

The Impact of the Media in the Implementation of Qatar's Foreign Policy on the Public Opinion of the People of the Middle East (2011-2023)

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Abstract : Modern diplomacy, in its general form, refers to the people and not the governments, and diplomacy tactics are more addressed to the people than to the governments. Media diplomacy and cyber diplomacy are also one of the sub-branches of public diplomacy and, in fact, the role of media in the process of influencing public opinion and directing foreign policy. Mass media, including written, radio and television, theater, satellite, internet, and news agencies, transmit information and demands. What the Qatari government tried to implement in the countries of the region during the Arab Spring and after was through its important media, Al Jazeera. The embargo on Qatar began in 2017, when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a land, sea, and air blockade against the country. The media tool constitutes the cornerstone of soft power in the field of foreign policy, which Qatari leaders have consistently resorted to over the past two decades. Undoubtedly, the role it played in covering the events of the Arab Spring has created geopolitical tensions. The United Arab Emirates and other neighboring countries sometimes criticize Al Jazeera for providing a platform for the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and other Islamists to promote their ideology. In 2011, at the same time as the Arab Spring, Al Jazeera reached the peak of its popularity. Al Jazeera's live coverage of protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Syria helped create a unified narrative of the Arab Spring, with audiences tuning in every Friday to watch simultaneous protests across the Middle East. Al Jazeera operates in three groups: First, it is a powerful base in the hands of the government so that it can direct and influence Arab public opinion. Therefore, this network has been able to benefit from the unlimited financial support of the Qatar government to promote its desired policies and culture. Second, it has provided an attractive platform for politicians and scientific and intellectual elites, thus attracting their support and defense from the government and its rulers. Third, during the last years of Prince Hamad's reign, the Al Jazeera network formed a deterrent weapon to counter the media and political struggle campaigns. The importance of the research is that this network covers a wide range of people in the Middle East and, therefore, has a high influence on the decision-making of countries. On the other hand, Al Jazeera is influential as a tool of public diplomacy and soft power in Qatar's foreign policy, and by studying it, the results of its effectiveness in the past years can be examined. Using a qualitative method, this research analyzes the impact of the media on the implementation of Qatar's foreign policy on the public opinion of the people of the Middle East. Data collection has been done by the secondary method, that is, reading related books, magazine articles, newspaper reports and articles, and analytical reports of think tanks. The most important findings of the research are that Al Jazeera plays an important role in Qatar's foreign policy in Qatar's public diplomacy. So that, in 2011, 2017 and 2023, it played an important role in Qatar's foreign policy in various crises. Also, the people of Arab countries use Al-Jazeera as their first reference.

Keywords : Al Jazeera, Qatar, media, diplomacy

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