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Identity in the Light of Modernity:
Toward a New Model for Analyzing Media Framing of National Identity

Dr. Abdulsamad Hadi Sahly [(*)]

[(*)] Assistant Professor of Media & Public Relations, Head of Journalism & Media Department, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Jazan University.

Identity in the Light of Modernity: Toward a New Model for Analyzing Media Framing of National Identity

Dr. Abdulsamad Hadi Sahly
asahly@jazanu.edu.sa
Assistant Professor of Media & PR,
Jazan University

Abstract

This study examines the ways that global online news channels (i.e., Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, RT, BBC, and CNN) frame cultural transitions in Saudi Arabia, epitomized by Saudi Vision 2030, and explores how these news channels have positioned the Saudi identity (i.e., avowal and ascription) and framed the identity structure of Saudi culture (i.e., indulgence, restraint, certainty, uncertainty, thriving governance, and doomed governance). Guided by framing theory, this study undertakes a mixed-methods content analysis of news articles (N = 284). The study results concluded that global online news channels frame Saudi Cultural Identity heterogeneously. Besides, the study advances the literature on media framing in the context of modernization and global identities by providing a new measurable and replicable model- the national identity frame model.

Keywords: Media Framing; Identity; Framing Identity; Globalization, Cultural Identity; Modernity.

Introduction:

What happens when reporters work in global newsroom in cities as diverse as New York, London, Moscow, Doha, Dubai, and Riyadh, as well as for organizations as distinctly different as CNN, BBC, Russia Today, Al Jazeera, or Al Arabiya? As Silcock (2001) stated, "In the newsroom, the news artist [journalist] shapes images of the day's events with pictures and sound and in the process creates this cultural icon – a television newscast framed by the identity of the journalist in the image of the nation" (p. 3). A study of just such a deliberate cultural transition captured by global news channels could reveal much about how the identity of a nation is transformed. That is, global identities may be inherent in global media narratives. One way to study how media constructs the meaning of national identity is by employing framing theory.

The framing process exists everywhere, in the "communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Entman (1993) indicated that framing is a *fractured paradigm*, calling for amending framing research as a coherent research paradigm by bringing in social science theories that inform and provide a comprehensive understanding of the framing process. Some scholars have provided a rich conceptualization, meanwhile it was poor or no

operationalization. It is worth noting that, previous framing research and models have not adequately addressed a conceptual and operational framework that integrates the micro, meso, and macro levels into a holistic model. Additionally, previous research has not thoroughly studied national identity framing in the context of modernity and global identities.

Considering these gaps, the current study attempts to address a new conceptual and operational framing model: the national identity frame model. Although the model can be applied to various contexts (e.g., political, economic, and cultural identity), this study focused on cultural identity framing. The study integrates several social science theories and models into framing theory to bridge the gap between the micro, meso, and macro levels.

This study examines how global online news channels framed the Saudi Cultural Identity. The study explores cultural identity framing through two framing devices, identity positioning, and identity structure. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to develop a national identity frame model. It contributes to framing research by providing a new measurable and replicable frame: the national identity frame.

Literature Review:

On April 25, 2016, Saudi Arabia declared an important modernization transition designed to diversify and develop its economy, modernize its society, and promote its national identity, internally and externally. The Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed Ibn Salman announced a new roadmap for Saudi Arabia, Saudi Vision 2030, that established a national strategic plan for transforming the Kingdom. Saudi Vision 2030 calls for strengthening the country's economy through diversifying its sources of revenues away from oil, such as by creating a reliable and competitive environment for investments, becoming a logistical hub for global trade, building megacities for tourism and technology, and issuing new laws and legislation that enable the private sector to grow and contribute to the country's economy (*Saudi Vision 2030*, n.d.).

The vision also recognizes the importance of government institutions to reconstruction, transparency, and regulations that support the modernization project's efforts to fight corruption; empower women and youths in the workforce; and improve government services, plans, education, and training that contribute to citizens' welfare and productivity. Additionally, Saudi Vision 2030 focuses on creating an identity that supports a balanced lifestyle, promoting openness and convergence locally and globally, and overcoming the previous challenges of extremism by becoming a moderate nation and society that rejects Islamic and liberal extremism (*Saudi Vision 2030*, n.d.).

Modernity and Global Identities:

Social scientists have discussed two scholarly conceptualizations of modernity and global identity. The first camp argues that modernity implies globalization. In modernity, globalization is a dialectical process in which "social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990, p. 64). Boundaries between nation, society, and nature are pluralized. Boundaries are not given but are a matter of choice, wherein individuals can draw their own boundaries (Beck et al., 1994, 2003; Giddens, 1990, 1994). Globalization connects social relations on a global level (with a connection between the local and global), creating a global order that entails sharable issues and values.

Another scholarly position is that globalization in the modern age entails global identities. Although globalization is a dialectical process that connects social relations on a global level (with a connection between the local and global), it is also a fragmented process that produces different identities. Globalization feeds the need for the autonomy of national identity (Castells, 2013; Giddens, 1990). "Today we can not only speak about Europeanization and Americanization, but also of Japanization and even Brazilianization" as a reference to global identities (Featherstone & Lash, 1995, p. 3). Castells (2013) referred to the notion of a multilateral world in the wake of globalization's rise. With the rise of globalization, the need for national identity is also on the rise. Under globalization, many underdeveloped countries promote their own identity internally and globally to legitimize their unity and distinguish themselves from others.

Likewise, journalism and media scholars' arguments are also divided into two camps: on the one hand, "Advocates of globalization support the idea that news is becoming homogenized at a global level," and on the other, "Localization advocates reject the idea of global news in favour of its diversification along national lines" (Archetti, 2008, p. 464). Therefore, how media frame national identity at the global level remains unclear. Framing theory guides this inquiry.

Framing Theory:

Framing theory examines how news media represents issues and creates certain narratives through a selection and omission process (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2001). Framing theory involves selecting certain aspects of reality and making them more salient to the public consciousness (Entman, 1993). Aspects that influence selection include linguistic attributes, symbols, icons and photos, and journalistic routines and practices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Moreover, although the media plays an essential role in signifying the frame, cultural hegemony, political and social elites, and ideological positions, it also contributes to frame production (D'Angelo, 2002; Entman, 2003). While framing

research has flourished the media studies literatures, some limitations and gaps are worth mentioning.

Gaps of the Framing Theory Research:

Framing scholars have called for moving beyond framing limitations that lead to "overused and sometimes misused in communication research to the point where it has become unclear what is framing and what is not" (D'Angelo et al., 2019). First, it could be argued that framing studies have yet to provide a clear, holistic model that can heal the fractured framing paradigm. The second gap is that framing studies have not adequately explored the embedded, manifested, and latent frames. Certain studies have limited framing research to coding and comparison. They have neglected the interpretation process that helps us understand the embedded meaning in a news story and its production sources and contexts (D'Angelo et al., 2019; Reese, 2001). Finally, previous framing research has not clearly explored the notion of national identity framing, which may be particularly important for global news products in the context of modernity and global identities.

Objectives of the Study:

This study examines how global online news channels framed the Saudi Cultural Identity, focusing on three main objectives:
1- To heal the fractured paradigm of the framing theory, where the study looked to the framing from the perspective of agency and structure to unify the micro, meso, and macro levels into a cohesive model.
2- The study provides a measurable and replicable variable for the national identity frame model.
3- The current study employed mixed-methods approach to fulfill the methodological limitation of the framing research.

The Importance of the Study:

This study contributes to framing research by providing a new measurable and replicable frame: the national identity frame.

National Identity Frame Model:

Identity involves a duality of structure, in which identity is shaped by the interconnections between agents (e.g., journalists, editors, editors, reporters, sources, elites, sponsors, or other social actors) and social structure (e.g., rules, beliefs, values, traditions, and norms) (Chen & Collier, 2012; Giddens, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This study defines the national identity frame as a meaning-making process that shapes and is shaped by the dualistic relationship

between the agents involved in a story's production (e.g., gatekeepers, elites, sources, other social actors) and the social structures (e.g., rules, values, traditions, norms, ideologies) that produce, activate, and disseminate the frame, which is mediated, under some circumstances, by an interpretive community.

On the macro level, identity is embedded in the national social structure—which here refers to the set of rules, values, behaviors, or norms that constitute or regulate the social organization of a society (D'Angelo et al., 2019; Giddens, 1990; Gurevitch et al., 1993). On the micro-level, agents (e.g., journalists, producers, editors, managers, editors, elites, sources, or other social actors) are members of social organizations with their own individual experiences (House et al., 2002). Agents convey frames from their interpretations, knowledge, background, and ideology. Accordingly, their self-identity is the first tool for frame-production. While crafting a news story, agents (e.g., gatekeepers) must take their audience into consideration, thereby creating a sharable culture between the self (micro-level) and social structures (macro-level).

Furthermore, the interpretive community a network of associations embedded between agents themselves (Zelizer, 1997) acts as a mediated layer between agents and social structures (meso level). According to McNair (2009), "there is a link between the power structure of a society and its journalistic output; that journalism is part of a stratified social system; part of the apparatus by which that system is presented to its members in terms with which they can be persuaded to live" (p. 46). The interpretive community creates three areas of connection: first, the contact within the media organization environment (e.g., between journalists, editors, owners, and managers, etc.); second, colleagues' interactions with various media organizations (e.g., in press conferences, journalism associations, or any other social meetings); and third, the contact between the media organization and other social actors (e.g., advertising clients, lobbyists, non-government organizations, or political elites). These connections foster an interpretive community network that negotiates, activates, and disseminates the frame within the community ecosystem (see Breed, 1997; Entman, 2003; Mellor, 2007; Zelizer, 1997).

While there are three sources that inform national identity framing on a global level social structure (macro), agents (micro), and interpretive community (meso) the constructed meaning of the message can be conceptualized in three clustered cues.

Deviation Cue:

Deviation refers to the media's framing of differences between two cultural identities (e.g., values, lifestyles, norms, traditions). The framing of global events is a process that involves agency and social structure. The agents (e.g., gatekeepers, journalists, editors) interpret national identity in a way that is meaningful to local audiences. Both local audiences and journalistic agents are

parts of the same social structure, sharing similar values, traditions, norms, or rules. This structure comprises the deviation cue: it creates the differences between the local identity of the culture to which the media belongs and global cultures.

In modernity, the media frames global identities heterogeneously. That is, media framing cultivates the idea that the world consists of different cultural identities. The phenomenon of globalization perceives a multilateral world. While modernization inherently affects the entire globe, every nation tries to preserve its unique identity to legitimize their unity and distinguish themselves from others (Castells, 2013; Featherstone & Lash, 1995; King, 1995; Therborn, 1995). Thus, modernization has become a goal for every nation worldwide, including the most conservative, like Saudi Arabia. However, media framing of identity has been constructed differently.

Hybridization Cue:

Hybridization is a framing process that refers to media advocacy on shared global issues, such as human rights, poverty, global health, climate change, and human trafficking. Hybridization involves a universal issue that corresponds with the values of globalization in the context of modernity. The issue of hybridization tends to be shared across global media. This conceptualization resonates with the perspective of a globalized world, connected and unified through communication technologies and the media, thus sharing a similar identity and values. Boundaries between the local and global levels are blurred, such that "social relations…link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990, p. 64). Thus, hybridization in modernity is a corollary of globalization (Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1990).

However, the narrative may differ based on political gains, social structure differences, and contestation causes. While the frame is sharable across global news media (homogenous), particularly with issues such as human rights, global energy, and climate change, global news media tends to twist the frame politically in a way that serves its national interests (heterogeneous).

Shoemaker and Reese (2014) indicated that global news media interpret and report foreign events based on national ideology or interest. For example, the line between human rights driven by compassion versus political gains on a global level becomes difficult to distinguish "because humanitarianism [has] become more clearly political in its objectives"(Barnett, 2011, p. 193). Current scholarly work on framing human rights has indicated that the human rights frame is highly selective and politically objective in Western media (see Brandle, 2018; Jenkins & Hsu, 2008).

Domination:

Domination refers to the dominant frame that spreads in all news contexts with a similar tone due to communication between the agents themselves. That is, identity framing dominates media content across all issues and contexts (i.e., political, economic, and cultural issues or contexts) with either a favorable or an unfavorable tone. The frame's spreading resonates and gains momentum within the agents' interpretive community. The domination cue is activated during contestation, crises, or campaigning circumstances.

The domination of the frame is activated due to the contact between government elites and journalists, between journalists within a media organization (e.g., journalists, editors, columnists, executive managers, owners), or between media organizations and market pressures (e.g., advertisements, public relations, governmental and political pressure). This interconnection between these agents creates a network community called an interpretive community (Breed, 1997; Entman, 2003; Zelizer, 1997). From the perspective of modernity and global identities, domination cue is an ideologically driven process that accounts for contestations or campaigning to serve the nation's geopolitical interests. Propagandistic or persuasive narratives aim to mobilize the audience toward unified national, regional, or global identities. The domination cue reflects the belief that the media cultivate fragmented identities even across neighboring nations (Castells, 2013; Hofstede et al., 2010). The following figure illustrates the national identity frame model.

Figure 1: National Identity Frame Model
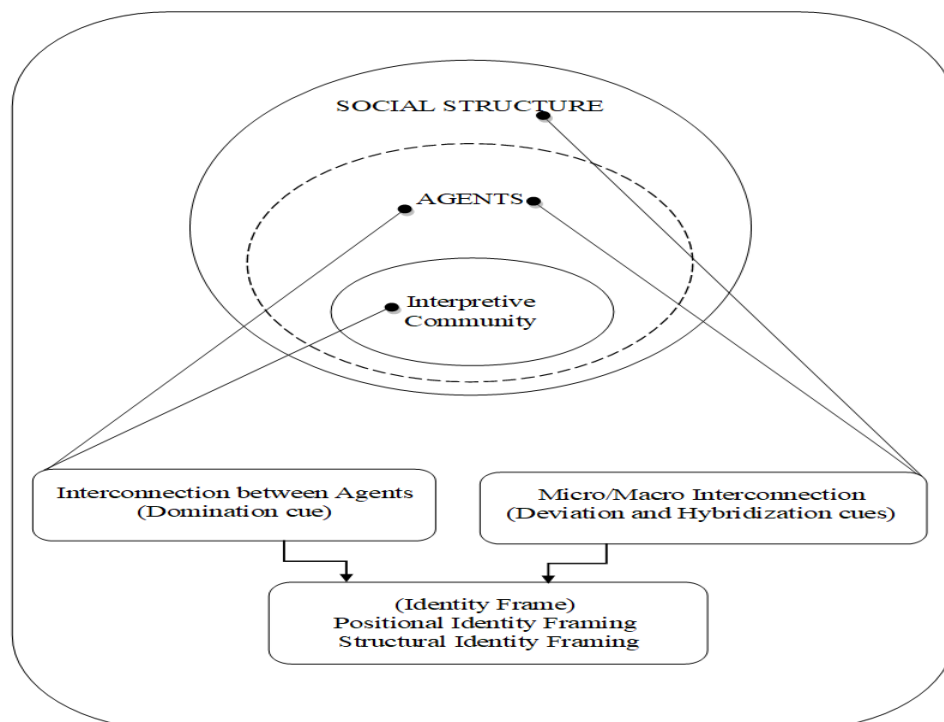
National identity frame, then, can be detected in a news narrative through two properties: identity positioning (Chen & Collier, 2012; Golden & Jessica, 2019) and identity structure (Hofstede et al., 2010; House et al., 2004; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Schwartz, 1999). The two properties are the identity frame kits that detect the embedded meaning in the news story.

Identity Positioning:

The constructed meaning of identity in media stories moves from static to a more discursive meaning determined by the relationship of self-identity and social structure (Golden & Jessica, 2019). Van Dijk (2009) argued that identity is constructed and organized as self-presentation versus other-presentation. Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) proposes two identity properties relevant to this study: avowal and ascription. Avowal refers to one's views or ideas that one articulates about one's group or community, while ascription is defined as how one labels or characterize other groups (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Collier, 2009).

Avowal and ascription are also defined as positioning processes. Golden and Jessica (2019) indicate that avowal and ascription are identity positioning actions, stating that "Positioning shifts away from the static sense of a fixed identity or role, and includes the ways that discourse, language use, or other literacy events contribute to constructions of self or other" (p. 212). Positioning concerns the avowed self-identity formation (avowal), as well as the ascribed identity formation (ascription), which considers the two sides of identity formation (insider and outsider). Moreover, identity positioning (i.e., avowal and ascription) is a framing process embedded in the discursive narrative of a news story. According to Nutter (2017), positioning means that "the way in which people understand the world and their placement within it relies on the placement of themselves within a story" (p. 40).

Identity Structure:

Cross-cultural studies have provided measurable variables that help us observe the identity structures of societies across modern nations, including behaviors, norms, and values. Minkov and Hofstede (2011) argued that national culture could be measured through several "variables that correlate at the national level and are conceptually linked to cultural phenomena" (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, p. 12). Building on models of Dimensions of National Culture (G Hofstede et al., 2010), GLOBAL Study (House et al., 2002), Cultural Values (Schwartz, 1999), and Cultural Change Values (Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart & Baker, 2000), the study developed the identity structure variables. The identity structure models provide numerous variables and dimensions. Table (1) summarizes the definition of each variable. These variables were used to guide the study's conceptual framework and develop measurable national identity frame variables to analyze media content.

Table 1.

Conceptual Definitions of Social Structure Categories from Various Studies.

Category	Definition
Dimensions of National Culture (G Hofstede et al., 2010)	
Power Distance	The extent to which less powerful members of an institution or organization within a country expect and accept that power is distributed equally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by an ambiguous or unknown situation.
Indulgence	The tendency to allow free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun.
Restraint	The idea that gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.
Individualism	The extent to which ties between individuals within a society are loose: everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family.
Collectivism	The extent to which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in groups in a society, as well as the extent to which those groups continue to protect them throughout a person's lifetime in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.
Masculinity	A society in which emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success.
Femininity	A society in which emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life.
Long-Term Orientation	The fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift.
Short-Term Orientation	The fostering of virtues related to the past and present—in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of "face," and fulfilling social obligations.
***GLOBAL Study** (House et al., 2002)	
Humane Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.
Institutional Collectivism	The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
In-Group Collectivism	The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others.
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which a collective seeks to reduce gender inequality.
Future Orientation	The extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors, such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future.
Performance Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.
Cultural Values (Schwartz, 1999)	
Conservatism	A cultural emphasis on the maintenance of the status quo, propriety, and restraint of actions or inclinations that might disrupt the solidary group or traditional order (social order, respect for tradition, family security, wisdom).
Intellectual	A cultural emphasis on the desirability of individuals independently pursuing their own ideas and intellectual directions (curiosity, broadmindedness, creativity).
Affective autonomy	A cultural emphasis on the desirability of individuals independently pursuing positive affective experiences (pleasure, exciting or varied life experiences).
Hierarchy	A cultural emphasis on the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources (social power, authority, humility, wealth).
Egalitarianism	A cultural emphasis on the transcendence of selfish interests in favor of voluntary commitment to promoting the welfare of others (equality, social justice, freedom,

	responsibility, honesty).
Mastery	A cultural emphasis on getting ahead through active self-assertion (ambition, success, daring, competence).
Harmony	A cultural emphasis on fitting harmoniously into the environment (unity with nature, protecting the environment, world of beauty).
Cultural Change Values (Inglehart, 2008; Inglehart & Baker, 2000)	
Traditional	Placing a strong emphasis on religion and respect for authority, having relatively low levels of tolerance for abortion and divorce, and having relatively high levels of national pride.
Secular-Rational Orientation	Having opposite characteristics. Agrarian societies tend to emphasize traditional values; industrializing societies tend to emphasize secular-rational values.
Survival	Societies that emphasize survival values show relatively low levels of subjective well-being, report relatively poor health, are low on interpersonal trust, are relatively intolerant of out-groups, are low on support for gender equality, emphasize materialist values, have relatively high levels of faith in science and technology, are relatively low on environmental activism, and are relatively favorable to authoritarian government.
Self-Expression	Societies high on self-expression values tend to have the opposite preferences on these topics, bringing new political issues to the center of the stage and motivating new political movements.

Note. House adopted the same concepts of power distance and uncertainty avoidance as Hofstede.

Considering the previous studies' variables mentioned in Table (1), the researcher, then, started developing coding schemes for National Identity Frame. This study utilized *the exploratory sequential design*. The figure (2) illustrates the study design. Qualitatively, the researcher carefully read each unit (paragraph) and assigned the unit to one of the pre-defined national identity frames. Units that cannot be coded at this phase were highlighted for a second analysis. As the researcher continued labeling, comparing, and combining units, some units fit the determined categories, some categories combined, some new categories emerged, and other categories died out.

Figure 2. *Procedures of the Exploratory Sequential Design*
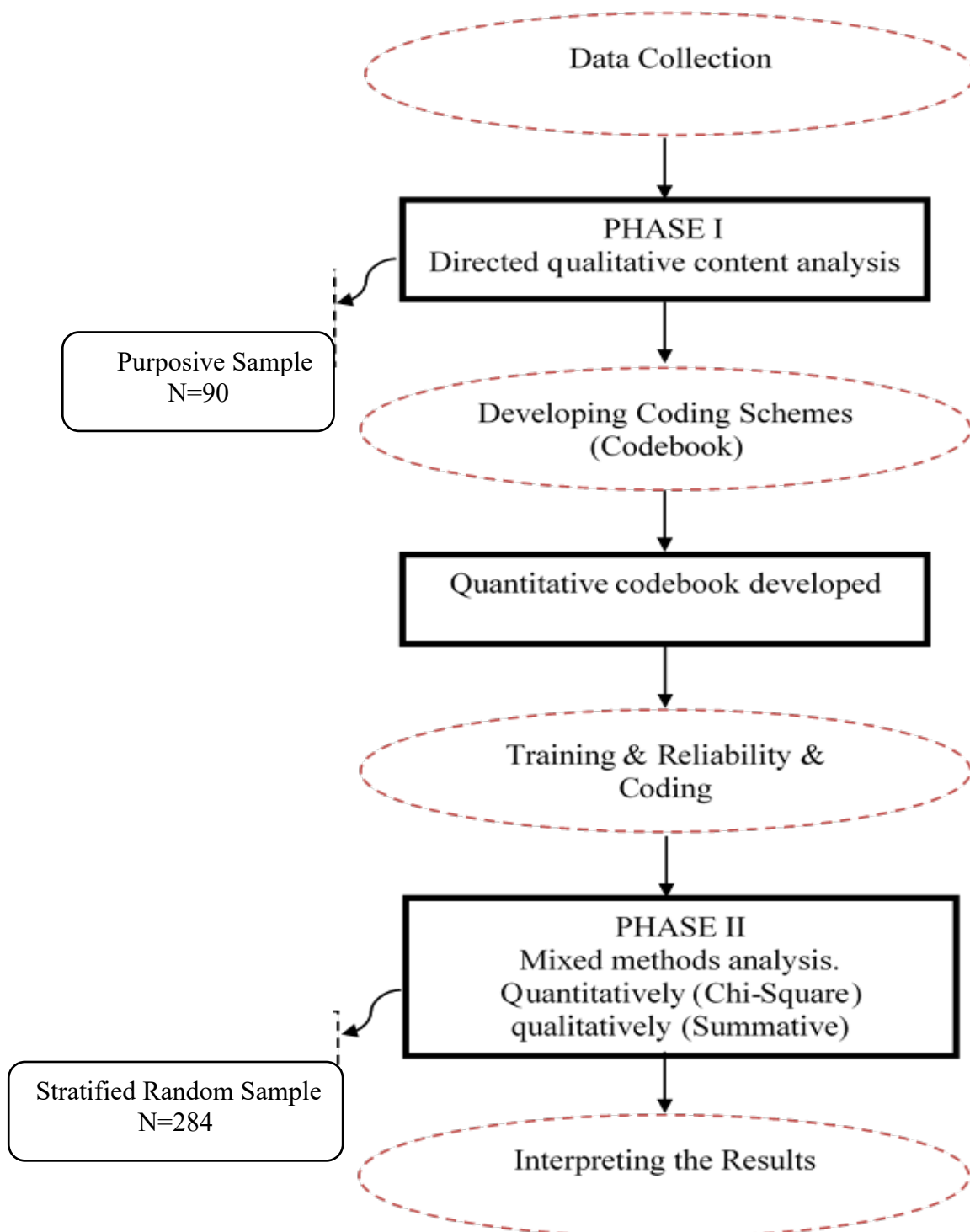
Ultimately, the two pre-defined identity positioning categories were found evident (i.e., avowal and ascription). Additionally, the four pre-defined identity structure categories were found evident (i.e., indulgence, restraint, certainty, and uncertainty). Besides, two identity structure categories were added as data-driven categories (i.e., thriving governance and doomed governance).

Operationalization: Independent and Dependent Variables:

This study consists of one independent variable, the cultural context, which was defined as: Issue, event, or policy that discusses Saudi culture, identity, religion, values, lifestyle norms, citizen's benefits or suffering or prosperity, human rights, justice, tourism, media, sport, arts, entertainment, or reform and legislation related to the culture. Moreover, the study entails two dependent variables (identity positioning and identity structure), each variable has several categories. Following, an operational definition for the dependent variables is provided.

Identity Positioning. The identity positioning has two categories (i.e., avowal and ascription). The coder assigned each unit (paragraph) into one of the identity positioning categories. Each unit was coded either (1) frame evident or (0) no frame, hence, coding within identity positioning categories was mutually exclusive.

Table 2.
The Identity Positioning Categories and their Operational Definitions.

Categories	Operational definition
Avowal	- The paragraph cites Saudi sources (e.g., individuals, government, society, or groups) who express, define or characterize themselves concerning the event or concerning others. - The paragraph cites Saudi sources (e.g., individuals, government, society, or groups) who suggest that the event preserves or promotes Saudi culture, history, heritage, value, or identity.
Ascription	- The paragraph mentions or cites non-Saudi sources (e.g., individuals, government, society, or groups) that label or characterize Saudi's culture, society, political, or economic system in general terms. - The paragraph mentions or cites non-Saudi sources (e.g., individuals, government, society, or groups) that compare between cultures, political, or economic systems, or between two distinct times, groups, or individuals.

Identity Structure. The identity structure variable has six categories (i.e., indulgence, restraint, certainty, uncertainty, thriving governance, and doomed governance). The coder assigned each unit into one of the identity structure categories. Each unit was coded as (1) frame evident or (0) no frame. Coding within identity structure categories was mutually inclusive, in which one unite can be coded into more than a category. Table (3) that follows provides the operational definitions of the identity structure categories and their sub-categories.

Table 3.

The Identity Structure Categories and their Operational Definitions.

variables	Sub-category	Operational definition
Indulgence	Tolerance	The paragraph suggests that the event provides liberty, freedom, modernization, tolerance, inclusion, participation, and engagement or openness.
	Prosperity	The paragraph suggests that the event allows the development of life quality such as entertainment, arts, healthcare, education, and sports.
	Equality	The paragraph suggests that the power, rights, ideas, or decisions are unconsolidated or distributed equally between socioeconomic classes, groups or communities, superiors, and subordinates, or institutions.
Restraint	Intolerance	The paragraph suggests that the event restrains liberty, freedom, modernization, tolerance, inclusion, participation, and engagement or openness.
	Deprivation	The paragraph suggests that the event restrains the development of life quality, such as entertainment, arts, healthcare, education, and sports.
	Inequality	The paragraph suggests that the power, rights, ideas, or decisions are consolidated or distributed unequally between socioeconomic classes, groups or communities, superiors, and subordinates, or institutions.
Certainty	Harmony	The paragraph suggests that the event corresponds with the belief of truth or desires. The speaker expresses comfort, support, or certitude about the event.
	Security	The paragraph suggests that the event provides security, safety, or stability consequences.
	Agreement	The paragraph suggests an agreement or reconciliation about the event between countries, societies, parties, individuals, or groups.
Uncertainty	Disharmony	The paragraph suggests that the event contradicts the belief of truth or desires. The speaker expresses disappointment, disownment, doubt, or skepticism about the event.
	Insecurity	The paragraph suggests that the event causes insecurity, unsafe, or instability consequences.
	Conflict	The paragraph suggests disagreement or conflict about the event between countries, societies, parties, individuals, or groups.
Thriving governance	Progression	The paragraph suggests that the government broadens or diversifies partnerships, investments, and funds locally and globally. The government's institutes or private sector is advancing, or its rating is increasing locally or globally.
	Reliability	The paragraph suggests that the government considers the importance of accountability, transparency, evaluation, adaptiveness, dialogue, and negotiation.
	Proficiency	The paragraph suggests that the government provides sufficient governmental services, promising opportunities, and solutions for administrative bureaucracy. The government account for the importance of training, competitiveness, and sustainability.
Doomed governance	Retrogression	The paragraph suggests that the government fails to broaden or diversify partnerships, investments, and funds locally and globally. The government's institutes or private sector is retreating, or its rating is declining locally or globally.
	Unreliability	The paragraph suggests that the government ignores or neglects the importance of accountability, transparency, evaluation, adaptiveness, dialogue, and negotiation.
	Incompetence	The paragraph suggests that the government fails to provide sufficient governmental services, promising opportunities, and solutions for administrative bureaucracy. The government neglects the importance of training, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Note: event refers to the subject being discussed, described, or dealt with in the article.

Research Questions:

The previous model above proposed a conceptual definition for the national identity frame. This study examines the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways do English global online news channels position Saudi Cultural Identity?

RQ2: In what ways do English global online news channels frame the identity structure of Saudi culture?

Methods:

For the purposes of this study, global media networks represent three geopolitical and ideological systems: Al Arabiyan is pro-Saudi TV network (Al-Rawi, 2017), Al Jazeera is pro-Qatar TV network (Powers, 2009; Toumi, 2011), Russia Today (RT) is pro-Russian TV network (Palmer, 2009; Vartanova, 2011), BBC and CNN are pro-Westren TV network (Hallin & Mancini, 2011). The study drew a sample from the five English global online news channels. This study employed a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative content analysis). The qualitative analysis was first used to develop a coding scheme, then a mixed-methods analysis was conducted to analyze the data.

Four criteria were used to rationalize the selection of the global online news channels. First, they represent or are based on various geopolitical systems. Second, they contain similar operation features (TV networks), and their websites publish online news in Arabic and English while their coverage targets local, regional, and international audiences. Third, they have a leading, recognizable, or popular role in global media. Finally, the data for each website is accessible.

Data Collection, Unitizing, and Sampling:

To collect data, the researcher specified four search criteria: First, the search was limited to a timeframe of three years, from the first day of the Saudi Vision 2030 announcement to the date that the researcher started collecting data (April 25, 2016, to April 25, 2019). The justification for this period is that three years since the announcement of the vision will allow enough data collected. Moreover, this long period helps reveal the consistency of the media discourse over time. Second, Google Advanced Search
 (https://www.google.com/advanced_search) was used to generate the data from the five media websites. Google Advanced Search enables users to specify a variety of commands, where Google operators help to navigate and narrow the search for specific websites, contents, dates, region, language, and other features. Third, the search phrases "Saudi Vision" and "Saudi Vision 2030" in English were used to specify the terms associated with the targeted articles.

Fourth, the researcher searched the sites or domains of the online news channels, Al Arabiya (https://english.alarabiya.net/), Al Jazeera and (https://www.aljazeera.com/),RT (https://arabic.rt.com/), BBC (https://www.bbc.com/), and CNN (https://www.cnn.com/).

The coding unit in this study were the paragraphs in each news story. Paragraph referred to a passage in a news story identified by a new line, indentation, or numbering. Table (2) summarizes the samples and coding units used in the current study.

Table 4.
Article Sampling and Coding Units Included in the Final Analysis.

Online News Channels	Article Sample	Coding units	Mean	*SD*
Al Arabiya	60	624	312.50	180.27
Al Jazeera	55	1106	553.50	319.41
RT	56	608	304.50	175.65
BBC	53	986	493.50	284.77
CNN	60	1263	632.00	364.74
Total	284	4587		

Training and Reliability:

The researcher recruited a second coder[1] for training and testing the reliability of the developed coding schemes. Over a month, four coding training sessions were conducted. After training, both coders coded 10% of the sample to test the level of agreement between the two coders. Cohen's Kappa for inter-rater reliability test was conducted. The agreement scores varied between .73 and .81. Table (5) provides the inter-coder reliability results of the identity positioning categories and the identity structure categories as well as the cultural context.

Table 5.
Intercoder Reliability of the Positioning Identity and the Identity Structure Categories.

Categories	Cohen's Kappa *K*
Avowal	.75
Ascription	.73
Indulgence	.78
Restraint	.76
Certainty	.77
Uncertainty	.75
Thriving governance	.81
Doomed governance	.74
Cultural context	.80

[1] The second coder is Hassan Abu Sharifa, a lecturer at Jazan University, and a PhD candidate at King Saud University.
The validity of the form was validated by Dr. Tariq Al Saidi and Dr. Mohammed Bassiony, professors at Jazanu University.

Analytical Plan:

After coding all the data, the researcher conducted a series of statistical tests to examine the stated research question. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 27. To analyze positioning identity, Cochran's Q test was used to determine if there were significant differences between avowal and ascription in the Saudi cultural context. To analyze the identity structure, two steps of analysis were used. First, Chi-square test with Adjusted Standardized Residual Analysis Bonferroni correction were used to find the relationship between the identity structure categories and the Saudi cultural context. Second, Cochran's Q test was used to determine if there were significant differences between the correlated categories in the Saudi cultural context. The researcher, then, analyzed the texts qualitatively, using the summative content analysis approach. The summative approach is one of the three approaches to qualitative content analysis (the others being conventional and directed qualitative content analysis) (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Typically, the summative approach to qualitative content analysis is used as a secondary analysis, while the primary method is quantitative. Quantitative content analysis can help understand the manifested content of the media framing. However, the summative qualitative content analysis goes beyond that to interpret the content's underlying (latent) meaning (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The qualitative content analysis was conducted only for the significance results of the quantitative data.

Findings:

The descriptive statistics showed that across all global online news channels, the data showed that uncertainty ($M = .20$, $SD = .40$) was the most frequently employed identity category, followed by thriving governance ($M = .18$, $SD = .38$), and indulgence ($M = .14$, $SD = .34$). Conversely, the least used categories were doomed governance ($M = .04$, $SD = .20$) and avowal ($M = .04$, $SD = .19$).

Table 6.
Descriptive Statistics of the National Identity Frame Categories.

National Identity Categories	M	SD
Avowal	.04	.19
Ascription	.09	.28
Indulgence	.14	.34
Restraint	.12	.32
Certainty	.10	.30
Uncertainty	.20	.40
Thriving governance	.18	.38
Doomed governance	.04	.20

Positioning the Saudi Cultural Identity. The first research question asked about the ways that English online news channels (i.e., Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, RT, BBC, and CNN) positioned (i.e., avowal and ascription) the Saudi Cultural

Identity. After conducting, Cochran's Q test, the results indicated that all online news outlets used ascription significantly more than avowal, except for Al Arabiya.

Cochran's Q test showed that there were no significant differences between avowal (13.3%) and ascription (14.1%) in positioning the identity of Saudi culture in Al Arabiya, χ^2 (1) = 1.32, p = 0.251. Al Jazeera employed ascription (10.8%) significantly more than avowal (4.2%), χ^2 (1) = 10.97, p = 0.001. RT employed ascription (21.6%) significantly more than avowal (6.9%), χ^2 (1) = 19.28, p = 0.001. The BBC employed ascription (16.8%) significantly more than avowal (6.5%), χ^2 (1) = 29.26, p = 0.001. CNN employed ascription (16.6%) significantly more than avowal (7.9%), χ^2 (1) = 18.78, p = 0.001. Thus, all online news channels employed ascription more than avowal, except for Al Arabiya.

Table 7.
The Statistical Results of the Saudi Cultural Identity Positioning in the Online News Channels.

Online News Channels	Positioning Variables	Percent	df	Cochran's Q	p-value
Al Arabiya	Avowal	13.3%	1	1.32	0.251
	Ascription	14.1%			
Al Jazeera	Avowal	4.2%	1	10.97	0.001*
	Ascription	10.8%			
RT	Avowal	6.9%	1	19.28	0.001*
	Ascription	21.6%			
BBC	Avowal	6.5%	1	29.26	0.001*
	Ascription	16.8%			
CNN	Avowal	7.9%	1	18.78	0.001*
	Ascription	16.6%			

0.05<*Significant level

The qualitative reading of the data showed that Al Arabiya's use of avowal referred to Saudi citizens and officials regarding the cultural transformation that is taking place in Saudi Arabia. In this avowal framing, a women's rights reform narrative was salient, positioning Saudi women's roles and achievements in society. Statements such as "women have achieved a lot in our country, and we are very proud of this, achievements the outside community does not know about," "I feel happy and proud," and "I look at these changes as steps toward a better future since most of the recent changes are visible, which have a direct impact on Saudi culture" appeared frequently in Al Arabiya narratives. In the ascription framing, Al Arabiya described international figures' (e.g., artists, musicians, diplomats, global media, journalists) perceptions of the cultural changes in Saudi Arabia, usually with a positive tone. Expressions such as "revolutionary changes for the kingdom under Vision 2030" and "A sense of vibrancy has been thrust in cities such as Riyadh" appeared in Al Arabiya ascription narratives.

Al Jazeera, RT, BBC, and CNN employed ascription framing in the context of Saudi women's rights, as well as religiosity, characterizing how Saudi culture treats women. Statements such as "second-class citizens," "[has] the world's tightest restrictions on women," "[has] long [been] a symbol of repression

against women," and "women are looked down upon" were salient in the ascription framing of Saudi culture. Furthermore, phrases highlighting the nature of Saudi religiosity, including "religiously conservative kingdom," "the socially conservative country," "strict version of Islam," "ultra-conservative Wahhabist," and "an ultra-conservative theocracy," were prominent in the ascription framing of Saudi culture. Also, they used a comparative narrative between Western and Saudi cultures. For example, highlighting the loosening cultural restrictions under Vision 2030, CNN stated that this "could mean women will be allowed to sunbathe and swim wearing bikinis, hitherto unheard of in the conservative kingdom where women are expected to cover their skin with robe-like dresses known as 'abayas.'" RT compared the two cultures by saying "Disneyland in Saudi Arabia might look a little different from those in Paris or Orlando, however. For starters, the Disney princesses' costumes would be illegal on the streets of Riyadh." And BBC indicated that "It is unclear how something like a Six Flags will work in a country where women and men are largely segregated".

Framing the Identity Structure of Saudi Culture. The second research question asked how English online news channels (i.e., Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, RT, BBC, and CNN) framed the identity structure (i.e., indulgence, restraint, certainty, uncertainty, thriving governance, and doomed governance) of Saudi culture. First, a series of Chi-square tests with Bonferroni correction was conducted to examine the relationship between identity structure categories and cultural context. The statistical results indicated no significant association between certainty, uncertainty, thriving governance, doomed governance, and the identity structure of Saudi culture across all the online news channels. However, the identity structure of Saudi culture was associated with indulgence and/or restraint categories across all the online news channels. Table (8) summarizes the results.

Table 8.
Statistical Results of Identity Structure in Online News Channels.

Online News Channels	Count	Expected	*z-value*	Chi-square	*p-value*
Indulgence					
Al Arabiya	135(91.2%)	64	13.48	181.70	0.001*
Al Jazeera	85(85.9%)	32	11.83	140.07	0.001*
RT	94(94.0%)	38	12.53	156.97	0.001*
BBC	191(94.6%)	127	10.45	109.19	0.001*
CNN	137(89.0%)	73	11.10	123.29	0.001*
Restraint					
Al Arabiya	2(100%)	1	1.62	2.63	0.187
Al Jazeera	151(71.6%)	69	13.4	179.68	0.001*
RT	72(40.9%)	33	9.21	84.82	0.001*
BBC	132(79.5%)	104	4.87	23.67	0.001*
CNN	108(82.8%)	58	9.39	88.24	0.001*
Certainty					
Al Arabiya	22(24.4%)	39	-3.90	15.18	0.001
Al Jazeera	20(26.7%)	25	-1.14	1.31	0.253
RT	17(58.6%)	11	2.30	5.31	0.021
BBC	62(62.30%)	62	-0.06	0.00	0.956
CNN	67(40.9%)	77	-1.72	2.96	0.085
Uncertainty					
Al Arabiya	3(15.8%)	8	-2.46	6.03	0.014
Al Jazeera	42(17.0%)	81	-5.95	35.36	0.001
RT	42(28.4%)	57	-2.86	8.18	0.004
BBC	69(35.0%)	124	-9.05	81.84	0.001
CNN	98(29.7%)	156	-7.37	54.36	0.001
Thriving					
Al Arabiya	39(18.2%)	93	-9.12	83.23	0.001
Al Jazeera	7(7.8%)	29	-5.25	27.55	0.001
RT	13(11.2%)	45	-6.68	44.59	0.001
BBC	22(31.4%)	44	-5.65	31.93	0.001
CNN	37(21.9%)	80	-7.06	49.79	0.001
Doomed					
Al Arabiya	1(25.0%)	2	-0.74	0.55	0.637
Al Jazeera	4(6.7%)	20	-4.41	19.47	0.001
RT	3(9.7%)	12	-3.37	11.34	0.001
BBC	3(15.0%)	13	-4.48	20.05	0.001
CNN	2(6.1%)	16	-4.79	22.92	0.001

* Significant positive correlation, Bonferroni correction *p* < 0.008**.**

Second, a follow up test using Cochran's Q was conducted. The results of Cochran's Q test showed that indulgence was significantly more evident in Al Arabiya (50%) than restraint (0.7%), χ2 (1) = 129.11, *p* = 0.001). BBC results indicated that indulgence (30.8%) was significantly more evident than restraint (21.3%), χ2 (1) = 11.27, *p* = 0.001. RT results showed that there were no significant differences between indulgence (40.1%) and restraint (30.6%), χ2 (1) = 3.72, *p* = 0.054. CNN's results also showed that there were no significance differences between indulgence (23.0%) and restraint (18.2%), χ2 (1) = 3.74, *p*

= 0.053. Finally, the statistical results of Al Jazeera indicated that restraint (41.8%) was employed significantly more than indulgence (23.5%), $\chi2$ (1) = 19.27, p = 0.001.

Table 9.
Statistical Results of Identity Structure in Online News Channels.

Online News Channels	Structure Variables	Percent	df	Cochran's Q	p-value
Al Arabiya	Indulgence	50%	1	129.11	0.001*
	Restraint	0.7%			
Al Jazeera	Indulgence	23.5%	1	19.27	0.001*
	Restraint	41.8%			
RT	Indulgence	40.1%	1	3.72	0.054
	Restraint	30.6%			
BBC	Indulgence	30.8%	1	11.27	0.001*
	Restraint	21.3%			
CNN	Indulgence	23.0%	1	3.74	0.053
	Restraint	18.2%			

0.05.<*Significant level

The qualitative analysis revealed that Al Arabiya used two narratives in its indulgence framing. First, through a prosperity narrative, Al Arabiya highlighted the cultural and lifestyle changes from conservativism to a more tolerant, indulgent, and open society: "the dream of creating a modern, prosperous and inclusive Saudi society is now a living reality." Second, via an equality narrative, women's empowerment and right reforms were prominent. For instance, Al Arabiya's coverage included: "Three years ago, Saudi Aramco launched a special unit to train its women in leadership positions. Aramco raised the number of women in those roles from just four women to 48 today," as well as "Edge of Arabia's goal is to foster and improve understanding through free exhibitions and public programming, acting as a conduit between different cultures." These examples show the indulgence narrative that Al Arabiya employed to frame the identity structure of Saudi culture.

BBC's indulgence framing was evident in its use of equality, tolerance, and prosperity narratives. BBC's equality narrative was devoted to women's rights issues. Citing Saudi journalists and citizens, BBC focused on women's rights and empowerment (e.g., women driving, participating in municipal elections, holding high governmental positions). Moreover, tolerance and prosperity narratives were evident in observing the changes in cultural lifestyle, such as women's engagement in public events, eased restrictions on music and arts, gender-mixed events that were previously forbidden, and welcoming new cultural reforms. BBC frequently reports from inside Saudi Arabia, describing the changes in the Saudi atmosphere toward a more indulgent lifestyle, especially concerning women, arts, and music events.

RT and CNN's framings of the identity structure of Saudi culture were more balanced, presenting the indulgence and the restraint of Saudi culture. These platforms also focused heavily on women's issues and social change. Highlighting an equality narrative, RT reported that "women were allowed to

vote and run as candidates in municipal council elections" and described social prosperity as "liberalization reforms." Besides equality and social prosperity (e.g., youth interest in music, arts, and sports events in Saudi culture), CNN described the socially tolerant aspects of the identity structure. Citing Saudi journalists and citizens, they focused on women's rights and empowerment (e.g., women driving, participating in municipal elections, and holding high governmental positions). For example, CNN reported that "everyone can have fun and enjoy these changes in Saudi Arabia". This tolerance narrative was evident in CNN's observations of changes in cultural lifestyle, such as women's engagement in public events, easing restrictions on music and arts, gender-mixed events that were previously forbidden, and the welcoming of new cultural reforms.

On the other hand, RT and CNN also framed the structure of the Saudi Cultural Identity using restraint framing. Intolerance and inequality narratives were evident. The narrative emphasized the historically conservative lifestyle of Saudi society, where many cultural activities (e.g., music, arts, gender mixing, and women's participation in public events) were religiously restricted. For example, CNN indicated that "before May, women weren't able to access government services without getting permission from a male guardian or having him present." RT discussed the Saudi structure in women's lifestyle, reporting that "women in Saudi Arabia have been banned from working outside the home."

In Al Jazeera, restraint framing was twice as salient as indulgence. As in the cases of RT, BBC, and CNN, Al Jazeera used the restraint framing mainly in the context of women's inequality and activism intolerance. For the women's inequality narrative, Al Jazeera focused on the guardianship system in Saudi Arabia, describing it as "systematic discrimination," "women are in effect legal minors who must defer to men to make key decisions about their lives," and "laws that treat women as second-class citizens in comparison to men."

Discussion:

Framing theory guided the study's theoretical framework. The researcher collected online news stories published on the websites of five global online news channels (i.e., Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, RT, BBC, and CNN). The researcher developed a coding scheme for national identity frame; identity positioning variables (i.e., avowal and ascription); and identity structure variables (i.e., indulgence, restraint, certainty, uncertainty, doomed governance, and thriving governance). A mixed-methods analysis was conducted. The findings of this study can be interpreted from the three cues.

Deviation.The study showed that all online news channels except the pro-Saudi online news channel (Al Arabiya) frequently positioned the Saudi Cultural Identity against Western identity (i.e., the ideal Western identity),

depicting Western identity as the expected standard for modernity and Saudi Cultural Identity as deviant or odd. This framing process comprises the deviation cue: it characterizes the other culture that is located across the globe (Saudi culture) as deviant from the culture to which the media or its target audiences belong. The ascription framing of global events is a process that involves agency and social structure in the frame production. The agents (e.g., gatekeepers, journalists, editors) interpreted Saudi Arabia's cultural identity in a way that is meaningful to their local audiences.

The deviation is an ideologically driven cue because a global event is interpreted based on the local social structure that Western media often adapts for its audience. In other words, based on the cases presented, the deviation cue is an orientalist stereotype that promotes the ideal Western modernization identity (e.g., Western norms, values, tradition) compared to other identities in the light of the globalized world. As McNair (2009) stated, "News media of a particular society- press and broadcasting- tend to construct accounts of events that are structured and framed by the dominant values and interests of society of that society" (p. 46). News media reporting on foreign affairs constructs meaning for events based on whether it is socially, politically, or ideologically acceptable or deviant according to an inevitable reality (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This is consisting with what have proposed in the literature that in late modernity, the media present and frame cultural identities differently, and that we live in a globalized world, yet a multilateral world (Castells, 2013; Featherstone & Lash, 1995; King, 1995; Therborn, 1995).

Hybridization.The study also showed that, except for the pro-Saudi TV network Al Arabiya, these online news channels prominently connected the cultural identity of Saudi Arabia to the human rights that the Saudi political system restrains. Whereas human rights were the central issue in framing Saudi Cultural Identity, CNN, Al Jazeera, and RT connected the structure of cultural contexts to the political and economic structure of Saudi Arabia. It is often via this hybridization framing process that the human rights frame travels across global media, though it is politically or economically twisted according to the national interests of a given media outlet.

It is what **Shoemaker and Reese** (2014) has indicated that global news media frame foreign events based on the national ideology or interest. It has been argued in the current scholar work of the human rights frame is highly selective and politically objective in Western media. For instance, Brandle (2018) confirmed this assertion with empirical evidence:

> Human rights continue to receive extremely little coverage in both British and American news outlets. In the case of television news, coverage of human rights continues to decline in amount and depth, and demonstrates a significant tendency to only frame international affairs as human rights…Some news stories actually include human rights

information, but do not include the phrase human right, which means that even when journalists cover human rights stories, they do not use human rights frames… [Concluding that] the government-leading-media perspective on who determines news coverage, making the press far less of an independent check on government when it comes to human rights in both the USA and UK. (p. 190).

Giddens (1991) provided a helpful direction in which the human rights movement became a manifest phenomenon in reflexive modernity. Giddens called it "*emancipatory politic*s" (Giddens, 1991, p. 215), referencing the integration between human rights (e.g., equality, justice, and participation) and politics in reflexive modernity. Therefore, humanization refers to the conjunction between human rights, activism, and politics.

Domination. This framing cue was evident in Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera across all categories with the same tone. Al Arabiya framed the Saudi Cultural Identity as indulgent, vibrant, and tolerant, and correspondent with Saudi traditions and values. In contrast, Al Jazeera framed the Saudi Cultural Identity as an intolerant culture that restricted social lifestyles, particularly for women. This result is consistent with the domination cue. The frame is activated within the interpretive community (i.e., newsroom community) due to a contestation or campaign between two sides, which was the case during the political crisis that erupted between Saudi Arabia and Qatar (2017-2021) that activated the dominant frame before they restored their relationship in June 2021.

From the modernity and global identities perspectives, domination is a politically driven cue that accounts for contestations or campaigning to serve the nation's geopolitical interests. The propagandistic or persuasive narratives aim to mobilize the audience toward a unified national, regional, or global identities. The domination cue reflects the belief that the media cultivate fragment identities even across geographically neighbored nations, thus it is a persuasive narrative that accounts for contestations or campaigning to serve the nation's geopolitical interests (Castells, 2013; Hofstede et al., 2010).

Implications, Limitations, and Future Studies:

The theoretical implications indicated that the national identity frame model expanded and contributed to the conceptual and operational knowledge of framing research. This study attempted to holistically bind a least a portion of the fragmented framing research into a cohesive model. In particular, this study contributed to framing research by providing a replicable and measurable model of framing identity in the context of modernity and globalization. It opened a new window to sources and methods for frame production research both conceptually and operationally. The study provided a practical way to implement a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative research). This approach helps to obtain both the manifest and latent embedded frames in

media discourse. It also provided a practical way to develop a coding scheme, operational definitions for variables, and reliable and applicable measurements. The limitations highlighted that the data sample obtained in this study did not cover multiple languages. Additionally, the study results included only the significantly positive relationship between identity framing and cultural context. In other words, the negative relationship between identity framing and the contexts across all online news channels was not reported. Further explanation of the negative relationship between the variables could enhance our understand of this study.

Future potential research may include variables like proximity (e.g., national, regional, global), visual-verbal congruence, additional languages (e.g., Russian, Chinese, French, Spanish, Urdu, Turkish, Persian), and more global news outlets, such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, Fox News (U.S.), Le Monde and Le Figaro (France), TRT network (Turkey), Al-Alam and Iran Daily (Iran), DW (Germany). Furthermore, future research may account for treating identity structure categories as dichromic variables, such as indulgence versus restraint, certainty versus uncertainty, and thriving governance versus doomed governance.

In conclusion, the study's findings have shown that the Saudi Cultural Identity is framed differently in international media level. It is true that the globe is unified through media's technological connections that bridge the gap between time and space (globalization). At the same time, the media frames national identity (e.g., rules, values, traditions, norms) differently. These finding are in line with the scholarship camp arguing that modernity is not a linear path, but is comprised of multilateral identities (Castells, 2013; Featherstone & Lash, 1995; Hofstede et al., 2010; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Therborn, 1995), which support the suggestion that even though we are in a globalized world, it is clear that each culture or nation distinguishes its self globally to compare its cultural standards with others (Deviation), impose a political gains (Hybridization), legitimize its unity (Domination).

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