis decided that from now on they were going to clamp down on it [*Aljazeera*] in any way they could" (Miles, 2005, p. 53).

In 2002, Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador from Doha, because of criticizing comments made on the Saudi ruling family by Egyptian Islamic theologian Al-Qaradawi, who is a prominent figure within the Muslim Brotherhood. These criticisms were broadcasted on the *Aljazeera* TV channel. Also, in the 2014 crisis, *Aljazeera* was a point of discussion. In order to resolve the then ongoing crisis, "Qatar promised to stop "interfering" in its Gulf neighbours' domestic politics to resolve another diplomatic spat that saw Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain withdraw their ambassadors" (Ponniah, K., 2017). As a reaction to *Aljazeera*'s critical way of reporting, Saudi-Arabia founded *Alarabiya News Channel*, established in Dubai, the UAE, as discussed earlier.

Not only Saudi-Arabia, but also Kuwait, Egypt and the UAE maintain or maintained a difficult relationship with Qatar's media outlets, and with *Aljazeera* in particular.

After the Emir of Kuwait was insulted, according to the then Kuwaiti Minister of Information, in an episode of *Aljazeera*'s *Religion and Life* by an anonymous caller, the Minister of Information himself went to Doha to protest against the broadcasting of the episode. The Kuwaiti regime demanded the *Aljazeera* bureau in Kuwait to be closed but lifted the ban after one month.

Egypt has arrested several *Aljazeera* journalists in recent years, like for example Huwayda Taha (during the Mubarak regime) and rather recently Mahmoud Hussein (during the al-Sisi regime).

According to US officials, "the United Arab Emirates orchestrated the hacking of Qatari government news and social media sites in order to post incendiary false quotes attributed to Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad al-Thani" (DeYoung, K., & Nakashima, E., 2017). Abu Dhabi also ended the broadcasting of *Aljazeera* and other Qatari-funded news outlets in the UAE.

However, the demand for the shut-down of *Aljazeera*, as T. Kharroub pointed out in a lecture organised by the Arab Centre DC, "violate[s] the right to information and the freedom of the press; they are against international law and human rights" (The Role of Media in the GCC Crisis: Hacking, Free Press, and their Implications, 2017). Considering those discussions, it is clear that media play a significant role in developments in the Gulf region and should therefore be investigated further.

2.3   Conclusion

In the *Literature Review*, the following topics have been discussed, which will form the base of this research: the news genre, ideology and national imagery in the news, CDA, the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* and news media in the MENA region. It can be concluded that ideology plays an important role in news media in the MENA region and in the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*. Moreover, CDA is considered to be the appropriate methodology with which to investigate ideology's role in the conflict even more. Therefore, the next chapter will present the methodology for the present research.

3   METHODOLOGY

The present research's main focus is ideology in the news and the representation of the *other* in the *discourse of a conflict*. Therefore, the next research questions have been formulated:

A. How is the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* constructed in online news discourse?
   a. How is it constructed by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
   b. How is it constructed by Qatari *Aljazeera*?
B. How is the discursive construction of the *other* represented in online news covering the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*?
   a. How is Qatar represented by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
   b. How is Saudi Arabia represented by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

In this chapter, the methodology of the research will discussed. Therefore, it has been subdivided in two main sections. First, an explanation and justification of the selected media genre, the chosen news sites, the selected (type of) articles and the time span will be given. Second, the chosen methodology, namely *critical discourse analysis*, will be discussed in more detail.

3.1   Selection

First, it had to be considered which news genre fits the purpose of this research most. I decided to investigate only the online journalism genre by analysing a selection of online news articles. The main reason for this is related to the choice of the news networks: *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya*. Both channels only publish news products on their television broadcasting channels and online. The second reason for this choice is the fact that online journalism reports comparatively quick on news topics. Another reason is the fact that online news data are easily and freely collected, consulted and analysed, compared to broadcast news. For the choice of primary sources from both news sites, a balanced selection was made consisting of eight news articles for each news network. I opted to only analyse 'traditional' news articles, and not columns, opinions or editorials, for they will offer a better insight in the representation *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* construct. Columns, opinions and editorials are usually written by external journalists or writers.

Second, the choice of news organizations is well thought-out. As this conflict has two main social actors (i.e. Qatar on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt on the other), news organizations of both sides had to be investigated. For Qatar, the choice of news network was rather obvious, for *Aljazeera* is the biggest and most influential Arabic news network in the world, stationed in Doha and owned and sponsored by the Qatari state. Moreover, the well-known news organization's role in the Arab world and the Gulf region is part of the allegations made by Saudi-Arabia and co, claiming that "it [*Aljazeera*] promotes terrorist "plots", supports Houthi militias that Saudi Arabia is fighting in Yemen, and has attempted to "break the Saudi internal ranks"," as reported on by the *BBC* (Ponniah,

K., 2017). One of the demands of Qatar's neighbours' 13-point list is the suspension of all investigative journalism by *Aljazeera* in the Gulf region and the Arab World to a greater extent.

For the other side of the conflict, the Saudi-sponsored *Alarabiya* is chosen as Saudi Arabia is regarded as one of the major players in the region and in the ongoing conflict. Additionally, some researchers say *Alarabiya* was founded as a Saudi reaction to the Qatari *Aljazeera*, as has been discussed earlier.

Moreover, both *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* have similar profiles in the world's media landscape. *Aljazeera* was founded in 1996 and from then on sponsored by the Emir of Qatar. *Alarabiya* was founded in 2002 by members of the Saudi royal family. Both could be considered as the first type of mass-mediated diplomacy, as stated by Gilboa (2006), namely state-sponsored international broadcasting efforts. Both news organizations apply an international focus on news reporting, with a particular emphasis on the Middle East. Additionally, as said before, both news networks publish broadcast and online news.

The obvious difference between both, illustrated by *Aljazeera* being a point of discussion in the ongoing GCC crisis, is the disparity in agendas and ideologies. As both news networks are state-funded, they both are affirmative of their countries' policies and subversive to the other's policies. They therefore make an interesting representation of the ideology in both disputing Gulf states.

Third, the time span too is well-considered. As the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* started on the 5th of June 2017, articles will be analysed from that day forward. The selected sets of articles were published between the 5th of June 2017 and the 3rd of October 2017. The major part of the articles – five out of eight – were published in the first two months, for in that period the conflict is constructed through the discourse. Although the crisis is still ongoing at the moment of publication of this research, I opted to set the time span like that, in order to have enough time to analyse the chosen articles.

In total eight articles for both news networks were selected, covering eight different topics related to the current crisis in the Gulf region. By doing so, the research intends to make sure that the comparison and the contrast between both networks' articles is obvious and clear-cut. What follows is an overview of the articles and topics that have been selected for analysis.

The first topic is the much-discussed effect of the crisis on the economy of Qatar (AA: 09/06/2017; AJ: 07/06/2017). The second set of articles discusses the consequence of the diplomatic crisis for Qatari flag carrier *Qatar Airways*. It has been the target of sanctions by Saudi Arabia and co who banned all flights from and to Qatar, and forbade *Qatar Airways* to use Bahraini, Egyptian, Saudi and Emirati airspace (AA: 12/06/2017; AJ: 11/06/2017). The third topic is the reaction of then freshly elected French president Emmanuel Macron on the evolving crisis between the Gulf states (AA: 15/06/2017; AJ: 15/06/2017).

The fourth discusses then United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's reaction for the US is a key actor in the Middle East and the Gulf region (AA: 25/06/2017; AJ: 25/06/2017). The fifth set of articles

talks about Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani's speech to the Council of Ministers addressing the crisis (AA: 03/07/2017; AJ: 02/07/2017). The sixth set discusses how Yousef Al Otaiba, current United Arab Emirates ambassador to the US and high profile political figure in the Gulf region, reacted to the crisis (AA: 29/08/2017; AJ: 29/08/2017). The seventh pair of articles is about Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to the Gulf states in an attempt to urge the different parties to hold a dialogue and solve the crisis (AA: 28/08/2017; AJ: 29/08/2017). The eighth set of articles discusses Qatar-Iran relationships as Iran plays a key role in the Middle East (AA: 03/10/2017; AJ: 03/10/2017).

With this diverse selection of topics, over a period of 4 months, the present research intends to give an elaborate comparison and analysis of the articles published on the GCC crisis.
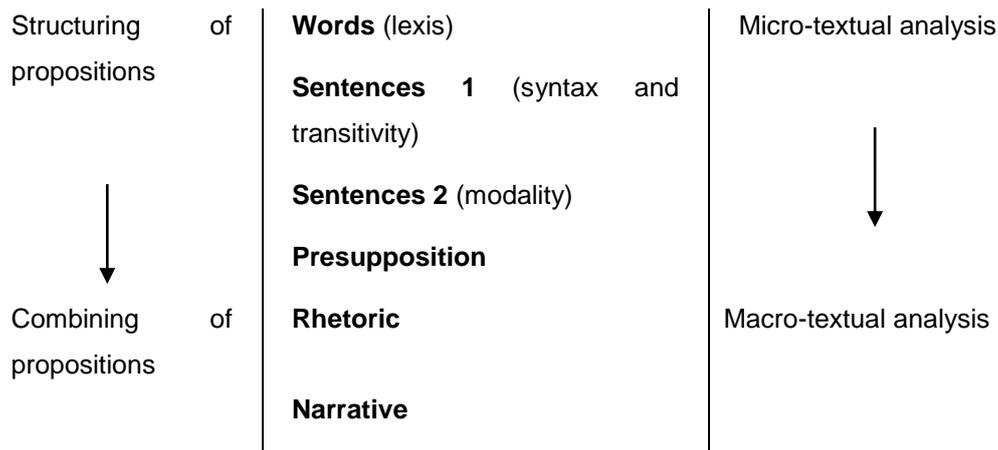
3.2   Critical discourse analysis

In order to find an answer to the research questions, the method of *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) is considered to be the most appropriate, as is concluded from the *Literature Review* of this research and earlier investigations in the *discourse of a conflict*.

The method that will be used is based on *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* by John E. Richardson, for its practical nature aimed at the analysis of news(paper) articles. As the news reports by two news networks will be analysed, the research will be of a comparative nature. The method is made up of three dimensions, each covering and analysing an aspect of news discourse in relation to terms such as power and ideology.

The first dimension is the linguistic analysis of the texts, the second is the analysis of the discursive practices and the third is an investigation into the social practices constructed via discourse. These three dimensions will be explained further as they will make up the major structure of the present research. Moreover, in the present research the three dimensions of both news networks will be continuously compared in order to point at the difference in the discourse on the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*. For a more elaborate discussion of this method, readers are advised to consult *Analysing Newspapers* by John E. Richardson (2007).

3.2.1   Linguistic analysis

The linguistic analysis consists of a number of foci, covering various areas of linguistics. Moreover, the linguistic analysis aims to cover the several levels of textual analysis, going from the structuring of words to the combining of the different propositions to a narrative. Richardson (2007, p. 47) visualized that in the following scheme:

Structuring of propositions	**Words** (lexis)	Micro-textual analysis
	Sentences 1 (syntax and transitivity)	
	Sentences 2 (modality)	
	Presupposition	
Combining of propositions	**Rhetoric**	Macro-textual analysis
	Narrative	

First, the lexical choices made by the journalist can influence the discourse considering the connotation of certain words. "All types of words, but particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs carry connoted in addition to denoted meanings" (Richardson, 2007, p. 47). The choice of lexical items shapes the story and emphasizes ideological contrasts. "Words convey the imprint of society and of value judgements in particular" (p. 47). The journalist can for example choose between the next titles to represent the killing of Palestinians by Israeli forces in demonstrations:

47 Palestinians died in demonstrations on Sunday

47 Palestinians were killed in demonstrations on Sunday

Israel killed 47 Palestinians in demonstrations on Sunday

In addition, *Naming and Reference* and *Predication* further determine how a certain player is represented in terms of lexis and thus frame the story. The classic example of that is the contrast between rebel (negative) and freedom fighter (positive).

Also on the level of sentence construction, choices made by the author may affect the ideological character of the news article. For instance, transitivity can de-emphasize the actor's role in the sentence as exemplified in the next three sentences:

The USA bombed Syria last night.

Syria was bombed last night.

Syria was bombed by the USA last night.

If the author chooses to omit the actor in the passive sentence (as shown in the second example), he succeeds in shifting the focus from the actor to the event. In Arabic, special attention is to be paid to the use of the seventh pattern of the verb forms. That seventh pattern (انفعل) often bears a passive nuance.

In addition, word order on the sentence level can also put the emphasis on certain characteristics of the state of affairs, while de-emphasizing others.

Third, structures of modality are to be investigated too. Modality intensifies certain statements while weakening others. That can be realized through modal verbs (positive or negative), constructions and adverbs. The various levels of for example the probability of a statement offer a wide range of understandings and interpretations to the article, as can be seen in the next example:

> Chlorine likely used in February attack in Syria's Idlib: OPCW (Chlorine likely used in February attack in Syria's Idlib: OPCW, 2018)

In this headline by the Turkish news network *TRT World* the modal adverb "likely" is included. In that way, the OPCW managed not to confirm but rather to suggest that it is (highly) possible that chlorine has been used in Idlib in February 2018.

The fourth technique which can point the reader into a certain direction is the presuppositions that are being evoked by the use of definite articles, wh-questions, certain verbs (for example: to stop, to continue, to begin) and certain nouns or adjectives (for example: new).

> A presupposition is a taken-for-granted, implicit claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance. (Richardson, 2007, p. 63)

Examples of presuppositions can be found in most opinions or columns, such as the following title by Chowers in a column for *Middle East Eye*:

> Israel at 70: Why democracy is now in retreat (Chowers, E., 2018)

In this headline it is not the question 'whether' democracy is in retreat, the question is 'why'. By using a wh-question, the author managed to make the reader presuppose Israeli democracy is in retreat, without question. Further examples of presuppositions can be found on pages 63 and 64 of *Analysing Newspapers* by John E. Richardson (2007).

The fifth point of interest for the linguistic analysis is the use of rhetorical tropes. Richardson (2007) argues that "journalism is best approached as an argumentative discourse genre" (p. 64). In light of this statement, it can be concluded that the techniques discussed above, can be situated in the wider argumentation built up by the author and the publishing institution. The same goes for the rhetorical tropes, which are techniques used to strengthen a certain flow of thoughts, a certain narrative. Richardson enlists a number of tropes: hyperbole, metaphor, metonym, neologism, puns.

Finally, the general narrative is of major importance when studying ideology in news articles. The narrative is the combination of the various propositions to a unity, which thus enables the text to convey more than what is explicitly written. However, journalism often sticks to the same narrative structures as

they report on "ever-unfolding social events" (Richardson, 2007, p. 71). Richardson also states that hard news narratives are in nearly all cases structured following the *climax-first structure* (or pyramid structure). The chosen narrative structure determines how the readers experience the sequence of events described in the article. Thus, the author can manipulate the narrative and the reader's interpretation of the described social events and its actors.

3.2.2 Discursive practices

The CDA method as explained by Richardson does not only focus on linguistic elements, but also investigates discursive practices namely text production and consumption. For the present research, it will be specifically interesting to look at the institutions and the professional and organisational practices influencing the text production, instead of investigating the mechanisms behind text consumption. That is not the scope of this research and its research questions, which mainly concentrate on the influence of ideology on text production.

First, the professional practices behind text production will be discussed. Journalists have to take into account a number of players in the media landscape and are not free to write as they please. Therefore, the two concepts of ethics and objectivity (or their absence) play a key role in journalism. The ethics of journalism can be organized in a *code of ethics*, with four basic principles as Iggers (1999) prescribes: seeking and reporting truth; acting independently, of sources and other journalists; minimising harm; and being accountable for their [journalists] work" (p. 23, 38). However, it is not easy to comply with these four principles. Objectivity too is a key concept in professional practices in journalism. For example, the sources that are being referred to play a vital role in the news production process. A journalist can for instance use an evaluative quote by a politician as a headline. In that way the journalist manages to include an opinion in his article, without expressing the opinion himself. To restore the objectivity balance, the journalist can – but does not always do so – also quote an objector of the statement. Also, the use of supporting facts presented as background information can have an influence on the objectivity of the text.

Second, the organisational practices will be dealt with. As discussed before, both *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* are financially supported by respectively Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which is the starting point of the present research, and therefore produce discourse which is "institutionally based" (Richardson, 2007, p. 75). As has been discussed earlier and as Kress (Fowler, 1991, p. 42) puts forward, "discourses are systematically-organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution". This means that the news organization can decide what to include, what to exclude, how to arrange the news product and so on. In line with their audience's expectations, journalists select what is newsworthy and what is not, based on a number of principles such as threshold, unambiguity, unexpectedness, continuity and negativity. However, news is not only a product of the relation between producer and consumer. It is also embedded in a social structure, relating to "other social institutions and wider social factors" (Richardson, 2007, p. 113).

3.2.3   Social practices

The third dimension of CDA is the social practices of journalism. Richardson (2007) describes these social structures as follows:

> Social practices cover the structures, the institutions and the values that, while residing outside of the newsroom, permeate and structure the activities and outputs of journalism. (p. 114)

Thus, journalism is shaped by economic, political and ideological practices, which in return are shaped by discourse. The present research is mainly interested in the ideological practices of journalism with regard to the political situation in the Middle East. As the chapter by Richardson focusses on Western media and the dominance of the ruling class, it will not be used to investigate the social practices of the present study. Instead, a selection of ideas of Carpentier (2008), De Rycker & Don (2013) and Bell & Garrett (1998) will be used.

The two previous sections are ways in which the ideological beliefs of a social entity are being conveyed. In the present case, the *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera* are expected to express the ideological beliefs of respectively Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Thus, the conflict can be represented using a number of strategies which have been discussed in the *Literature Review*.

The main concept in the representation is the *ideological model* or *square* as discussed by Van Dijk, in which the antagonism between two (or more) entities plays a key role. In that model, a number of techniques are used to represent the different social actors of the conflict, the different developments, and the *self* and the *other*. One's own party is presented positively (*positive self-presentation*), while the other party is associated with negative features (*negative other-presentation*). Thus, the author attempts to hegemonise the own party and emphasize the antagonism with the other party. Interesting to keep in mind is that the construction of the *other* and the construction of the *self* depend on each other for the *self* can only be constructed and understood compared to and in contrast with the *other*.

Furthermore, the institution behind the discourse can select the information it needs to back its stance (sometimes referred to as *cherry picking*) and exclude information that opposes it (*exclusion*). Moreover, selected information can be highlighted (*foregrounding*) or be pushed into the background (*backgrounding*).

A specific case of *foregrounding* or *backgrounding* is the use of respectively active or passive constructions. In that way, the author can allocate a role to a certain player and (de-)emphasize his involvement. This strategy is also called *role allocation*.

A way in which the social actors (of a conflict) can be represented is *assimilation*, which is the representation of one social actor as a group. In addition, a group can be referred to in a *generic* or *specific* way. Van Leeuwen (2009) argues that mainly *generic reference* "plays a large role in establishing "us" and "them" groups" (p. 282).

Other techniques can be found in *Discourse, Of Course* and *Discourse Theory and Cultural Analysis*. In this chapter, the analysis has been expounded as will be used in the next chapter for the comparative *critical discourse analysis*.

4   RESULTS

The following chapter of this research presents the results of the comparative *critical discourse analysis* of the selected articles by *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera.* This chapter is divided into eight parts, each discussing the results of each of the eight pairs of articles that have been analysed. In each discussion, first, an orientation of the topic of the article will be given, situating the article in the sequence of developments of the diplomatic crisis in the Gulf region. Second, the (major) findings of the analysis will be presented and compared, covering the various aspects of CDA. Subsequently, the analysis of the discursive practice will be given. The interpretation and contextualization of the social practices will be presented in the next chapter, the *Discussion*. At the end of this chapter, a short prospect to the *Discussion* will be given.

4.1   Consequences of the crisis for Qatar's economy

The first set of articles was published within the first week after Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE cut off all diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed a land, sea and air blockade. It discusses the way in which the Qatari economy will be affected (and already has been affected) by the unfolding crisis.

The first striking element in this set of articles, which will frequently return in the next sets, is the difference in focus of both articles. The divergent foci are already noticeable in the title.

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

خبير: اقتصاد قطر يتمتع <u>باحتياطيات ضخمة</u>

</div>

(= Specialist: Qatar's economy enjoys <u>huge reserves</u>)

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

الريال القطري <u>يهبط</u> لمستوى قياسي جديد أمام الدولار

</div>

(= The Qatari riyal <u>drops</u> to a new minimum level compared to the US dollar)

While *Aljazeera* focusses on the large reserves Qatar disposes of (احتياطيات ضخمة), *Alarabiya* zooms in on the falling (يهبط) exchange rate of the Qatari riyal compared to the US dollar to a minimum in recent years. This different focus in the title implies the disparity in focus in the remainder of the article.

Alarabiya directly links (already in the first paragraph) the new tendency in the Qatari economy to the diplomatic crisis that developed a few days before the article was published. The *Alarabiya* writer establishes cause-effect relations between the present crisis and possible consequences. The first one is by بسبب (because) and suggests that investors and capital might be leaving Qatar. The second one is

by الأثر الاقتصادي (the economic impact) and suggests the negative long-term effect of the crisis on the Qatari economy, without unequivocally confirming this.

Those cause-effect constructions are a striking difference with the *Aljazeera* article. *Aljazeera* frequently indicates that destabilizing a country in the Gulf region will turn out detrimental for the surrounding countries, however only refers once to the diplomatic crisis and unequal treatment of Qatar in the region's economy, at the end of the article. In addition, the article firmly states that Qatar will not take the same measures aimed at Saudi, Bahraini and Emirati companies and citizens (المعاملة بالمثل).

Furthermore, the *Aljazeera* article does not mention a single word about negative consequences of the diplomatic crisis for the Qatari economy, but only emphasizes its reserves and resilience to the economic sanctions. The article backs this statement with examples of earlier economic challenges, such as in 2006 and 2008, when the Qatari economy, as concludes the economist, recovered relatively quick compared to its neighbours.

Secondly, the use of modal verbs does also influence the way the story is told. In the article by *Aljazeera*, the link between a possible economic setback and the crisis in the Gulf is not explicated. The use of modal verbs is therefore strategically applied.

Aljazeera:

وأضاف أن قطر تتمتع باحتياطيات ضخمة <u>يمكن</u> اللجوء إليها <u>وقت الحاجة</u>.

(= He added that Qatar disposes of great reserves that <u>can</u> be fallen back on <u>in time of need</u>.)

This modal verb is used to avoid making explicit the possibility that the crisis will affect the economy in a bad way. Also, the use of وقت الحاجة (in time of need) is remarkable for it does not explicitly refer to the present crisis. However, in that sentence the *Aljazeera* journalist might carefully imply that such a "time of need" is upon the Qatari economy.

Next, there are some examples of well-considered use of predication that deserve to be discussed, especially quantitative predication concerning the economic tendencies caused by the crisis.

Aljazeera:

... احتياطيات <u>ضخمة</u> ...

(= … <u>huge</u> reserves …)

... بتجاوز <u>العديد من</u> الأزمات <u>الكبرى</u> ...

(= … to overcome <u>numerous great</u> crises …)

... الاحتياطيات الأخرى لدى <u>عدة</u> جهات حكومية ...

(= … the other reserves of <u>several</u> government agencies …)

With the word choice of these examples, the *Aljazeera* journalist intends to emphasize the multiplicity of the reserves Qatar disposes of in order to defend itself from the economic consequences of the GCC crisis. He also lays stress on how great the past crises were, from which Qatar managed to recover thanks to its reserves.

Alarabiya:

الريال القطري يهبط لمستوى <u>قياسي</u> جديد أمام الدولار

(= The Qatari riyal drops to a new <u>record</u> low compared to the US Dollar)

هبط الريال القطري لمستوى جديد هو <u>الأدنى</u> في عدة سنوات ...

(= The Qatari riyal has dropped to a new level, which is the <u>lowest</u> since several years …)

... إلى 630 نقطة مسجلة <u>أعلى</u> مستوياتها ...

(= … to 630 points, which is the <u>highest</u> registered level …)

Alarabiya similarly makes use of quantitative adjectives to enforce its arguments, yet it is striking that *Alarabiya* mainly highlights the negative figures concerning the Qatari riyal.

Fourthly, naming and reference also play a role in the articles. The *Aljazeera* journalist is referring to the economist who is being discussed as a المتخصص في السياسة النقدية وعلم (economic expert) and خبير اقتصادي الاقتصاد السياسي (expert in monetary politics and political economy). The source referred to in the article by *Alarabiya*, the Moody's analyst in Dubai, is being referred to as المحلل (analyst).

Fifthly, *Alarabiya* supports its claims that the Qatari riyal is losing its value, by offering numerous statistics, aiming to enforce its arguments, while *Aljazeera* does not include any concrete figures.

Sixthly, there is a striking example of a presupposition in the *Alarabiya* article. Twice, the *Alarabiya* journalist uses the word مخاوف (fears), which refers to the fears of Qatari officials for the consequences of the present crisis. It is implied that the Qatari people do fear negative consequences for their country as a result of the blockade and the crisis. This has not at all been rendered by the *Aljazeera* article.

Concerning the discursive practice of both articles, both *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera* only use sources from within their own country. *Aljazeera* frequently quotes Qatari economist Khalid bin Rashid Al-Khater. His statements that Qatar disposes of great reserves on which it can rely in times of need, are frequently

repeated and backed by past examples. The last sentence in which he is quoted, says that he believes Qatar's policy is built on firm foundations which will not be changed easily. Moreover, he states that it is not in the interest of the economic system in the Gulf to destabilise any Gulf country. *Alarabiya* quoted a Moody's analyst stationed in Dubai who says – in only one sentence – that there is a lot of vagueness concerning the solution of the crisis.

4.2 Consequences for Qatar Airways

The second pair of articles discusses the consequences of the crisis for Qatari flag carrier *Qatar Airways*, one of the world's biggest airline companies. Saudi Arabia and co did not only cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar, they also closed their airspace to flights going from or to Qatar, as part of a sea, air and land blockade. As Qatar is nearly completely surrounded by the four blockading countries, this measure resulted in the re-routing of a part of its flights, which caused delays, financial losses and the cancelling of flights.

In the second set of articles too, it immediately becomes clear that both networks zoom in on different aspects of the story. Although the *Aljazeera* article has been published only a day before the *Alarabiya* article, it only focusses on the financial growth *Qatar Airways* has known in the budget year 2016-2017, so up to March 2017 – i.e. before the crisis. *Alarabiya*, on the other hand, focusses on the losses *Qatar Airways* has suffered as a result of the air blockade by Saudi Arabia.

Alarabiya:

الخطوط القطرية مهددة بخسارة 30% من إيراداتها

(= Qatar Airways threatened by the loss of 30% of its revenues)

Aljazeera:

الأرباح السنوية للخطوط القطرية ترتفع 22%

(= Yearly profits of Qatar Airways increase by 22%)

It is remarkable that while both articles include a percentage in the title, they are used to express exactly the contrary: *Alarabiya* uses it to highlight the losses and *Aljazeera* to emphasize the increasing profits.

As the title is a herald of the article, the disparity in focus can also be found in the various paragraphs. The difference is rather clear in this set of articles as the article by *Alarabiya* discusses the consequences of the crisis for *Qatar Airways* in depth, while the article by *Aljazeera* does not even mention the ongoing crisis once, which is rather remarkable. Based on news reports on the crisis, it is unquestionable that the air, sea and land blockade has had an impact on *Qatar Airways*.

Secondly, both articles are backed by several statistics and numbers, yet they cover other topics. Similar to the use of the percentages in the title, numbers in the articles are used to express the opposite message.

The third set of remarkable findings concerns the lexical choices when referring to the sources. In the first paragraph of both articles, the percentage in the title is explained further. Also the source of the percentage is mentioned.

Aljazeera:

أعلنت شركة الخطوط الجوية القطرية أمس الأحد نتائجها المالية للسنة المالية 2016-2017، التي أظهرت نموا بنسبة 21.7% في صافي الأرباح.

(= Qatar Airways revealed yesterday on Sunday its financial results of the fiscal year 2016-2017, which showed a growth of 21.7% net profit.)

Alarabiya:

أظهرت أحدث التقديرات والتوقعات أن شركة الخطوط الجوية القطرية قد تخسر ما يصل إلى 30% من إيرادتها، أي نحو الثلث، في حال استمرت الأزمة الراهنة بين الدوحة وجيرانها من الخليجيين والعرب.

(= The newest estimates and prospects showed that Qatar Airways might lose up to 30% of its incomes, which is nearly a third, if the current crisis between Doha and its neighbours in the Gulf and the Arab world continues.)

The *Aljazeera* journalist states that the company Qatar Airways itself has revealed numbers about its profits, while the percentage of *Alarabiya* is based on the latest estimates and prospects which show that Qatar Airways might lose 30% of its incomes due to the crisis. There is another remarkable element in the sentence by *Alarabiya*: the use of قد. This particle is used in combination with a present tense – تخسر (to lose) in this case – to express the modal nuance *maybe.*

In the fourth paragraph too, *Alarabiya* makes use of estimates to back its arguments.

Alarabiya:

وبحسب تقديرات صادرة عن شركة "فوريست آند سوليفان" للاستشارات ...

(= According to estimates published by investment company *Frost and Sullivan* …)

Fourthly, it is remarkable that *Alarabiya* frequently used cause-effect conjunctions in various ways.

Alarabiya:

... إغلاق الحدود والمجال الجوي أمام الطائرات القطرية، <u>وهو ما اضطر</u> الشركة القطرية ... إلى تغيير مسار رحلاتها ...

(= … the closing of the borders and airspace for planes of *Qatar Airways*, <u>which forced</u> the Qatari company to reroute its flights …)

... إن أكثر من 50 رحلة يوميا تم إلغاؤها، فضلا عن تغيير مسار الرحلات التي لم يتم إلغاؤها، <u>حيث</u> لم يعد بمقدور أي طائرة قطرية التحليق فوق الأراضي السعودية أو الإماراتية أو البحرينية أو المصرية، <u>وهو ما يعني</u> أيضا ارتفاع تكاليف السفر إلى الوجهات الأخرى ...

(= …(said) that more than 50 flights per day will be cancelled, while the ones that cannot be cancelled will be rerouted, <u>since</u> any Qatari plane can no longer fly above Saudi, Emirati, Bahraini or Egyptian soil. <u>This means</u> also that the flight cost to other destinations will rise …)

In the above examples, the author clearly links the measures taken by Saudi Arabia to the cancellation and rerouting of flights by *Qatar Airways*. He or she therefore uses conjunctions such as حيث (since) and coordinating sentences such as in the first and third example.

Fifthly, there is an example of strategic use of transitivity in the article by *Alarabiya*.

Alarabiya:

... الدول العربية الأربع التي <u>انقطعت</u> معها العلاقات.

(= … the four Arab countries with which relations <u>were cut</u>.)

In the above example, the journalist used the root قطع in the seventh pattern انقطع (to be severed, to be cut), which has a passive meaning in Arabic, rather than in the active first pattern قطع (to sever, to cut). By doing so, he can de-emphasize the agent (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain).

Finnaly, the sources offer insight in which message both networks want to convey. The article by *Alarabiya* uses quotes by three different agencies (i.e. *Bloomberg*, *Forest and Sullivan*, *Martin*) and also refers to an unspecified Qatari source, while *Aljazeera* only quotes the CEO of *Qatar Airways* and other spokesmen of the Qatari flight carrier. The reports by the agencies that are being quoted by *Alarabiya* show estimates of the consequences of the crisis, including the cancellation (إلغاء), the increasing travel prices (ارتفاع تكاليف السفر), the increasing costs for *Qatar airways* (تضخيم النفقات) and the loss of transit passengers. *Alarabiya* enforced the reliability of its sources by stating twice that the agencies' reports were checked by *Alarabiya.net* ("التي راجعتها العربية.نت" and "الذي اطلعت عليه العربية.نت").

Besides, no *Aljazeera* articles with concrete figures about the financial situation of *Qatar Airways* have been found in the same week other than condemnations of the air, land and sea blockade.

4.3   Reaction of French president Macron

The third set of articles deals with the reaction of, back then freshly elected, French president Emmanuel Macron to the Gulf Crisis. In a speech he gave more than a week after the beginning of the crisis, he urges the Gulf countries to come to a dialogue and try to solve the conflict.

The difference in focus is again the first striking element in both articles.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

ماكرون سيلتقي بشكل منفصل ولي عهد أبوظبي وأمير قطر

</div>

(= Macron will meet separately with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and the Emir of Qatar)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

الإليزيه يتراجع عن خبر لقاءات ماكرون بقادة خليجيين

</div>

(= The Élysée reconsiders the statement of holding meetings with Gulf leaders)

Although both articles were published on the same day, they state exactly the opposite. *Alarabiya* says the French president will be meeting the Emir of Qatar and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi in separate meetings at the end of June 2017, while *Aljazeera* states that Macron has reconsidered these two meetings. The title and first paragraph of *Alarabiya* and the ones of *Aljazeera* too are a direct contradiction. Besides, although *Aljazeera* states that France has reconsidered both meetings (with the Emir of Qatar and the Crown prince of Abu Dhabi), the article does state that Macron said he will be holding talks with (other) officials from both countries.

When searching for other articles on both news sites (*Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera*), no rebuttal of the aforementioned articles can be found. Furthermore, when looking for articles on *bbc.com* (both English and Arabic) and *lemonde.fr*, which are both renowned news networks in the international media landscape, no coverage of the two meetings between Macron and Mohammed bin Zayed on the one hand and Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the other hand can be found. Thus, it can be concluded that both meetings did not take place.

Secondly, there is a rather striking lexical similarity between both articles.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

... قطعت دول عدة [...] علاقاتها مع قطر بعدما اتهمتها ب"<u>دعم وتمويل الإرهاب</u>."

</div>

(= … a number of countries […] severed ties with Qatar after they accused it of "<u>supporting and financing terrorism</u>".)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

... و<u>مكافحة الإرهاب وتمويله</u> من جهة أخرى ...

</div>

(= … and <u>the fight against terrorism and its financing</u> on the other hand …)

Both excerpts deal with the support for terrorists and terrorism in the Middle East, although *Alarabiya* links that to Qatar, while *Aljazeera* does not link the support for terrorist groups to a particular state. This finding occurs rather frequent in other articles too.

Thirdly, in the article by *Alarabiya*, the next sentence can be found:

<div dir="rtl">

... في المنطقة حيث <u>قطعت</u> دول عدة على رأسها السعودية و الإمارات والبحرين ومصر علاقاتها مع قطر ...

</div>

(= … in the region where a number of countries, led by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, <u>severed</u> its ties with Qatar …)

In this sentence, the first pattern of the verb قطع (to cut, to sever) is used to state that ties between several countries and Qatar were severed. This first pattern has an active meaning, in contrast with the passive pattern seven انقطع (to be cut) that was used in the second article on *Qatar Airways*. By using the active pattern, the emphasis is on the agent ("a number of countries"). It is remarkable that *Alarabiya* first used the seventh pattern and then the first. A similar construction can be found in the article by *Aljazeera*, in which it is more logical to be used:

<div dir="rtl">

و<u>كانت</u> السعودية والإمارات والبحرين ومصر ودول أخرى <u>قطعت</u> علاقاتها الدبلوماسية مع قطر وأغلقت حدودها البرية والبحرية والجوية معها ...

</div>

(= Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt and other countries <u>have severed</u> diplomatic ties with Qatar and closed their land, sea and air borders with it …)

Fourthly, modal constructions again are strategically used. Both *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* have extensively referred to statements by Macron, in which the use of two modal constructions attracted attention.

Aljazeera:

... وقال ماكرون الأربعاء إن منطقة الخليج العربي <u>يجب أن</u> تبقى مستقرة ...

(= … Macron said on Wednesday that the Gulf region <u>has to</u> remain stable …)

Alarabiya:

ورحب الرئيس الفرنسي [...] بشأن <u>ضرورة</u> إيجاد حل للازمة الخليجية.

(= The French President acclaimed […] <u>the necessity</u> to come to a solution for the Gulf crisis.)

Both paraphrases express the same meaning and both use a modal technique: *Aljazeera* used the modal verb يجب أن (to have to), while *Alarabiya* used the modal noun الضرورة (the necessity).

Concerning the discursive practices, in both articles only the French President Emmanuel Macron – or his presidential staff – was quoted, yet, as has been shown, different quotes by the President have been selected.

4.4 Reaction of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

As has been discussed before, the United States of America is one of the major secondary players in the present crisis. Therefore, the fourth set of articles deals with the reaction of the then US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson twenty days after the 5th of June 2017. The articles were published only three days after the quartet issued its list of demands on Qatar (on the 23th of June 2017), which is actually the main topic of both articles. Before the list was published, Tillerson stated the following: "We hope the list of demands will soon be presented to Qatar and will be reasonable and actionable" (Qatar's blockade in 2017, day by day developments, n.d.). Moreover, the reaction of the United States is rather important, for US President Donald Trump and its government officials have expressed differing stances on the US position towards the GCC crisis.

Unsurprisingly, the first striking element is the different focus. There is a striking disparity in coverage, although both articles discuss the list of demands by the four blockading countries and in particular Rex Tillerson's reaction to it. *Alarabiya* only shortly refers to comments by Rex Tillerson on the present crisis, in which he says that the list of demands includes some important issues that are essential to solve the conflict. The remainder and major part – seven out of 9 paragraphs – of the article discusses the list issued by Saudi Arabia and co, and each of the thirteen demands separately.

Aljazeera on the other hand discusses Rex Tillerson's comments in more depth and quotes several other political analysts and journalists on the interest of the US in solving the Gulf crisis. It did not discuss the content of the list of demands, as that has been elaborately commented upon in various other

articles. In the other paragraphs of the *Aljazeera* article, three messages frequently reappear: continuing the talks (three times), reducing the tension (three times) and solving the crisis (six times). These three phrases occur in various ways with different synonyms. For all those reasons, it is not surprising that the titles differ again.

Alarabiya:

أميركا: قطر تراجع قائمة مطالب دول المقاطعة

(= United States: Qatar examines list of demands of the blockading countries)

Aljazeera:

تيلرسون: بعض مطالب دول الحصار صعبة التنفيذ

(= Tillerson: some demands of the blockading countries are difficult to execute)

While the title of *Alarabiya* is rather neutral, *Aljazeera* states that Tillerson thinks some demands are too hard to execute for Qatar.

This disparity in focus can also be found in the first paragraphs. Herein, both news sites report on what Rex Tillerson concretely said about the list of demands. *Aljazeera*'s first paragraph states that Tillerson thought some demands are hard to comply with, while other points can form the starting point of the continued talks between the two parties.

Aljazeera:

وأضاف تيلرسون أنه يصعب للغاية أن تستجيب الدوحة لبعض هذه المطالب، لكن هناك عدة مجالات ملحوظة يمكن أن تشكل أرضية لحوار متواصل لحل الأزمة.

(= Tillerson added that it is hard for Doha to agree to some of these demands, but there are some remarkable points that can form the basis for continuing talks to solve the crisis.)

Alarabiya uses the following quote by Tillerson (or another White House official) on the list of demands in its first paragraph:

وقالت واشنطن إن هناك "مجالات مهمة تضع أساساً لحوار يؤدي لحل الأزمة"، وحثت جميع الدول على "مواصلة الحوار وتخفيف لهجة الخطاب للمساعدة في تخفيف التوترات."

(= Washington said that there are "important fields that lay the foundation for debate that leads to the solution of the conflict" and he urges all countries to "continue the talks and soften the tone of speech in order to help reduce the tensions".)

These two quotes show that Tillerson and the White House think that the demands can lead to a debate which will have to lead to the solution for the conflict. However, the article by *Alarabiya* does not include Tillerson's comment that some demands are hard to comply with, which the one by *Aljazeera* did. It can be concluded that while *Alarabiya* used a more neutral title, the first paragraph is less balanced. On the other hand, it can be said that *Aljazeera* approached Tillerson's comments from a more balanced point of view, while it formulated a more biased title.

Secondly, in one of the paragraphs in the article by *Alarabiya*, a clear example of presupposition can be found.

Alarabiya:

[وشملت قائمة المطالب] ... إعلان قطر قطع <u>علاقاتها</u> مع جميع التنظيمات الإرهابية والطائفية والإيديولوجية ...

(= [The list of demands comprised] … the declaration that Qatar cuts <u>its ties</u> with all terrorist, sectarian and ideological organizations …)

In the above example, علاقاتها (its ties) is an example of presupposition. By making the "ties" definite with the possessive suffix, the journalist intends to make clear that Qatar has/had relations with terrorist groups. In this case it is not the question whether Qatar maintains ties with terrorist, sectarian and ideological groups, but rather with which.

Further in the article, another example of presupposition can be found.

Alarabiya:

... إيقاف جميع أشكال <u>التمويل القطري</u> لأفراد أو كيانات أو منظمات إرهابية أو متطرفة ...

(= … to stop with all forms of <u>Qatari funding</u> of terrorist or extremist individuals, entities or organisations …)

It is in the article by *Alarabiya* not questioned whether Qatar funds terrorist organizations.

Furthermore, it is again interesting to discuss the sources that are quoted in the article and used to back the argumentation. *Alarabiya* uses US Minister of Foreign Affairs Rex Tillerson's comments on the crisis and the list of demands, and quotes UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash, who said that "it is most wise for Qatar to treat the demands of its neighbours seriously" (كان من الأعقل أن تتعامل الدوحة مع مطالب ومشاغل جيرانها بجدية). *Aljazeera* quotes five sources: US Minister Tillerson, *Aljazeera*

correspondent in Washington DC Murad Hashim, an American political analyst, Qatari intellectual Majed Alansari and the writer and political researcher Mohamad Kawas.

4.5   Reaction of the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani

The fifth set of articles discusses the reaction of Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to the crisis, Qatar's position and which steps should be taken in order to solve the conflict. In the light of the developments in that period (beginning of July 2017), Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani addressed the Qatari *Council of Ministers*, stating Qatar has become stronger because of the crisis.

The first notable difference between both reports on the speech by Qatar's Emir is that both news networks selected and emphasized other quotes made by the Emir of Qatar. That becomes clear in the title.

Alarabiya:

أمير قطر: مستعدون لحل الأزمة بالحوار.. دون إملاءات

(= Emir of Qatar: we are ready to solve the conflict through talks … without dictations)

Aljazeera:

أمير قطر: ما حدث قوانا ودفعنا للمزيد من العمل

(= Emir of Qatar: what happened has made us stronger and pushed us to create more work)

Aljazeera mainly focusses on Qatar's strength and how it succeeded in overcoming the negative implications of the crisis and the blockade. *Alarabiya*, on the other hand, states that Qatar wants a solution to the ongoing crisis but explicitly highlights the fact that the solution should be without dictations from other countries. It is emphasized even more by using the two dots in Arabic (three in English). This is the first example of the influence of interpunction on the news article in the present research.

In this set of articles, the quoted officials have been found to be an important strategic choice. While *Aljazeera* only refers to what Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has said, *Alarabiya* also quotes Qatari Minister of Defence Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah and two reports by the American newspaper *Huffington Post*.

In general, *Aljazeera* quotes and refers to statements that express a number of positive features of Qatar. First of all, the Emir states that Qatari people have a history of which they are proud and which they cherish (فلنا تاريخ نفخر ونعتز به). Secondly, the quality of Qatari projects and products is mentioned, "with the optimal quality which has always been expected of Qatari projects" (كان عليها العمل فيها بالشكل

الطبيعي وبالجودة المُثلى المتوقعة لمشاريع قطر دائما). Thirdly, Sheikh Al Thani praises Qatari working values, such as "the positive working spirit, solidarity and motivation" (روح العمل الإيجابية والتكاتف والدافعية), which distinguished the Qatari people and its residents during the crisis" (التي تميّز بها أهل قطر ومقيموها خلال الأزمة). The fourth feature the Emir discusses is the Qatari "sense of team spirit and cooperation, which adorned all citizens and residents as a prominent feature during this period" (روح الفريق والتعاون التي تحلّى به الجميع من مواطنين ومقيمين كسمة بارزة خلال هذه الفترة).

Other aspects of the article that frequently return are the fact that the Emir wants to solve the crisis through dialogue, and that Qatar should focus on internal efforts to solve the crisis and should strengthen various domestic domains such as economy, safety and health.

Concerning the article by *Alarabiya*, the focus lies mainly on one message, which only received minor attention in the article by *Aljazeera*.

Alarabiya:

... من خلال الحوار، من دون إملاءات أو تدخل في السيادة الوطنية والشؤون الداخلية لأي دولة.

(= …[to solve the crisis] through dialogue without dictations or interference in the national sovereignty and internal affairs of any coutry.)

The statement by Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani about the fact that Qatar is becoming stronger was also quoted. Yet it is remarkable that the *Alarabiya* journalist choose to quote other sources too, while *Aljazeera* only quoted the Emir. Therefore, it is interesting to look at the content of the quotes, from which the journalists' considerations can be concluded.

The second person quoted by *Alarabiya* is Qatari Minister of Defence Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah, who made rather strong statements, compared to the ones by the Emir of Qatar, such as the following.

Alarabiya:

وأكد وزير الدفاع القطري أن الوقت والانتظار سيساهمان في استمرار الأزمة، وسيفاقمان العلاقات <u>أكثر وأكثر</u>.

(= The Qatari Minister of Defence stated that time and waiting will contribute to the continuing of the crisis and will make relations <u>even worse</u>.)

This statement is more accusing and ominous than the ones by the Emir (as discussed in both articles). Especially by using أكثر وأكثر (more and more), the *Alarabiya* journalist emphasizes the statement by the Minister even more. The article also states that Al Attiyah accused the three blockading countries of interfering in Qatari affairs, which has not been discussed in the *Aljazeera* article.

Alarabiya:

واتهم الوزير خالد بن محمد آل عطية، الدول الخليجية الثلاث المقاطعة للدوحة بالتدخل في الشؤون القطرية.

(= Minister Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah <u>accused</u> the three Gulf countries [KSA, UAE and Bahrain] blockading Doha of interfering in Qatari affairs.)

Moreover, the *Alarabiya* article includes a number of conclusions of a study by the *Huffington Post*, as well as reports by other "Western sources", which are also more extreme and negative than the ones by the Emir of Qatar, as discussed in both articles.

Alarabiya:

أكدت مصادر غربية أن قطر تلعب دورا نشطا في دعم التطرف في المنطقة ...

(= Western sources confirmed that Qatar plays an active role in supporting extremism in the region …)

In this sentence, it is striking that it is not specified which western sources say so. *Alarabiya* also refers to a report by the *Huffington Post* which states the following:

... تقريرا أكد أن الدوحة باتت تهدد أمن أوروبا، وخصوصا بريطانيا.

(= … a report that states that Doha continues to threaten the safety in Europe and especially in Great Britain.)

With these statements, *Alarabiya* backs the Saudi accusations of Qatar sponsoring terrorism.

4.6   Reaction of UAE ambassador to the US Yousef Al Otaiba

The sixth set of articles discusses top UAE official and current ambassador to the US Yousef Al Otaiba's reaction to (the developments in) the crisis after the first three months. In an interview with the American magazine *The Atlantic*, Al Otaiba was asked some questions about the crisis, the blockade and the cyberattacks on *Qatar News Agency* of May 2017. As the UAE is one of the key players and most influential countries on the side of Saudi Arabia, it is important to investigate the comments of one of its top officials. Since both articles are rather long, they will be dealt with separately. First the difference in focus will be explained by immediately comparing both articles. Next, both articles will be discussed separately.

From the title can again be deduced that both articles have chosen to lay the focus on different aspects of the story.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

العتيبة: قطر تحولت إلى قوة هدم في المنطقة

</div>

(= Al Otaiba: Qatar moves to the demolition of power in the region)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

العتيبة: لسنا وراء اختراق وكالة الأنباء القطرية

</div>

(= Al Otaiba: We were not behind the hacking of the *Qatar News Agency*)

In this set of titles, it becomes clear that there will again be another focus in the article by *Alarabiya* compared to the one by *Aljazeera*. *Alarabiya* only discusses Al Otaiba's accusations towards Qatar, while *Aljazeera* mainly focusses on the hacking of the *Qatar News Agency*. Furthermore, the ideological square by Van Dijk also becomes clear in the statements by Al Otaiba. In the title by *Alarabiya*, a negative aspect of the *other* is emphasized by Al Otaiba (i.e. that Qatar is destabilizing the power balance in the region). He expressed that in an affirmative sentence. In the title chosen by *Aljazeera*, Al Otaiba denies that the UAE was behind the cyberattacks on the *Qatar News Agency*, by using a negative sentence. That way, he denies and de-emphasizes a negative aspect of the *self*.

Traditionally, the choice of content of the first paragraph explains the title and further indicates the focus of the article. *Alarabiya* therefore included another quote by Al Otaiba, who states that Qatar is the second largest host of terrorists in the world.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

... الدوحة هي ثاني دولة على مستوى العالم في استضافة أكبر عدد من الإرهابيين.

</div>

(= … Doha hosts the world's second largest number of terrorists.)

Aljazeera on the other hand adds that Al Otaiba evaded the question of whether the content the hackers published was fake or not, with which *Aljazeera* possibly implies that Al Otaiba believes it was not fake.

Next, the analysis of both articles will be given separately, without exhaustively comparing both as of yet (only small comparisons will be made).

The first interesting and rather striking point in the *Alarabiya* article is the fact that Al Otaiba denies that the quartet have set up a blockade on Qatar.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

وقال السفير الإماراتي في واشنطن العتيبة، في حديث لمجلة أتلانتك الأميركية، إن قطر غير محاصرة، فموانئها مفتوحة، وكذلك مطاراتها، ومواطنوها يتحركون منها وإليها بكل حرية.

</div>

(= The Emirati ambassador in Washington Al Otaiba said in an interview with the American magazine *[The] Atlantic* that Qatar is not blockaded, that its ports and airports are open and that its citizens move <u>freely</u> from and to Qatar.)

He said that Qatar's ports and airports are open and that people can move freely in and out of the country. However, in all reports by *Aljazeera* on the crisis so far there has not been a single report on the end or non-existence of the blockade. Additionally, as can be seen in the literature review, no academic articles deny the ongoing blockade. Moreover, *Alarabiya* has written in earlier articles that the airspace and land borders have been closed to Qatar.

Secondly, while *Aljazeera* has named the ongoing crisis a blockade or siege (حصار) from the beginning of the crisis onwards, the UAE diplomat now denies that the crisis can be named a blockade or siege by saying the following:

Alarabiya:

وفندت تصريحات الدوحة عما تسميه <u>حصاراً</u>، لصرف أنظار المجتمع الدولي عن حقيقة أزمتها مع دول الرباعية العربية.

(= [The UAE] refuted Doha's statements of what it called <u>a siege</u>, to avert the international community's eyes from the truth of its crisis with the four Arab countries.)

This excerpt has been taken from the *Alarabiya* article. *Aljazeera* did not discuss the use of the word حصار in its article on Al Otaiba.

Another example of an ideological strategy is the next sentence from the *Alarabiya* article:

... مشيراً إلى أن <u>كل</u> الإجراءات التي اتخذت أتت <u>لحماية أمن الدول الأربع.</u>

(= … indicating that <u>all</u> the measures that have been taken, were <u>to protect the safety of the four states</u>.)

The *Alarabiya* journalist included this sentence of Al Otaiba, for it is an example of *victimization*. Al Otaiba herein states that all the measures the quartet took were for the protection of the safety in their countries, making themselves a victim of Qatar's regional policy.

Fourthly, in the *Alarabiya* article another strategy has been used, namely presupposition:

... العتيبة الذي أوضح أن الدوحة لا يمكنها الاحتفاظ <u>بعلاقتها</u> مع طهران والميليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا والإرهابيين أينما كانوا ومع دول الخليج والدول العربية في الوقت ذاته ...

(= … Al Otaiba who made clear that Doha cannot maintain <u>its relations</u> with Tehran, armed militias in Libya and terrorists wherever they are, and with the Gulf and Arab countries at the same time …)

In this quote, the proposition that Qatar maintains relationships with armed militias and terrorists throughout the region and the world is presented as a presupposition. The choice of Al Otaiba to arrange his statement that way and the journalist's choice of including this quote, are ideologically motivated. Another example of a presupposition in the *Alarabiya* article is this one:

<div dir="rtl">

... لكنه فتح الباب مجدداً أمام عودتها إلى "الخيمة الخليجية والعربية" <u>إذا غيّرت سلوكها.</u>

</div>

(= … but he [Al Otaiba] opened the door again for its [Qatar] return to "the Gulf and Arab camp" <u>if it changed its behaviour</u>.)

In this sentence, the journalist stated that the UAE and the Gulf countries are open to renewed and better relations with Qatar, but only if it changed its behaviour, implying that Qatar's behaviour in the region has caused the relations to deteriorate.

Fifthly, the use of modal constructions is remarkable in the following sentence.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

وأعرب العتيبة عن اعتقاده أن أمير قطر <u>ربما</u> يرغب في التفاوض، لكن الأمير الأب <u>غالباً</u> لا يحبذ ذلك، وهو الممسك بمقاليد الأمور ...

</div>

(= Al Otaiba expressed his belief that the Emir of Qatar <u>maybe</u> wishes to negotiate, but that his father <u>probably</u> does not want that, and he is the one in charge …)

The use of ربما (maybe) and غالباً (probably) is of strategic importance in Al Otaiba's quote. They create a clear contrast between the willingness to negotiate of the Emir of Qatar and the restraint to do so of his father.

As has been said before, the *Aljazeera* article again focussed on other perspectives. *Alarabiya* mainly focussed on Al Otaiba's statements about Qatar threatening the power balance and peace in the Gulf region, about the fact that there is no blockade going on, and about Qatar supporting terrorism. *Aljazeera* solely focussed on the hacking of the *Qatar News Agency* in May 2017. In support of its arguments, *Aljazeera* used a number of strategies to enforce its rhetoric.

First of all, the use of الكثير من الـ (= a lot of) in the following sentence emphasizes that Al Otaiba tried hard to evade answering the question on whether the news that was spread by the hackers was false or not:

<div dir="rtl">

... وحملت إجابة العتيبة على هذا السؤال <u>الكثير من المراوغة</u> ...

</div>

(= …Al Otaiba's answer to this question carried <u>a lot of avoidance</u> …)

The *Aljazeera* journalist seems to imply that Al Otaiba believes the news was not false. On the other hand, Al Otaiba's firm statement that the hacking was not the work of the UAE is frequently repeated, for example:

<div dir="rtl">

... أعلم أنه <u>لم يكن نحن</u> ...

</div>

(= … I know that <u>it was not us</u> …)

<div dir="rtl">

... وأنا <u>متأكد</u> من ذلك ...

</div>

(= … and I am <u>sure</u> about that …)

It is rather remarkable that *Aljazeera* included this so frequently. It might be because *Aljazeera* wants to offer a balanced approach in its news report.

It is also striking that while the article by *Aljazeera* solely dealt with the cyber-attack on the *Qatar News Agency*, news site *Alarabiya* did not once mention the hacking or Al Otaiba's comments on that matter in its article or video fragment.

4.7   Reaction of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

The seventh pair of articles deals with the reaction of the current Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov to the developments, three months after the beginning of the GCC crisis. As Russia plays a key role in the Middle East, it is of considerable importance to discuss its reaction on the diplomatic conflict between the Gulf countries.

When the articles were published, on August the 28th 2017, Russian minister Lavrov was on the first high-level Russian visit to the region aimed at solving the conflict. On the 28th of August, he arrived in Kuwait to talk with the Emir of Kuwait, which is the mediator in the conflict. Later, he also visited Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

For the first time in this analysis, both news sites have similar – in any case not opposing – titles. Both state that Lavrov is in Kuwait to discuss the conflict.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

لافروف في الكويت لمحاولة لحلحلةً أزمة قطر

</div>

(= Lavrov is in Kuwait to try and solve the Qatar crisis)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

لافروف يلتقي أمير الكويت ويؤكد دعم وساطته الخليجية

</div>

 (= Lavrov meets with the Emir of Kuwait and assures his support for his mediation in the Gulf)

However, one disparity can be noticed in these two rather similar titles: while *Alarabiya* states Lavrov is in Kuwait in order to try and solve the crisis, *Aljazeera* does not include that in the title. *Aljazeera* emphasizes the fact that Lavrov expressed his support for the mediating efforts by Kuwait.

Moreover, in the rest of the article too, the focus remains rather similar. Both news sites repeatedly emphasize that Lavrov and Russia support the efforts by Kuwait and want to participate in settling the conflict. To express that, different noun phrases were used.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

...دعم موسكو الوساطة الكويتية...

</div>

(= … Moscow's support for Kuwait's mediation …)

<div dir="rtl">

...حض العواصم المعنية على الجلوس على طاولة واحدة لبحث الخلافات.

</div>

(= … he incited the concerned capitals to sit together at one table and investigate the disagreements.)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

...استعداد موسكو للمساهمة في مساعي دولة الكويت لتسوية للأزمة الخليجية...

</div>

(= … Moscow's readiness to take part in Kuwait's efforts to settle the Gulf crisis …)

<div dir="rtl">

...روسيا تتواصل مع كل دول الخليج...

</div>

(= … Russia is interconnected with all Gulf countries …)

<div dir="rtl">

وقال [لافروف] "إننا مستعدون لتقديم هذا الدعم ... "

</div>

(= He [Lavrov] said: "we are ready to present this support …")

<div dir="rtl">

وأضاف أن لافروف قد يحمل معه أفكارا جديدة لحل الأزمة الخليجية...

</div>

(= He [the chairman of *Aljazeera*] added that Lavrov maybe has new ideas on solving the crisis …)

Nonetheless, after a more precise reading of the articles, some small incongruities between both can be noticed. Firstly, as has been noticed in earlier articles and will be discussed later in this research, both news networks refer to the crisis in a different manner. *Aljazeera* calls it الأزمة الخليجية (the Gulf crisis), while *Alarabiya* uses أزمة قطر (Qatar crisis). *Alarabiya* also used الأزمة الخليجية, yet that was in a quote by the Russian ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatin. Both names for the conflict are an unequivocal difference, which will be discussed in greater detail in the *Discussion*.

Secondly, at the end of the article by *Alarabiya* an example of presupposition can be found.

Alarabiya:

ومنذ 5 يونيو/حزيران الماضي، قطعت كل من السعودية و الإمارات و البحرين و مصر علاقاتها مع قطر على خلفية <u>دعم الدوحة للإرهاب</u>.

(= Since the 5th of June, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut its ties to Qatar because of <u>Doha's support for terrorism</u>.)

In this sentence, it has been put that way that there is no doubt on whether Doha supports terrorist groups. As this is the last sentence of the article, the statement is emphasized even more.

Thirdly, *Aljazeera* frequently repeated that Lavrov wants to find a solution that fits all parties:

...لتسوية للأزمة الخليجية بما يلائم <u>جميع الأطراف</u>.

(= …to settle the Gulf crisis in a way that suits <u>all parties</u>.)

وقال "إننا مستعدون لتقديم هذا الدعم بطرق مقبولة <u>لجميع الأطراف</u> المعنية في هذا الوضع."

(= He [Lavrov] said: "we are ready to present this support in ways accepted by <u>all parties</u> affected by this case.")

The article also reports on Russia's interest in securing a unified Gulf Cooperation Council.

Aljazeera:

...وأنها مهتمة ببقاء مجلس التعاون موحدا كونه لاعبا دوليا وإقليميا مهما...

(= …[Russia] is concerned about keeping the Cooperation Council united as an important regional and international player …)

While *Alarabiya* frequently stated Russia wants a solution for the conflict, it did not emphasize its ambition of finding a solution for all parties. *Aljazeera*, on the other hand, frequently emphasized that

there must be a solution with which all parties agree, a statement that has been found in other articles too.

Finally, there is a sentence in the article by *Alarabiya* that draws the attention of the reader.

Alarabiya:

ومع أن موسكو نفت في مناسبات عدة دخولها على خط الوساطة في أزمة قطر، إلا أن المساعي الروسية وبحسب مراقبين تأتي بعد فترة ليست بالبعيدة من محاولات الدوحة لشراء أسلحة من موسكو في خضمّ أزمتها مع جاراتها في الخليج.

(= Although Moscow refused on several occasions to participate in the mediation in the Qatar crisis, still Russian efforts, following observers, come after a period not far from Doha's attempts of buying weapons from Moscow, in the midst of its crisis with its neighbours in the Gulf.)

Again, there is a presupposition in this sentence:

... محاولات الدوحة لشراء أسلحة من موسكو ...

(= … Doha's attempts of buying weapons from Moscow …)

This statement is not to be found in any other reports on the crisis or the Russia-Qatar relationship on other news websites (*Aljazeera, BBC, The Guardian* and *Russia Today*).

Concerning the discursive practices, *Aljazeera* obviously quoted Sergey Lavrov, as well as the director of the *Aljazeera* bureau in Kuwait. *Alarabiya* quoted Lavrov, a Kuwaiti news agency and the Russian ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatin.

4.8   Talks between Iran and Qatar

The eighth set of articles discusses talks held in the beginning of October 2017 between the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif and the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Iran too, like Russia and the US, plays an important role in the crisis. After the blockade was started, Iran sent help to Qatar. Moreover, Iran was one of the matters in dispute, as the quartet demanded relations between Qatar and Iran to be cut back. In a wider perspective, Iran and the countries of the quartet have developed a difficult relationship over the years; especially the tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran has increased.

First of all, as has been the case with others sets of articles, the title and focus of both articles clearly differ.

Alarabiya:

<div dir="rtl">

العلاقة مع إيران أحد أسباب أزمة قطر مع محيطها العربي

</div>

(= The relationship with Iran is one of the reasons for the crisis of Qatar with the surrounding Arab countries)

Aljazeera:

<div dir="rtl">

أمير قطر يستقبل وزير الخارجية الإيراني

</div>

(= The Emir of Qatar meets the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Aljazeera opted for a rather neutral title, plainly stating that there has been a meeting between Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani and Mohammad Javad Zarif. *Alarabiya* on the other hand did not yet mention the meeting but writes that the ties between Iran and Qatar are one of the reasons for the ongoing crisis, which is perceived as a more biased statement.

This disparity continues in the article. The *Alarabiya* article mainly focusses on the developing ties between Qatar and Iran, its impact on the GCC crisis and Iran's threat to the stability of the region. On the other hand, *Aljazeera* only focusses on the developing ties and the meeting between the Emir and the Iranian Minister but does not mention anything about the role of Iran in the regional politics and stability, as *Alarabiya* emphasized. In fact, *Aljazeera* wrote that the talks aimed to find "ways to strengthen the cooperation in the region" (سبل تعزيز التعاون في المنطقة).

The fact that *Aljazeera* quotes that Doha and Tehran want to cooperate more in the region, contrasts sharply with the *Alarabiya* article which stated the following:

<div dir="rtl">

...أن إيران هي أحد أسباب المشكلة مع جيران الدوحة.

</div>

(= … that Iran is one of the reasons for the problem with Doha's neighbours.)

This idea has been conveyed in four other ways in the *Alarabiya* article and not once in the *Aljazeera* article.

Secondly, the naming of the ongoing conflict again shows a disparity between both news networks. As has been discussed in the previous set of articles, *Alarabiya* calls the diplomatic conflict أزمة قطر or الأزمة القطرية (the Qatar crisis). As has been found in the sixth set of articles on the UAE top official Al Otaiba, *Aljazeera* refers to the crisis in another way.

Aljazeera:

...هذه الزيارة هي الأولى التي يؤديها وزير الخارجية الإيراني للدوحة منذ بدء <u>الحصار</u> الذي فرضته كل من السعودية والإمارات والبحرين على دولة قطر...

(= … this visit is the first by the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs to Doha since the beginning of <u>the blockade/siege</u> which Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Bahrain imposed on Qatar …)

In this article, *Aljazeera* again calls the crisis a "blockade" or "siege", while *Alarabiya* seems to deny that.

Alarabiya:

...وإن قال أميرها الشيخ تميم بن حمد آل ثاني إن <u>ما أسماه بالحصار</u>، هو ما سيدفع بلاده باتجاه إيران...

(= … and its Emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani said that <u>what he calls the blockade/siege</u> will push his country towards Iran …)

In this reference to a statement by the Emir of Qatar, the *Alarabiya* journalist chooses to cast doubt on referring to the crisis as a blockade or siege in a way similar to the article by *Alarabiya* on Al Otaiba's interview.

Thirdly, the following noun phrase in the *Alarabiya* article is an example of presupposition:

فكلمة الأمير القطري التي <u>سببت</u> الأزمة...

(= The speech by the Qatari Emir which <u>caused</u> the crisis …)

In this noun phrase, it is implied that (a speech by) the Emir of Qatar directly caused the crisis, while the crisis had several causes, as can be concluded from the *Literature Review* of this research and other academic writings on the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*.

The fourth finding, concerning transitivity, indicates the strong point of a comparative analysis.

Alarabiya:

… المقاطعة <u>المفروضة عليها</u> منذ بداية الأزمة في يونيو الماضي …

(= … the begin of the boycott, <u>imposed on it [Qatar]</u> since the begin of the crisis in last June, …)

Aljazeera:

... منذ بدء الحصار الذي <u>فرضته</u> كل من السعودية والإمارات والبحرين <u>على</u> دولة قطر في يونيو/حزيران الماضي.

(= … since the beginning of the blockade that Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain <u>have imposed on</u> Qatar since last June.)

In those two sentences, the same verb has been used: فرض على (to impose on). The *Alarabiya* journalist used the passive participle (المفروضة عليها) and left out the agents, while the *Aljazeera* journalist used the active conjugated verb (فرضته على قطر) and thus put emphasis on the agents. By using كل من (all of), the agents are emphasized even more.

4.9   Prospect

The linguistic and discursive analysis has offered many findings, some of which regularly reappeared. In the following chapter, the *Discussion*, these findings will be analysed further. Eventually conclusions will be drawn with regard to the *discourse of a conflict* and the representation of the *self* and the *other* in the articles by both news networks *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera*.

5   DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the *critical discourse analysis* will be discussed, interpreted and contextualized. In the discussion, the linguistic elements and discursive practices will be considered as well as the social practices.

In order to comprehensively investigate how the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* has been represented in the news discourse of *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera*, the next research questions have been formulated.

A. How is the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* constructed in online news discourse?
    a. How is it constructed by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
    b. How is it constructed by Qatari *Aljazeera*?
B. How is the discursive construction of the *other* represented in online news covering the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*?
    a. How is Qatar represented by Saudi *Alarabiya*?
    b. How is Saudi Arabia represented by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

Therein, the representation of the *other* occupies a central role. As both news networks are state media, they will reflect the Saudi and Qatari stance on the conflict and on the *other*. A comparative *critical discourse analysis* of a selected number of articles of both news networks has been done, which aims to offer insight in the linguistic, discursive and social representation of the conflict.

5.1   Disparity in focus

First of all, it needs to be emphasized that the main finding of this research was the disparity in focus between both news networks. Although all sets of articles were published not more than three days apart and discussed the same topics, only one out of eight sets was rather similar: the article on Lavrov's visit to the Gulf states.

Both networks used other quotes of the same sources, such as the comments by Rex Tillerson on the list of demands or quoted other sources, they used other figures and statistics to back their argumentation. Moreover, they excluded parts of the story, while including others. Those disparities will be discussed in greater detail and with concrete examples in the following sections.

5.2   Impact on the Qatari economy

In the first two articles, *Alarabiya* frequently links the conflict with the negative consequences for on the one hand the Qatari economy, and on the other *Qatar Airways*. It therefore uses a number of linking elements such as conjunctions, coordinate and subordinate clauses, and certain nouns (such as الأثر – the influence). Moreover, it explicitly highlights the negative (long-term) effects of the crisis by using superlatives such as الأدنى (the lowest) and أعلى (highest). Furthermore, it uses statistics to show that

the Qatari Riyal is losing its value and that *Qatar Airways* is threatened to lose a certain percentage of its income. The use of the word مهددة (threatened) should also be remarked. However, the losses for *Qatar Airways* are only based on prospects and estimates. In addition, the use of the modal particle قد, conveying possibility, shows that the claims by *Alarabiya* are not yet proven. The *Alarabiya* article on the Qatari economy also presupposes that the Qatari people fear the negative impact of the crisis on the economy, which has not been rendered by the *Aljazeera* article.

On the contrary, *Aljazeera* states that *Qatar Airways* has been enjoying financial growth over the last year, and that the Qatari economy disposes of huge reserves – emphasized by quantitative predication yet without support of any statistics – with which Qatar managed to overcome other crises too. Thus, the Qatari people can be assured that Qatar will overcome the sanctions; an example of *positive self-presentation*. Even more remarkable is that in both articles by *Aljazeera*, the crisis was only mentioned once – in the one about the economy. The journalist does not once imply that there could possibly be negative consequences for the Qatari economy due to the crisis. Moreover, *Aljazeera* stresses that it is not in the interest of any Gulf state to destabilize another Gulf state, without explicating the crisis. Thereby, the *Aljazeera* source, Khalid bin Rashid Al-Khater, also states that Qatar will not act in the same way, saying that Qatar's policies are built on a firm foundation that cannot be changed so easily. Concerning *Qatar Airways*, *Aljazeera* only discussed the rise of its yearly profits, without mentioning the crisis once. Therefore, it did use statistics. The source in the *Aljazeera* article is *Qatar Airways* itself, which makes it reliable information. However, *Aljazeera* did not publish one article discussing the negative impact of the blockade on *Qatar Airways*' profits, while it is not questionable whether the blockade has had a negative impact.

It can be concluded that neither of the news networks published balanced articles, yet selected the information that represented their own entity positively.

5.3   Selection of comments

In the research, a number of articles covering other states' comments on the crisis have been analysed. It is interesting to investigate precisely which comments have been quoted by which network, for it indicates which message the network wants to convey. Concerning the comments by French president Macron, both networks quoted him in stating the necessity (الضرورة and يجب أن) of finding a solution for the Gulf crisis, for the region to remain stable. However, both networks conveyed another message regarding Macron's meetings with Gulf officials, although the articles were published on the same day. *Alarabiya* stated that the meetings would take place, while *Aljazeera* said they had been cancelled. After consulting other news outlets it turned out they had not been held.

Alarabiya quoted Rex Tillerson who said that the list of demands forms a foundation for debate about solving the crisis, while *Aljazeera* quotes him in saying that some demands are hard to comply with. This has already been conveyed in the title, which can be perceived as rather accusing. However,

Aljazeera also says that he thinks the list of demands can be the foundation of a debate. In that, it can be said that *Aljazeera* approaches Tillerson's comments in a more balanced way, as *Alarabiya* did not mention that Tillerson found some demands to be hard to comply with. Besides, *Aljazeera* elaborated more on the comments by Tillerson, while *Alarabiya* mainly elaborated on the content of the demands. Furthermore, it was striking that *Aljazeera* frequently repeated the next three messages: solving the crisis, continuing the talks and reducing the tension. It can be concluded that *Alarabiya* presents Tillerson as a supporter of the Saudi-led blockade, while *Aljazeera* applies a more balanced approach – although it uses a rather accusing title – and states that Tillerson thinks some demands are hard to comply with and that others form the foundation for a debate.

In both articles on Sergey Lavrov's visit and the Russian position, the emphasis is on the fact that Lavrov supports Kuwait's mediation and wants to solve the crisis. In the *Aljazeera* article, it has been emphasized twice that Lavrov wants a solution for both parties, which has not been rendered in the *Alarabiya* article. The articles on Al Otaiba and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani will be discussed separately in the next sections. Besides, to underline the reliability of its sources, *Alarabiya* stated twice that they checked the reports they quoted.

It can be concluded that both news networks pick and choose (*cherry-picking*) the statements they deem appropriate for their audience, stance and side in the conflict.

5.4   Al Otaiba: accusing Qatar

In the article by *Alarabiya*, UAE diplomat Al Otaiba made numerous accusations towards Qatar, calling it a demolition force, the second largest host of terrorists in the world and a supporter of terrorists. He also refutes the fact that there is a blockade, as he says that Qatar calling the crisis a blockade or siege is a way of distracting the attention of the international community away from the truth about the crisis. All the above examples are considered to be *negative other-presentation*.

Another strategy that has been used by Al Otaiba in *Alarabiya*'s article is *victimization*. The next statement by Al Otaiba was quoted:

<div dir="rtl">

... مشيراً إلى أن كل الإجراءات التي اتخذت أتت لحماية أمن الدول الأربع.

</div>

(= … indicating that all the measures that have been taken, were to protect the safety of the four states.)

In this statement he says that the blockading countries had to take the measures in order to protect themselves. Thus, he manages to represent the blockading countries as a victim of Qatar's (regional) policy.

In addition, *Alarabiya* states that Al Otaiba opened the door again for Qatar to return to "their side", "if it changes its behaviour". With that, he implies first that it is better for Qatar to return to their side of the

region's power balance, and second that Qatar is to change its behaviour. The fact that Al Otaiba still wants to talk with Qatar – despite its (alleged) support of terrorism – is an example of *positive self-presentation*.

Concerning the article by *Aljazeera*, the focus is on the hacking of the *Qatar News Agency* in May 2017. In that article Al Otaiba has been quoted frequently stating that the UAE is not behind the hacking of the agency, although *Aljazeera* also emphasized that Al Otaiba wanted to avoid some questions about that in his interview, such as whether he thinks the fake news that was spread by the hackers was false or not. It is rather remarkable that *Aljazeera* repeated his denial so often. It could be because *Aljazeera* wants to be neutral and offer every piece of information in a more or less balanced article. Another reason can be that *Aljazeera* wants to put emphasis on the fact that Al Otaiba denies any involvement in the hacking, although it seems likely that the UAE was behind the ban. *Alarabiya* did not cover any of Al Otaiba's statements about the hacking.

As *Aljazeera* on the one hand often repeated that Al Otaiba denied any responsibility for the hacking and on the other hand emphasized that Al Otaiba tended to avoid some questions, it can be suggested that they used a more balanced approach. In *Alarabiya*'s article, Al Otaiba is represented as a reasonable diplomat for he still considers talks with Qatar, while Qatar is not depicted positively or neutrally in a rather accusing narrative.

5.5   Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani: standing up for and complementing Qatar

Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani's speech on the list of demands offered various quotes that have been used in both articles. Thus, they give some examples of how the *other* is being represented in the discourse. *Alarabiya* focussed on the fact that Qatar wants to decide for itself what to do, without – and with great emphasis on that in the *Alarabiya* article – any dictations by other states. Also, *Alarabiya* includes comments by the Qatari Minister of Defence, which were generally more negative and accusing. He said that time and waiting will make the crisis and the relations even worse and accused the blockading countries of interfering in Qatari affairs. It can be said that the Emir is presented as a protective leader, who does not want any country to dictate him what to do.

Aljazeera on the other hand mainly focussed on the Emir's praising of the Qatari people, history, working values and quality of its projects, which is a clear-cut example of *positive self-presentation*. Furthermore, the Emir said that the crisis has made the country stronger and created more employment. Thus, he succeeds in representing Qatar and the Qatari society as a hegemonic entity. This strategy is called *hegemonisation*.

5.6   Iran: a threat or part of the solution?

One state that deserves particular attention in this analysis is Iran. As Iran has been the Saudi adversary in recent developments in the Middle East, it is unquestionable that this poor relation will also be rendered in the news coverage. The *Alarabiya* article has a rather accusing title, stating that Iran is one of the reasons for the crisis to have developed: an example of *role allocation*. In addition, the article states that the Emir said that "the blockade […] will push his country towards Iran, as if he forgets or pretends to forget that Iran is one of the reasons of the problem with Doha's neighbours." Furthermore, the article by *Alarabiya* frequently repeats that Iran is a threat to the region's stability, exoressed by a number of presuppositions. The journalist says that Iran supports terrorism, interferes in "a lot of Arabic countries' matters" and backs "the instability of countries such as Yemen and Syria." *Alarabiya* also states that Qatar has been proceeding towards Iran with for example the return of its ambassador after a year and a half.

In the article by *Aljazeera*, a more neutral title has been used, simply stating that the Emir of Qatar has met with the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The reason for Zarif's visit was discussing economic cooperation, the latest developments in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and all issues relating to the Gulf region. The emphasis is mainly on the cooperation between both countries in the region.

In both articles, Iran is depicted entirely different; *Alarabiya* presents Iran as the main threat to peace in the region, while *Aljazeera* believes cooperation with Iran can lead to more stability in the Middle East.

5.7   Qatar: supporter of terrorism?

However, Iran is not the only country that has been associated with terrorism support by *Alarabiya*. Qatar too has been accused in five out of eight articles that it supports terrorist organizations and threatens peace, not only in the Middle East but also in Europe. This has been conveyed using a particular strategy, namely presupposition. As discussed in the previous chapter *Alarabiya* frequently presupposed that the reader already knew of Qatar's support for terrorists. The following presupposition has been rendered twice:

... العتيبة الذي أوضح أن الدوحة لا يمكنها الاحتفاظ <u>بعلاقتها</u> مع طهران والميليشيات المسلحة في ليبيا والإرهابيين أينما كانوا ومع دول الخليج والدول العربية في الوقت ذاته ...

(= … Al Otaiba who made clear that Doha cannot maintain <u>its relations</u> with Tehran, armed militias in Libya and terrorists wherever they are, and with the Gulf and Arab countries at the same time …)

In this excerpt, it is presented as an already known fact that Qatar has relations with terrorists due to the use of the possessive suffix. The title of that article is a quote by Al Otaiba saying that Qatar is the world's second largest host of terrorists.

Moreover, *Alarabiya* also quotes a study by the *Huffington Post* which says that Qatar continues to threaten the peace in Europe and especially in Great Britain. "Other Western sources" – though unnamed – have also stated that Qatar plays an active role in supporting extremism in the region, according to the *Alarabiya* article. Thus, *Alarabiya* manages to indicate that other news networks also support the Saudi stance on Qatari sponsoring of terrorism.

These presuppositions and other statements by for example Al Otaiba represent Qatar negatively and accuse it of sponsoring terrorism; an example of *negative other-presentation* and *role allocation*.

5.8   The cutting or the cutter?

Role allocation is a strategy that is often realized by the use of active or passive constructions. In the second article by *Alarabiya*, the journalist de-emphasized the fact that Saudi Arabia and co severed ties with Qatar by using the seventh pattern in Arabic of the verb قطع (to cut/to sever). In that way the emphasis is more on the state of affairs and less on the agent; an example of *backgrounding* of one's own negative features. However, in its third article, *Alarabiya* used the active first pattern of the same verb, which emphasizes the agent more. That active pattern has also been used by *Aljazeera*, as it is more logical for *Aljazeera* to lay the emphasis on the agent; an example of *foregrounding* or *negative other-representation*.

In the last article by *Alarabiya* again a passive verb form (participle) has been used to divert the reader's attention from the agent to the state of affairs. *Aljazeera* on the other hand used the same verb, yet in the active form, naming the agents (Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain).

5.9   What's in a name?

Finally, the most remarkable finding concerning *naming and reference* is the naming of the crisis. First of all, it is remarkable that *Alarabiya* most frequently named the crisis أزمة قطر or الأزمة القطرية (the Qatari crisis; the Qatar crisis), which can be perceived as accusing Qatar of being the (only) reason for the crisis. Also الأزمة الدبلوماسية (the diplomatic crisis) was used once, which is more neutral.

Aljazeera on the other hand named the crisis الأزمة في الخليج or الأزمة الخليجية (the Gulf crisis; the crisis in the Gulf), which can be perceived as stating that all the Gulf countries – and the GCC – are somehow involved, not only Qatar.

However, *Aljazeera* also referred to the crisis الحصار (the blockade/the siege) since its beginning. In the article on Tillerson too, the word الحصار is used in one of his quotes. Yet the fact that the crisis can be called a blockade or a siege has been refuted in two articles by *Alarabiya*: once in a quote by UAE diplomat Al Otaiba, once by an *Alarabiya* journalist. Al Otaiba stated that the present crisis cannot be named a blockade or siege as the Qatari Emir does. This is remarkable, even more because in the

article on Javad Zarif, the journalist writes about المقاطعة (the boycott), which is similar in meaning to a blockade.

Al Otaiba even said that there is no blockade on Qatar and that its ports and airports are open, from which its citizens can travel freely. However, when looking for similar reports by *Aljazeera* – or even *Alarabiya* – not one article can be found stating that the blockade is over. The denying of the blockade is an example of *backgrounding* of one's own negative characteristics.

5.10   The discourse of a conflict

To formulate answers on the research questions, all above-mentioned sections should be taken into consideration, as well as all concrete results of the *critical discourse analysis*.

A.   How is the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* constructed by Saudi *Alarabiya*?

Alarabiya constructed the crisis as being necessary to protect the quartet from Qatar's foreign policy. It also emphasized that the blockade's consequences for Qatar can turn out to be rather negative for its economy and flag carrier. Concerning the list of demands, it stated that Rex Tillerson said some of the demands are the foundation for a debate. Regarding the construction of other social actors in the crisis, Iran has been represented as a threat to stability and one of the reasons for the GCC crisis. Qatar's relations with Iran are being depicted as adverse for solving the crisis. Russia is being represented as a country that wants to resolve the crisis and supports Kuwait's mediation, like France.

B.   How is the *2017-18 GCC Crisis* constructed by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

Aljazeera on the other hand explicitly names the crisis a siege and blockade – which is refuted by *Alarabiya*. However, it seems to deny that the crisis bears any negative consequences for its economy: it is stated that the crisis created more work and made the Qatari people stronger. Furthermore *Aljazeera* laid great emphasis on the solving of the crisis in its articles on international reactions on the crisis by France, Russia and the US. In addition, it underlined that Qatar and other players want a solution for all parties, which was not rendered in the articles by *Alarabiya*.

In general, it is remarkable that *Aljazeera* focussed more on a balanced approach to the representation of the conflict than *Alarabiya*.

C.   How is Qatar represented by Saudi *Alarabiya*?

The articles by *Alarabiya* offer numerous images about Qatar in the ongoing crisis. Qatar is in general described as a supporter of terrorist organizations, and as a country suffering from the blockade and crisis with its neighbours. As Al Otaiba stated, the measures were taken to protect Saudi Arabia and co from Qatar's policies. *Alarabiya* also says that Qatari people are afraid of possible negative consequences for their economy. Moreover, *Alarabiya* calls the crisis *the Qatar Crisis*, possibly implying

that Qatar is the (only) reason for the conflict. With regard to the solution for the crisis, Qatar is depicted as being determined not to give in to any dictations by other states. Al Otaiba also states that Qatar has to change its behaviour. Furthermore, he says that while the Emir might be open for debate, his father is not – and he is the one in command (according to Al Otaiba.

D. How is Saudi Arabia represented by Qatari *Aljazeera*?

In the articles by *Aljazeera* there are fewer images of Saudi Arabia, which again points at *Aljazeera*'s neutrality compared to *Alarabiya*. A returning image is the one of Saudi Arabia and co as the agent – or perhaps aggressor – in the present conflict, although that image is constructed rather cautiously. The name Qatar gives to the crisis, الحصار, also indicates that Saudi Arabia's blockade is rather a siege of Qatar. Also, the comments by Tillerson suggest that some demands by the quartet are too hard to comply with, implicitly accusing Saudi Arabia of being to harsh on Qatar. It can be concluded that most images regarding Saudi Arabia by *Aljazeera* are rather cautiously constructed.

In general, *Aljazeera* mainly reports on its own side in the conflict with for example the Emir's compliments for the Qatari people and Al-Khater's statements that Qatar will not act in the same way as its neighbours. Moreover, it emphasizes its economic reserves and underlines that other international leaders want the crisis to be resolved.

6   CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to analyse and compare the news reports by state media *Aljazeera* and *Alarabiya* on the *2017-18 GCC crisis*, which began in June 2017. The central concept in that comparison was the ideology behind the text production. Therefore, a selection of eight sets of articles was analysed using the *critical discourse analysis* method as described by Richardson (2007), covering the linguistic, discursive and social practices of the news discourse. The focus of the research questions was the discursive construction of the conflict and the ideological representation of the *other*.

The research has indicated that both news networks use a number of techniques to convey assumptions and ideas of their side of the conflict. The main finding was the disparity in focus; both news networks reported on the same story from – at times utter – different angles and perspectives, in order to fit their audience and ideology. Some of the techniques that have been used are: *positive self-representation*, *negative other-representation*, *role allocation*, *backgrounding*, *foregrounding*, *hegemonisation*, …

This research has proven its value to the study of media and conflicts in general, and the *discourse of a conflict* in particular. It has shown how (state) media can approach a story from different angles by excluding certain information, including other or (de-)emphasizing certain developments. As the GCC crisis is still ongoing at the moment of publication of this research, further research can be done investigating the change or continuity of the news reports by *Alarabiya* and *Aljazeera* on the *2017-18 GCC Crisis*. Furthermore, reports by other news networks in the Middle East can be analysed, as well as other .

By way of conclusion, this study has shown that it is important to read news reports critically, in order to understand the mechanisms behind the text production and consumption.

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8   CORPUS REFERENCES

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9   APPENDIX