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Framing the Syrian Uprising: Comparative Analysis of *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times*

The study reports on framing of the Syrian uprising by two international newspapers i.e. Khaleej Times and The New York Times in the perspectives of their respective cultures, political inclinations and national policies regarding the problem in question. For this purpose editorials of the selected newspapers published from 15 March 2011 to 14 March 2012 were analyzed. The findings showed differences in the number of stories published by the two newspapers nevertheless, the mean length of editorials on the issue was almost the same. The two papers were also found not to be on the same page in treating and framing the issue. As far as framing of the issue is concerned, both the newspapers gave similar unfavorable coverage to Bashar al Assad however, conforming to their own cultures, political orientations, and official state policies both the papers framed the issue.

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■ Introduction

Syrians have been under continuous authoritarianism since 1963, when Ba'ath Party established its rule in the country as a result of a successful coup. It imposed emergency and martial law in the country, confiscating people's basic personal, political, and social rights. A bloodless coup within the Ba'ath party brought Hafiz al Assad, an Alawite ruler in power, who repressed the deviant fractions, killing many of dissidents and establishing a Shia regime in the country. By engraving the constitution of 1973, he stamped the supremacy of Ba'ath party over the Syria. Also he crushed an uprising in Hama in 1982 by bulldozing thousands of dissidents, and imprisoning hundreds others. His successor Bashar al Assad also put curbs on media, and individual freedom. This created a sense of frustration among the Syrians about the political future of the country.

Syria is a land of diverse ethnicity. According to an estimate of 2012, population of Syria is 21,118,000 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013). Ethnic division includes 90.3 per cent Arabs and 9.3 per cent Kurds, Armenians and other smaller groups. Seventy-four per cent of the total population are Sunni, and 13 per cent are Shia, while the remaining 13 per cent of population are Christians, Druze, Jews, etc (World Population Review, 2013). Since 1970, a minority is ruling over majority by means of repression and suppression. This is considered to be a cause of hatred and insecurity among the majority population (Sunni).

Corruption, unemployment, greater ratio of youth in the country's population and poor economic policies of the regime coupled with political repression are also some of the factors which contributed to the suffering of people in Syria. All these factors mobilized the Syrians to stand up for their rights and privileges.

The present Syrian uprising is part of the Arab spring, which was triggered by the self-immolation of Mohammad Bouzaizi of Tunisia on December 18, 2010 (against the cruel and humiliating behavior of the local authorities (Basselgia, 2012). After sweeping across various Arab countries the wave entered into Syria and but turned into a nationwide uprising on March 15, 2011, asking for an immediate exit of Bashar al Assad and his Ba'athist rule, which is hovering over the country since 1963 (Bhardwaj, 2012).

Syria occupies great significance due to its geo-strategic location in the Middle East. Owing to its geography, Syria is a hub of conflicting interests of the world powers. As per an agreement Syria has lent its strategically important warm-water seaport of Tartus to Russia, where Russia has established its naval base to keep a check on movement in Mediterranean Sea and to facilitate its trade. Syria also enjoys good relations with China. Syria is traditional rival of Israel. It has fought three wars with Israel and lost its strategic heights, the Golan Heights, in 1967. It is a staunch strategic and ideological ally of Iran, which borders Syria. Due to its enmity with Israel, and its socialist ideology, its relations with United States have been remained tense for quite some time. Its relations with other Sunni regimes of the region have also been remained volatile.

The outcome of the present uprising will define the future power politics of the region. So the events of the uprising are

not only continuously being monitored and covered but also framed by mass media of the region as well as by the international media especially, those owned by West, United States and others who have some stakes in the region. And as scholars of the agenda-setting and framing perspectives believe media owners and organizers having different agenda cover the same event/issue differently for pursuit of their own national and cultural objectives therefore, the present topic is selected by the researchers to look into how the two selected newspapers i.e., *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times*, which are internationally known but having divergent policies, contexts and regional backgrounds cover, treat and frame the problem in question. Objective of this study are to find out how much coverage within the selected time frame of one year i.e., from March 15, 2011 to March 14, 2012 has been given to Syrian uprising; what frames were employed by the two newspapers in their editorials, and whether policies of the papers regarding coverage and treatment of the issue vary or akin.

■ Statement of Problem

The aim of this study is to investigate the extent of coverage given to the Syrian uprising by *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times*, to find out the difference, if any, in coverage given to the issue by the two selected newspapers, to examine the treatment of the issue by both the newspapers, and to determine how the two papers have framed the issue in their editorials from March 15, 2011 and March 14, 2012. The researchers will analyze editorials of *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times* for this purpose during the selected period of the study. The study will unfold how cultural factors and

other interests shape editorial contents of news media which may be setting agenda of the audience. It will be helpful in understanding the official policies of both the newspapers on the issue in question in the context of their varying cultures, ideology, and national stakes.

■ Theoretical Framework

The present study is based on the idea of media framing. Framing is an extension of agenda setting in terms of media effects and is attributed to second-level agenda setting (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 1997; Scheufele, 1999). It involves selection and salience (Entman, 1993) and calling attention to some aspects of a reality or obscuring others (Griffin, 2003).

Framing is a "Fractured Paradigm" (Entman, 1993) which has no single or universal definition. Different scholars have defined the concept differently. The most cited definition provided by Robert M. Entman (1993) posits that:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (p. 52)

Framing involves two types of frames: media frames and audience frames (Sheufele, 1999). Media frames are generally viewed as coherent packages of information containing some vital idea which gives meaning to the series of events (Sheufele, 1999). They are the tools which provide a context suggesting what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Weaver, 2007; Danker-Dake, 2008). Norris, Kern, and Just (2003) also viewed frames

as key concepts and phrases which interpret developments. Audience frames reside inside the readers or viewers. They are the mental schemata which help in the subsequent interpretation or processing of media text (Entman, 1993).

In nutshell, framing defines how certain information is packaged in the media to prompt certain interpretations and to rule out others (Gamson & Stuart, 1992). It helps in the construction of reality and organize the world into manageable chunks for the mass media audience (Gamson, 1989; Tuchman, 1978). Frames can be found in four locations: the communicator, the text, the audience and the culture (Entman, 1993). The communicators (journalists) cover events or issues in a number of ways following certain news values, routines and ideology, personal and professional bias and organizational and extra organizational pressures (McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Coverage by the journalists is more influenced by media routines than their personal biases (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001).

The presence of frames in a text are the projection of power (Entman, 2007) and can be gauged by looking the usage of certain keywords, phrases, stock phrases, stereotyped images and sources of information (Entman, 1993) or rhetoric in verbs, nouns or modifiers- adjectives or proverbs (Ray, 2004). The frames in text provide contexts which are transferred to the audience, who interpret them according to their mental schemata, defined as mentally stored clusters of ideas (Goffman, 1974) that guide individuals' processing of information (Graber, 1988). Although each member of the audience has unique mental schemata, and all the frames are not created equally (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998) yet they are considered as having an almost uniform effect on the majority, if not all, of the audience exposed to

them. This common effect on readers is what makes it important to study the frames used by the mass media (Ray, 2004). This reflects that framing affects readers' understanding (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997) and recall of thoughts about events and issues (Valkenburg, Semetko, & De Vreese, 1999).

Frames are also embedded in a culture. They can be studied by looking at the elements and aesthetics of one's culture. Culture comprises of shared beliefs and understandings, mediated and formed by symbols and language of a group or society (Zald, 1996). It play an important role in giving the context and interpretation of certain information about an occurrence (Wolfsfeld, 2003; Zhou, 2008). The framing of an event or occurrence in one culture can have different interpretations from framing of same event in another culture (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997).

Since the present research is only limited to media frames, hence only frames embedded in text were analyzed, using a mixed qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the Editorials of *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times*.

Culture and ideology of a nation play a significant role in influencing media framing. Aday, Livingston and Hebert (2005) in their study on coverage of the Iraq war found that there were significant bias in the coverage among US and Arab media about the issue. Both the media constructed the reality as per their culture and ideology. Lent (2006) views that American newspapers are not known for giving much coverage to foreign issues, except where their culture and ideology matter. Democracy and capitalism are the dominant cultural norms of United States. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaparsad (1998) found that anti-communism and pro-

democracy were the main frames used in American press. US media also conform to the policies of their governments and national interests while covering a foreign crises or conflict (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). Vliegenthart and Schröder (2010) conducted a textual analysis of newspapers of four Western countries (US, UK, Germany and the Netherlands) on Iraq war and found that US media covered the issue in line with their government policy, legitimizing the intervention in Iraq and framing accordingly. Other studies also strongly suggest that media framing conforms to US state policy (Carpenter, 2007; Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, & Trammell, 2005; Fahmy & Kim, 2008). Cordesman (1996) listed major strategic interests of United States in Middle East. These include oil, security of regional friends and countering regional and ideological foes, Iranian nuclear program, counter terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, support for military presence in the region, defense basis and installations, Russian and Chinese influence in the region, arms control, capitalist ideologies, humanitarian issue, democracy and many others. In the period of cold war, before the Gulf War, US foreign policy in the Middle East had a "holy trinity" of American interests: Israel, oil and anti-communism but the collapse of Soviet Union left a vacuum in American policy which was filled by Islamic terrorism or fundamentalism. So soon after the end of cold war and the incidence of 9/11, the anti-communism frame was replaced by anti-Islam (Ibrahim, 2010). Whereas the pan-Arab media has been long serving under hegemony of authoritarian regimes who exercise their control on media either through direct pressure or through money (CHIBA, 2012). Journalists work there either under self-censorship or state censorship (Khazen, 1999). Arab media has a limited freedom but

surprisingly they are freer in American-occupied Iraq or in Israel-occupied Palestine, and are heavily influenced by political context and ethnic divisions of political landscape. In order to maintain an "Arab cause", they cover international events or crises more vocally than local interests as reflected in coverage of Darfur crises where the crises was framed more in political context rather than humanitarian (Jordan, Egypt, Denmark, & Italy, 2009). The Arab mainstream media reflect the political interests and political ideology of the state while covering the social movements in Arab world, which can be attributed as double standard or hypocrisy as being pro-revolution in one state and counter-revolution in another state. This double-faced political ideology is manifested by media portrayal of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera has supported the uprisings in Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, Libya and Yemen but did not favor it in Bahrain, conforming to the political ideology of their states (Alahmed, 2012)

The US media portrays countries (both Muslim or Non-Muslim) positively where their political, economic and military interests matter (Saleem, 2007) even if they are ruled by a non-democratic government (Kux, 2001; Said, 1997; Siraj, 2006). Saleem (2007) studied the framing of image of foreign countries in US media and found that US media supports US foreign policies and frames foreign countries as accordingly (Siraj (2006) in his study on image of Pakistan in pre and post-9/11 press of USA concluded that conforming to US foreign policy in their coverage, the US media portrayed Pakistan as foe before 9/11 and as friend after 9/11). But contrary to the findings of Siraj (2006), Khan (2008) while studying the image of Pakistan pre and post 9/11 in elite US newspapers found that US media does not conform

to foreign policy of its government rather it conforms to their cultural differences with other nations. Although after 9/11 Pakistan was an ally of US and supported its war against terror but being a Muslim state, cultural differences dominated over foreign policy of US in media portrayal. He found that US media portrayed Pakistan as foe both before and after the event of 9/11 while portraying Muslims stereotypically by using demonizing words and terms. Favorable or unfavorable coverage of any country in US media depends upon its relations with United States. But when it comes to the interests of Muslim world and its image, US media portrays the allies or friends negatively (Ali, 2007). Ali (2012) studied the image of Turkey in two American magazines before 9/11 and found that although Turkey is US ally yet being a Muslim country it was framed negatively. A similar study shows the image of Afghanistan as negative in American press (Shabir, Ali, & Iqbal, 2011).

Merskin (2004) conducted a textual analysis on the speeches delivered by President Obama on the media after September 11, 2001 to January 29, 2002. He concludes that confirming the prior studies, media portrayed Arabs stereotypically as evil, bloodthirsty, animalistic terrorists and enemies. According to Suleiman (1999), in US media, barbarism and cruelty are associated as common traits with all the Arabs. US newspapers distort the image of Arabs, framing them as extremists, terrorists and fanatics (El-Farra, 1996). Abrahamian (2003) found that after the incidence of 9/11 the US media framed the incidence in the context of Islam and portrayed all Muslims as either terrorists or sympathizing with terrorists.

Whereas US media cover a terrorist act in the perspective of episodic framing and demonize all Muslims, the Arab

media doesn't see Muslims as monolithic or terrorists in their coverage, rather it covers such terrorist incidents in thematic framing, giving proper context and avoids showing individual acts as labels to the whole Arabs or Muslims. It also differentiates freedom struggle from terrorism. Giving such a context, Arab media uses terms such as "martyrs" for the Palestinian suicide attackers against Israel (El-Nawawy, 2004) legitimizing a fight against Israel as it has occupied their land (Lynch, 2003). This shows that coverage of any Arab nation in US media depends upon its diplomatic ties with Israel. A nation enjoying good relations with Israel will be portrayed more favorable in the US media than the one who has rivalry with Israel... Studies show that in 1979 during the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem, Egypt and PLO were given more favorable coverage in the US media (Asi, 1981)

Summarizing the above literature review on Arab and American media, it can be assumed that the US media frame external/international uprisings or crises and actors involved in them in line with the policies and interests of their government, their culture and ideology. Whereas, the Arab media works partially under authoritarian controls either by self-censorship or state-censorship, and frames external conflicts while following political orientations of the country and ideology of the state.

■ Frames used in Previous Studies

Previous studies have used different generic and issue-specific frames while studying issues and conflicts and they have used both deductive (pre-defined) approach and I inductive (define after initial reading of data) approaches to

study the frames. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) used five generic news frames (attribution of responsibility frame, conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequence frame, and, morality frame) in their study of the European politics. Fong and Ishak (2013) also used same generic frames while investigating the framing of interethnic conflict in Malaysia in the year 2007.

Benford and Snow offered a classification of framing in three categories: diagnostic (defining problem and attribution), prognostic (suggesting solution), and, motivational (mobilizing for collective action) while studying the framing of social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000). Shou (2012) contends that Jing (2008) used three frames (attribution of responsibility frame, Human interest frame, Victimization frame) in his study.

The study in hand is concerned with the frames defined by inductive method, focusing on what attributes of the issue or actors have been highlighted and how were they emphasized in their coverage by the selected newspapers. The present study is based on the idea of diagnostic and prognostic task of framing and is concerned with frames used in US and Arab media under their culture, ideology, and national interests.

■ Hypotheses of the Study

Based on literature review and objectives the following research questions and hypotheses have been formulated for the present study:

- Q.1. What is the extent of coverage given to the Syrian uprising 2011 by the selected newspapers?

H1a: Khaleej Times gives more coverage in terms of number of stories to the issue than the New York Times.

H1b: Khaleej Times gives more coverage in terms of mean length of stories to the issue than the New York Times.

Q.2. What is the slant of editorials of selected newspapers toward Bashar al Assad?

H2: The New York Times publishes more unfavorable stories about Bashar ul Asad regime than the Khaleej Times.

Q.3. What frames are employed by the selected newspapers to highlight the issue?

H3a: The New York Times frames the uprising in the context of struggle against dictatorship whereas Khaleej Times focuses more on movement against injustices done by Assad regime.

H3b: The New York Times favors intervention over diplomacy for the solution of crises.

H3c: Khaleej Times accentuates on mere toppling Assad whereas The New York Times emphasizes on uprooting dictatorship from Syria.

■ Methodology

The study employed content analysis which deemed suitable as per objectives. It considered all editorials related to the context of Syrian uprising of *The New York Times* and those of the *Khaleej Times* from the day of starting the uprising in Syria i.e. March 15, 2011 to its first anniversary i.e. March 15,

2012. Conducting a census approach, the whole population from both the newspapers was taken as sample for the present study. Different researchers dealing with media contents have used the census techniques. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010) other researchers such as Skill and Robinson (1994) and Greenberg and Collette (1997) also used census approach in their studies. Siraj (2006) and (Durrani) 2012) also employed the census technique in their investigations.

The researchers selected the two newspapers due to their circulation and prestige. *The New York Times* has been publishing from New York City, USA since 1851. It is considered the most prestigious newspaper of USA. It has won 108 times the Pulitzer Prize and has world's largest online readership, with a circulation of 1,5860,757 in weekday, 1,220,696 on Saturday, and 2,003,247 on Sunday (The New York Times, 2013). It has a vital influence in setting the agenda of American media (El Zein & Cooper, 1992; Mnookin, 2004). The *Khaleej Time*, a daily English newspaper, started its publication in 1978 under Galadari Printing and Publishing Co. L.L.C Publishing House, in Dubai, UAE. It is the highest circulated English language newspaper in the GCC states and is considered as the most reliable newspaper of GCC states (Galadari Printing and Publishing Co. L.L.C, n.d.). With a multinational readership of 45,00,000, it is distributed in all parts of the UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia (Rao & Lee, 2005). It is partially owned by UAE government (Khaleej Times, 2013).

The data for *The New York Times* were retrieved from electronic database "Lexis-Nexis" and of the *Khaleej Times* was from the web archive/portal of *Khaleej Times* (http://www.khaleejtimes.com/site_search/calendar1.asp)

against key word/term "Syria". The initial search yielded 32 editorials from *The New York Times* and 121 editorials from *Khaleej Times* in the selected time frame. Blog-articles and duplicates were discarded first. Then a careful reading of the contents was done and only those editorials which were exclusively related to the context of Syrian Uprising 2011 were included in the final population. The final population comprised of 23 editorials from *The New York Times* and 104 editorials from *Khaleej Times*. So, pooling the contents of both the newspapers, the overall population of the study comprises 127 editorials.

■ **Variables**

Following are the variables of the study.

■ **Length**

Length was measured by "word count" of the story at ratio level. Byline, dateline or credit line was not included in the length of the editorial.

■ **Slant**

Slant means here attitude of newspaper's editor towards President Bashar al Assad. The slant for the present study was categorized as Favorable, Neutral, and Unfavorable to Assad.

■ **Frames**

Since the study is concerned with the analysis of issue in two different cultures having different ideologies, political orientations, policy and national interests, the frames are

selected on diagnostic and prognostic perspectives of the issue.

Diagnostic frames describe how the uprising and actors were presented:

■ ***Injustice Frame***

The "injustice frame" defines the uprising as people's struggle against corruption, bad governance and injustice, for reforms.

■ ***Anti-dictatorship Frame***

The "anti-dictatorship" frame defines the uprising as people's struggle against dictatorial rule of the Assad, for freedom, dignity and human rights.

■ ***Bashar al Assad as a Bad Ruler Frame***

This frame defines Bashar al Assad negatively as tyrant, illegitimate, repressor, dictator, or killer etc.

■ ***Protestors as Victims Frame***

This frame presents the protestors as victims of Assad's atrocities and repression

Prognostic frames involve how the solution of the crises is emphasized:

■ ***Pro-intervention Frame***

This frame asks for foreign military intervention and supporting the rebels against Assad.

■ ***Pro-diplomacy Frame***

This frame asks for diplomatic means, negotiations, pressure, curbs, trade sanctions etc. against Assad.

■ ***Syria-minus Assad Frame***

This frame asks for a limited change only concerned with toppling of Assad, keeping the stability of Syria and region at priority.

■ ***Syria-minus Dictatorship Frame***

This frame emphasizes democracy in Syria. Complete system change, emphasizing democracy in Syria

■ ***Units of Analysis***

The unit of analysis for the present study is taken as entire editorial for deciding length, slant and frames of the story. The slant and frames are coded contextually.

■ **Findings**

Data was analyzed by using PASW statistics by taking the level of alpha standard i.e. .05.

■ ***Overall Coverage and Treatment of the Issue***

Overall, total 127 editorials were published by the selected newspapers with a mean length 418.90 words per editorial. The tone of 9 (7.1%) editorials was favorable towards Bashar al Assad, 21 (16.5%) editorial carried neutral slant, whereas

tone of 97 (76.4%) editorials was unfavorable towards Bashar al Assad (see Table I).

Total 17 counts (13.4%) of Anti-dictatorship Frame, 50 counts (39.4%) of Injustice Frame, 103 counts (81.3%) of Assad as Bad Ruler Frame, 66 counts (52.0%) of protestors as Victims Frame, 80 counts (63.0%) of pro-diplomacy Frame, 8 counts (6.3%) of Pro-intervention Frame, 51 counts (40.2%) of Syria-minus-Assad Frame, and 14 counts (11.0%) of Syria-minus-dictatorship frame appeared in total 127 editorials from both the newspapers (see Table I).

**Table I:
Distribution of Coverage by No. of Stories, Length of Stories and Frames**

Variables \ Newspapers	<i>Khaleej Times</i> N (%)	<i>The New York Times</i> N (%)	Total N (%)	Chi-square Value (χ^2)
No. of Stories	104 (81.9)	23 (18.1)	197 (100)	51.661; <i>p</i> : .000
Mean Story Length^{*1}				
Wordage	412.92	445.91	418.90	
Slant^{*2}				
Favorable to Assad	9 (100)	0	9 (7.1)	
Neutral	20 (95.2)	1 (4.8)	21 (16.5)	17.190; <i>p</i> : .000
Unfavorable to Assad	75 (77.3)	22 (22.7)	97 (76.4)	28.959; <i>p</i> : .000
Frames				
Anti-dictatorship Frame	2 (11.8)	15 (88.2)	17 (13.4)	65.081; <i>p</i> : .000
Injustice Frame	49 (98.0)	1 (2.0)	50 (39.4)	14.432; <i>p</i> : .000
Bad ruler Frame	81 (78.6)	22 (21.4)	103 (81.1)	3.879; <i>p</i> : .049
Victims Frame	49 (74.2)	17 (25.8)	66 (52.0)	5.419; <i>p</i> : .020
Pro-diplomacy Frame	63 (78.8)	17 (21.2)	80 (63.0)	1.437; <i>p</i> : .231
Pro-intervention Frame	8 (100)	0	8 (6.3)	1.888; <i>p</i> : .169
Syria-minus-Assad Frame	49 (96.1)	2 (3.9)	51 (40.2)	11.569; <i>p</i> : .001
Syria-minus-dictatorship Frame	2 (14.3)	12 (85.7)	14 (11.0)	48.489; <i>p</i> : .000

*1F= .952; *p*: .585

*2Chi-sq= 5.880; *p*: .053

■ Coverage

The researchers analyzed the coverage given to the issue by examining the number and length of the published editorials on the topic of the study. It was found that out of the total 127 editorials, 104 (81.9%) were published by *Khaleej Times* and 23 (18.1%) were published by *The New York Times*. The difference between the two newspapers was statistically significant by number of stories (Chi-square=51.661; $p=.000$) which shows that *Khaleej Times* published more editorials than *The New York Times* (see Table I). This shows that the result is in the hypothesized direction. It was hypothesized (H1a) that *Khaleej Times* gives more coverage in terms of number of stories to the issue than the *New York Times*. The results in Table 1 indicate that mean length of editorials of *Khaleej Times* was 412.92 words, whereas; mean story length of *The New York Times* was 445.90 words. The difference between the two newspapers by mean length of stories was statistically not significant ($F=.952$ $p=.585$) which depicts that both the newspapers almost published same length of editorials (see Table I). This disapproves Hypothesis (H1b) which assumed that *Khaleej Times* gives more coverage in terms of mean length of stories to the issue than *The New York Times*.

■ Slant

The tone of 9 editorials from *Khaleej Times* was favorable to Assad. *The New York Times* did not publish any editorial favorable to Assad. However, *Khaleej Times* published 20 and *The New York Times* one neutral stories (Chi square=17.190; $p=.000$). Similarly, *Khaleej Times* published 75 stories and *The*

New York Times published 22 stories unfavorable towards Assad (Chi square=28.959; p=000). This shows that although both the newspapers gave unfavorable coverage to Assad, yet *Khaleej Times* contributed more stories. The overall difference in coverage between the two newspapers by slant was statistically not significant (Chi sq=5.880; p=.053), which shows that both the newspapers covered the event in a similar negative tone (see Table I). This disapproves hypothesis H2.

■ **Frame Visibility**

Out of 17 (100%) counts of anti-dictatorship frames, 2 (11.8%) were visible in *Khaleej Times* and 15 (88.2%) in *The New York Times* (chisquare=65.081; $p=000$). Whereas out of 50 (100%) counts of injustice frame, 49 (98.0%) appeared in *Khaleej Times* and 1 (2.0%) appeared in *The New York Times* (chi-square=14.432; $p=.000$). Similarly, out of 103 (100%) counts of Bad Ruler Frame 81 (78.6%) appeared in *Khaleej Times* and 22 (21.4%) appeared in *The New York Times* (chi square=3.879; $p=.049$). Out of 66 times (100%) counts of Victims Frame, *Khaleej Times* used 49 times (74.2%) and *The New York Times* used 17 times (25.8%) (chi-square=5.419; $p=020$). Similarly, out of 80 (100%) counts of Pro-diplomacy Frame, 63 times (78.8%) appeared in *Khaleej Times* and 17 times (21.2%) appeared in *The New York Times* (chi-square=1.437; $p=.231$), whereas all 8 (100%) counts on Pro-intervention Frame appeared in *Khaleej Times* (chi square=1.888; $p=.169$). Similarly, out of 51 counts (100%) on Syria-minus-Assad Frame, 49 counts (96.1%) appeared in *Khaleej Times* and 2 (3.9%) counts appeared in *The New York Times* (chi-square=11.569; $p=.001$). Out of 14 counts (100%) of Syria-minus-dictatorship Frame, 2 (14.35%) were visible in *Khaleej Times* and 12 (85.7%) appeared in *The New York Times* (Chi-square=48.489; $p=000$). The table shows that difference between the two newspapers was significant at Anti-dictatorship frame, Injustice frame, Bad Ruler frame, Victims frame, Syria-minus-Assad frame and Syria-minus-dictatorship frame but not significant at Pro-diplomacy frame and Pro-intervention frame. This depicts that *Khaleej Times* diagnosed the uprising in the context of injustice by the regime and *The New York Times* framed it a movement against dictatorship in Syria. Both the newspaper framed

Bashar al Assad as bad ruler and protestors as victims but *Khaleej Times* contributed more than *The New York Times*. Similarly, both the newspapers accentuated on pro-diplomatic solution of the crises and disfavored intervention; however *Khaleej Times* focused more on Syria-minus-Assad frame whereas *The New York Times* emphasized more on Syria-minus-dictatorship or democracy frame (see Table I). The findings approve Hypotheses H3a and H3c but disapprove H3b.

■ Discussions

The findings show that difference in coverage between the two selected newspapers was statistically significant as far the number of stories (editorials) on the Syrian uprising was concerned but there was no significant difference in coverage of the issue by the selected newspapers in terms of mean length of the stories. Similarly, overall treatment by slant or tone of coverage was similar between the selected newspapers, as both the newspapers gave unfavorable coverage to Assad. *Khaleej Times* diagnosed the issue as people struggle against bad governance of Bashar al Assad by employing Injustice Frame and characterized Bashar al Assad as Bad Ruler and Protestors as Victims more than *The New York Times*. It has framed the future of Syria sans Assad. This is in line with the findings of previous studies (CHIBA, 2012; Alahmed, 2012) that Arab media will serve the ideology and foreign policy of their repressive governments.

The New York Times diagnosed the problem as people's struggle against dictatorship by emphasizing on Anti-dictatorship Frame, demonizing Bashar al Assad as bad ruler and presenting Protestors as victims. However it framed the

future Syria sans dictatorship. This is in line with the findings of earlier studies (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998; Yang, 2003) that US media frame a conflict by conforming its culture, and ideology.

Interestingly both the newspapers accentuated diplomatic solution of the crises rather than intervention against the proposition that *The New York Times* will emphasize on intervention for solution of Syrian crises, as it did in Iraq (Vliegenthart & Schröder, 2010, Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005), Afghanistan (Ryan, 2004) or Libyan crises (Durrani, 2012). This is in line with its foreign policy and national interests of US government on the issue, as to safeguard its various strategic interests in the regions, as listed by (Cordesman, 1996).

■ Conclusion

The study infers that both *Khaleej Times* and *The New York Times* framed the Syrian uprising 2011 by conforming to their cultures, political orientations, and foreign/official policies of their lands. These findings are in line with those of Aday, Livingston, and Hebert (2005) and Lent (2006). The present investigation also supports the assumptions of agenda-setting theory and framing theory.

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