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## Sport and politics in Bahrain: A case study of the royal family Al-Khalifa's control of sports media

Ali Rabea  
*University of Wollongong*

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**Sport and Politics in Bahrain:  
A Case Study of the Royal Family Al-Khalifa's  
Control of Sports Media**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree

**Master of Arts - Research**

from

**University of Wollongong**

by

**Ali Rabea**

School of

the Arts, English and Media

Faculty of

Law, Humanities and the Arts

**2015**

## **Thesis certification**

### **CERTIFICATION**

I, Ali Rabea, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts - Research, in the School of the Arts, English and Media, Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution

Ali Rabea

December 2015

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To my family.. I love you and I miss you.

### بسم رب العلم والعلماء

والصلاة والسلام على من بعث باقراً وبنون والقلم وما يسطرون وعلى آله الطيبين الطاهرين.. إلى اشتياقي أُمِّي وأبي وإخوتي.. لولاكم لما كان هذا العمل المتواضع.. هذه هديتي إلى تلك البقعة المظلومة نسأل الله الفرج القريب لها ولأهلها.. إلى بنات وأبناء إخواني الذين غمروني بحبهم.. إلى زوجات إخواني.. إلى أصدقائي وكل من دعمني خلال هذه الرحلة الطويلة.. إليكم جميعاً جزيل الشكر والعرفان.. هذه ليست إلا البداية.. تعلمت مما مضى.. تعلمت من الشقاء والقسوة والفرح والسعادة.. تعلمت أن لا أستكين أو أستسلم.. وهأنذا أقوى وأكثر صلابة من أي وقت مضى.. إلى ف إلى ل إلى سد إلى ط إلى ي إلى ن.. إلى الحرية قريباً..

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the relationship between sports media and politics in Bahrain in 2011 when Bahrainis gathered at the Pearl Roundabout to protest for greater freedom, equality, and an end to the Al-Khalifa regime during the wave of national protests in the region that is now known as The Arab Spring. It argues that sports media in particular was used as a propaganda tool by the Al-Khalifa family regime to suppress the protest. This thesis addresses two research questions: how did the pro-regime sports media frame the uprising in Bahrain and what strategies were used by the Al-Khalifa regime to politicize the sports media? A quantitative and qualitative content analysis was conducted of the sports media coverage in two sports newspapers and two television sports programmes in the period between March and May 2011 when demonstrations spread across Bahrain, sports activities were suspended and martial law was introduced following a general national strike. The content analysis identified three main frames that the pro-regime sports media employed to define the uprising: the characterization frame, the consequences frame, and the unpatriotic frame. Also identified were three accompanying strategies that helped implement the frames: vilifying the demonstrations, glorifying the Al-Khalifa family, and a third double edged strategy undermining the protesters while simultaneously praising the supporters of the ruling family. These strategies were supported by a number of techniques including the use of sources, the use of images of the protests, and the use of visual and audio content. This thesis concludes that the sports media was used as a propaganda tool by the Al-Khalifa family regime in Bahrain to suppress the 2011 uprising, to name and shame the protesters, and to preserve the status quo.

Keywords:

Sports media, The Arab Spring, Bahrain, the Al-Khalifa family, framing, propaganda

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Inspired by the demonstrations that swept the Middle East and North Africa, which the world's media described as The Arab Spring, Bahrainis took to the streets on February 14, 2011 in protests against the Sunni Al-Khalifa family. The protesters demanded political reforms including the introduction of a constitutional monarchy and a fair distribution of the country's wealth. Reports showed that thousands of families received monthly government aid that did not cover their basic needs (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2004; UNDP 2012). The Al-Khalifa family has had political control of Bahrain since 1783 and maintained it even during the period of British colonization. The unsuccessful uprising in Bahrain raised concerns among other regimes in the Gulf States and their American ally as toppling the regime in Bahrain would threaten the U.S. interests in the region.

In solidarity with the Bahraini people, sports figures and other athletes joined the protest march on February 22, 2011. This "Athletes' March" was an unexpected move by sports figures since it was the first time that they had become directly involved in politics. The Athletes' March was only a small part of the larger national uprising directed against the Al-Khalifa regime. The regime's reaction to the demonstration is indicative of the kind of political repression in Bahrain.

Bahrain was the first country in the Gulf States to imprison sports figures, athletes and sports journalists because of their political views. As a result of their participation, a number of sports figures, sports journalists, political activists, teachers, university students and trade unionists were detained and tortured. Some lost their jobs or were suspended from playing for their teams. For example, Abdulla Alawi, a Shiite sports journalist, was forced to resign from his job at *Al-Bilad* for his participation in the uprising. He was then detained for more than 70 days without trial (Reporters Without Borders 2011). His colleague Faisal Hayat, also a Shiite sports journalist, was detained for about 84 days without trial, A'ala Hubail, a top scorer in the 2004 Asian Cup, and his brother Mohammed Hubil were arrested whilst training with their club following their participation in The Athletes' March (Fox 2011). Mohammed Adnan, runner-up Asian Footballer of the year in 2009, was forced to leave the country and move to Australia after being accused of organizing The Athletes' March (Alahrani 2011).

The Bahrain Press Association report (2011) counted the dismissal and the arrest of more than 12 sports journalists among 129 local journalists who were targeted for their participation in the protests.

While the local media in Bahrain covered the uprising from the first week, the sports coverage in newspapers and television remained focused on the sports events themselves until these events were suspended in Bahrain in March 2011 because of the ongoing political unrest. At that point, journalists and television presenters had to rely on international sources for sports news. The lack of explicit acknowledgment of the impact of the protests on sport in Bahrain or commentary by sports journalists and sports celebrities was indicative of the level of control that the Al-Khalifa regime had on sports media and on the media in general. Consequently, there was little opportunity for anti-regime news coverage in any media in Bahrain since it is been controlled, funded, or monitored by pro-regime agents.

However, on April 4, 2011, Bahrain Sports channel aired a programme that was called *With the Event* that explicitly discussed the uprising and its consequences. This programme was considered a breakthrough in the sports media coverage of the uprising because it criminalized the protesters and called for the suspension and arrest of all those who were involved in the demonstrations. It was these sports media events that encouraged writing this thesis, which examine the involvement of sports media in politics by questioning how the 2011 uprising in Bahrain was framed and what strategies were used by the Al-Khalifa regime to politicise the sports media, particularly during the first three months of the uprising between March and May 2011.

This thesis sheds light on the political role of sports media during a critical period in the history of Bahrain when the regime employed the sports media and pro-regime athletes to whip up nationalistic and patriotic sentiments in order to enhance the political and the social standing for the benefit of the royal family. According to Peter Beck (1982), during the 1920s and 30s, the German Nazi regime, the Italian Fascists and even the English used sports competitions as a propaganda means to create a sense of sporting "war" against other national teams. In Argentina, for instance, the former military government exploited the country's hosting of the 1978 World Cup to create a sense of patriotism to counter foreigners and domestic

opposition; both were referred to as the enemy. The military government's sense of patriotism was further enhanced by Argentina winning the 1978 World Cup:

For the junta it was clear: the victory articulated the excellence of the nation and the importance of staying together, like the national team, against all kinds of enemy. Football was defined as a privileged arena as far as patriotism was concerned. (Tomlinson and Young 2006, p. 141)

The popular appeal and wide-spread cultural impact of sport are two of the main reasons why sport attracts the interest of political regimes eager to find opportunities to propagandize their ideology. Sport attracts private interests keen to exploit profit margins associated with the popularity of televised and sponsored sport events. For instance, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation, 51.9 million (90% of the United Kingdom population), watched at least 15 minutes of coverage of the London 2012 Olympic Games (BBC 2012). This was the biggest national television event since the beginning of the current measuring system. It also surpassed two other major events in the United Kingdom: The Diamond Jubilee that was watched by 69% of the population and Kate and William's Royal Wedding that was watched by 61% of the population. In a report released by the International Olympic Committee (2012), statistics show that the coverage of the Olympics reached 3.6 billion people across more than 500 television channels around the world. This shows the power of sport competitions in reaching more than half of the world's population.

Success in sporting events is often used to divert attention from national political or economic crises. For instance, the three playoff matches between Algeria and Egypt in the qualifying round of the World Cup in 2010 was quickly politicized by the competing nations. Politicians, sports figures and the media from both countries escalated the patriotic competition until it reached what was called a "Soccer War" (Kujawsky 2009). As a journalist of the *New York Times* commented in an article titled "This Time Egyptians Rioted Over Sport, Not Bread", Egypt was swept away with nationalistic fever during the playoffs against Algeria which was temporarily united during the games despite its internal political tensions:

From the start, the Egyptian government sought to exploit the games with Algeria for political reasons,

political analysts said. State radio broadcast nationalist songs. Streets were filled with young men selling Egyptian flags. The president's son Gamal Mubarak, who is often talked about as a possible successor to his 81-year-old father, attended the two games with other high-ranking party members. (Slackman 2009).

The media in Egypt and Algeria reported that several of their national team supporters died during the "Soccer War" although this was later revealed to be false (Montague 2009; Slackman 2009). Ambassadors from both countries were withdrawn from embassies as a result of the "Soccer War". Even the Egyptian president of the time, Mohammed Hosni Mubarak participated in escalating the tensions. He insisted in a parliamentary speech that "Egypt does not tolerate those who hurt the dignity of its sons" (BBC 2009). He went on to qualify what could almost be interpreted to be a call for action to support the nation's football team against the competing nation's sports fans: "We don't want to be drawn into impulsive reactions. I am agitated too, but I restrain myself". In this speech, Mubarak simultaneously mobilized sport as a national propaganda tool and portrayed himself as a fellow sports fan to his people.

It is fairly common in media coverage of political disputes in Gulf States countries to go beyond the strictly sports issue and to transform into a political issue. The regimes of these countries do not hesitate to use sport and sports media to put pressure on each other. For instance, as early as 2014 Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates forced their journalists to give up their positions at the Qatari television channel, Bein Sport, after a political dispute with Qatar (Al Jazeera 2014). This dispute which was over the Qatari support to the Muslim Brotherhood included the withdrawal of the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain from Qatar. Evidence of official pressure can be found in a Tweet from the Saudi columnist Mohanna Alhubail, who writes for Qatari newspapers and Al Jazeera Arabic website: "I have received a call from the Deputy Minister of Information Dr. Abdullah Al-Jasser informing me politely about the leadership's decision to stop my writing in Qatar" (Alhubail 2014). In another event, Qatar was

also threatened of being penalized and banned from hosting regional sports tournaments (Arabian Business 2014).



Figure 1: Tweets from the Saudi journalist Muhanna Alhubail about instructions to stop dealing with the Qatari media

The 2011 uprising in Bahrain attracted international media attention about the relationship between sports and politics and responsibilities regarding human rights in sport competitions (Deedes 2012; Gibson 2014). Bahrain was supposed to host the Grand Prix in March 2011 but the race was cancelled as a result of the political turmoil. A year later, the question was raised once again about whether Bahrain should host the Formula One race after its violation of human rights during the uprising. Many observers argued that ignoring the human rights violations would give the green light to the Bahraini regime to continue its "crackdown" on dissidents. As British politician George Galloway stated: "There is blood on the tracks and anyone who drives over them will never be forgiven" (*The Guardian* 2012). However, in the same paper the Crown Prince of Bahrain, who had brought the Grand Prix to Bahrain for the first time in 2004, claimed that cancelling the race "would just empower extremists". The Crown Prince's statement showed how the Al-Khalifa family dismissed anyone who opposed the political status-quo in Bahrain as "extremists". On an international level, the British opposition leader Ed Miliband voiced his concerns and stated that:

Sport and politics generally shouldn't mix, but ...  
what kind of signal does it send to the world when  
this grand prix (sic) is going ahead, given the  
concerns there are, given the violence we have seen

in Bahrain, given the continuing issues around human rights? (Wilkinson 2012).

Despite this event, the Grand Prix went ahead in Bahrain in April 2012. While the regime had insisted on hosting the race in an attempt to prove to the world that the state in Bahrain was stable, the race had the unexpected result of bringing more international attention to the daily protests being held all over Bahrain. Since it was believed that the Formula One management supported the Al-Khalifa's autocratic rule, the protesters redoubled their efforts to underline the link between this major sport event and the suppression of the uprising and any political opposition in Bahrain.



Figure 2: Graffiti calling for boycott of the race in one of the Bahraini cities (Bahrain Watch 2014)

Figure 2 shows an example of political graffiti on a wall in Bahrain calling for the boycott of the Grand Prix. It shows Bernie Ecclestone, the president and CEO of Formula One Management and Formula One Administration driving a Formula One car beside the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa. The car spouts tear gas on protesters instead of exhaust fumes. The tires of the car drip blood, presumably from running over protesters, and the text underlining the drivers states "Is not on our blood".

The use of English instead of Arabic in this graffiti indicates that the anticipated audience was the international media rather than local protesters. The demonstrations against the Formula One sought to raise awareness among the Bahraini people about the way the regime's insistence on hosting the race was part of its public relations campaign. Given the lack of opportunities to voice opposition in the tightly controlled media of Bahrain, the walls of local cities became the

alternative platform for protesters along with the more high-risk banners and participation in street marches and protests. Figure 3 below shows an example of an Arab/English language banner pitched at both local and international media coverage. The Arabic text states "الفورمولا في البحرين تطحن أجساد الشعب" can be translated as "Formula One crushes the Bahraini people's bodies".



Figure 3: A poster calling for boycott of the Formula One during a protest event  
(*The Guardian* 2012)

British journalist Brian Dooley in an article titled "Bahrain Is Becoming Even More Repressive Because of the F1 Race" highlighted the way that the Formula One season was used by the royal family to hide the un-democratic situation:

Bahrain's rulers are invested financially and psychologically in the F1. It brings international prestige to the tiny kingdom, where the ruling family keeps tight control of power and the King's uncle has been the unelected prime minister for over 40 years.

(Dooley 2013)

Despite the international media recognition of violations of human rights in Bahrain and the use of Formula One for political purposes, there was no serious action taken by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (the International Automobile Federation).

The use of sport in politics in the Gulf States countries continued. In March 2015, a coalition of several Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the United States launched a war on Yemen. Sport and sports figures again engaged in the war by carrying banners, chanting national slogans during games, performing

tifos in stadiums by crowds, or encouraging public opinion to "support the sacred mission". In one case a Saudi air force pilot wrote an encouraging message to an injured football player on a missile that he intended to launch on Yemen. While the previous examples show a strong tie between sport and politics in all Gulf States countries, is argued in this thesis that the connection is particularly strong in Bahrain, as can be seen through targeting of sports figures and athletes and the excessive involvement of sport and sports media during the 2011 uprising.

### **1.1 The 2011 uprising in Bahrain**

Although anti-regime protests had been occurring for about a decade before 2011, the demonstrations during 2011 were the biggest protest events in the history of Bahrain. In 1992, two hundred national figures signed a petition calling for political reform and a new election, but the former Prince of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa (1961-1999), father of the present King, rejected the opposition's demands. Weeks later, the Prince established a Consultative Council with thirty members appointed by the Prince himself. The opposition strongly refused the Prince's move. In 1994, another petition was signed by 20,000 activists and citizens. In response to the growing movement, the regime arrested and exiled some of the opposition leaders. This led to general unrest and there were protests in many cities. These protests resulted in death, injury and the arrest of thousands of people (Peterson 2004; BBC 2013).

In 1999, the ruling family announced the death of the Prince Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa and his son Prince Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa took over the throne. About a year later, the new Prince established a committee for National Reconciliation, endorsing a new constitution and a re-election of the parliament in 2002 (Joyce 2012, pp. 109-111). The opposition rejected the new constitution and the "manipulated election" accusing the regime of reducing the powers of the parliament as outlined in the 2002 constitution. As a result, they boycotted the elections (Joyce 2012, p. 113).

On February 14, 2011 people from different areas organized demonstrations that began in what was called the "Day of Rage" (Khatib and Lust 2014, p. 190). Seven people were reportedly killed in the first few days of the uprising including two activists, Ali Mushaima and Fadhel Al-Matrook and hundreds were injured or

arrested (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2011a). The death of Ali Mushaima and Fadhel Al-Matrook ignited the protests across Bahrain which led to rallying in the Pearl Roundabout, a public space located only a hundred meters from the Council of Ministers' building, the Financial Harbour and the main shopping malls of the capital city Manama. The heart of the Pearl Roundabout was a large stone monument with six beams representing the six regional Gulf States. The beams join together to hold a giant stone pearl that represented unity. Protesters occupied the area around the Pearl Roundabout. They set up camps, food trucks and platforms for protest speeches with the intention of staying until political reform was negotiated. Foreign reporters were on site, particularly during the first weeks, perhaps because this Bahraini protest coincided with the wave of similar pro-democratic upheavals in the region. In an article for *The New York Times*, Ayesha Saldanha, described the Pearl Roundabout sit-in as she experienced the "carnival atmosphere" during the rally:

There were electric generators, stalls with food and tea ('freedom tea' read one sign), an area to find lost children, a 'media center' where journalists could get information and projections of TV feeds onto screens and even onto the Pearl Monument."

(Saldanha 2011).

However, within three days the Bahraini Special Forces attacked the sleeping protesters, killing four and injuring hundreds. According to the Human Rights Watch report (2011a) of the incident which took place during the early morning of February 17, 2011, even doctors and paramedics who endeavoured to treat the wounded protesters were targeted. After clearing the area, military forces surrounded the Pearl Roundabout for two further days and prevented the protesters' from returning. Thus "The Pearl Roundabout had become, after the bloodshed, a symbol of protest" (Sharmila 2012). A television report on February 19, 2011 from the Al Jazeera English Channel showed the protesters returning to the Roundabout chanting anti-regime slogans: "With our soul and blood we will redeem you Bahrain" (Al Jazeera English 2011a).

The ruling family began to feel its loss of control and called for urgent military support from Saudi Arabia and other neighbouring countries. Over 1500 troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were sent to Bahrain on

March 13, 2011 to assist the local police in its crackdown of the uprising. The assistance came once the regime declared a state of emergency. On March 15, the Bahraini Security Forces supported by the Gulf States troops attacked the protesters at the Pearl Roundabout for the second time. Within two days, the Bahraini forces had taken control and expelled the protesters (Tran 2011). A day later, the regime demolished the Roundabout and removed the Pearl Monument to prevent people from returning to it or using it as a focal point for protests. Although a junction was built over the site, it was not opened to public access and the area is still surrounded (as of December 2, 2015) by security forces as a measure to prevent the Bahraini population from rallying. According to unofficial records, more than 160 people have been killed since February 2011 and thousands detained or injured (Shuhdaana 2014).

This Pearl Roundabout protest was the culmination of a series of protests that the opposition movement in Bahrain had been staging for many decades. A report from the BBC, which can be found in the BBC televisions archives, points out that even in 1956 the pro-democracy leaders had demanded a stop to what they called "one man rule" (Ibnkan 2012a). The movement led by the Committee of National Union CNU negotiated with both the Al-Khalifa regime and the British who were a colonizing presence in the region at the time to allow it to become the legitimate voice of opposition for the Bahraini people. However, the regime and the British refused to negotiate with the opposition (Al-Naqeeb 1989, p. 138). Subsequently, some of the CNU leaders were arrested and three of the leaders were accused of attempting to assassinate the Prince of Bahrain, Sheikh Salman Al-Khalifa, and were exiled to the island of Saint Helena (Joyce 2012, p. 25).

14 Feb	Beginning of the uprising
15/16 Feb	Killing of the two activists Ali Mushaima and Fadhel Al-Matrook
17 Feb	First attack on protesters at the Pearl Roundabout
19 Feb	Return of the protesters to the Pearl Roundabout
21 Feb	Organizing The Athletes' March
13 March	Gulf States troops sent to Bahrain
15 March	National state of emergency declared
16 March	Second attack on protesters at the Pearl Roundabout

17 March	Attack on Salmaniya Medical Complex
17 March	Arrest of opposition leaders
18 March	Demolition of the Pearl Roundabout
1 April	Demolition campaign of Shiite mosques
3 April	Closure of <i>Al-Wasat</i> newspaper
4 April	Broadcast of <i>With the Event</i> programme
5 April	Arrest of medical staff
6 April	Beginning of explicit coverage in newspapers
11 April	Broadcast of <i>Special Event</i> programme
31 May	The call of the king for a national dialogue

Figure 4: A table of the main events of the uprising in March, April and May 2011

## 1.2 Sport and the Al-Khalifa family

Bahrain has been ruled by the Al-Khalifa regime since 1783. The family originally came from the central region of the Arabian Peninsula (Abdulla and Zain Al-Abidin 2009) and is part of the Sunni minority. Overall, Bahrain has a population of 1.2 million (46% Bahraini and 54% non-Bahraini) with the majority of the population being Muslim (approximately 81%) and the rest Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Baha'i and other religions (Central Intelligence Agency 2013). Muslims in Bahrain are divided into a Shiite majority and a Sunni minority. While there are no official statistics about the exact proportion of Shiites in Bahrain, reports estimate the percentage of Shiites as being between 70% and 75% (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2006; Aldosari 2007; Fuller 2011; Erlich 2013).

Since the Sunnis are the minority elite, with a stranglehold on economic and political power, the Shiites have a strong belief that there is systematic discrimination against them. However, while the majority of the detainees arrested during the 2011 uprising were Shiite, the first person arrested was Mohammed Al-Buflasa, a Sunni citizen who served in the Bahraini Defence Force. Al-Buflasa spoke in the Pearl Roundabout and was arrested by his colleagues in the Bahrain Defence Force (Human Rights Watch 2011b). Thus, as the opposition argues the conflict in Bahrain is political rather than sectarian (Erlich 2013).

The Al-Khalifa family effectively controls the media in Bahrain. It is not surprising that the media was biased in its coverage of the 2011 uprising. At the

beginning of the uprising, most media coverage described the protesters in benign terms. For instance, in a news article published in *Al-Bilad* (2011a), the Prime Minister of Bahrain described two people who were killed during the demonstrations as "our sons". Two days later, as the regime realized that the protest was gaining momentum, the demonstrations were described in a Ministry of Interior statement more negatively as a "riot" (*Al-Bilad* 2011b). The media as a whole reflected a pro-regime shift in attitude towards the protesters. Two years after the 2011 uprising, the opposition continued to be described in the pro-regime media as groups who were supported by foreign powers. For example, a columnist in *Al-Watan* described protesters as "magi" who worked for the Islamic Republic of Iran (Al-Modhaki 2013)

The close relationship between the royal family and sport in Bahrain is striking. Al-Khalifa's members not only occupy senior positions of sport in Bahrain but their activities are closely followed by the local sports media. For example, Sheikh Nasser bin Hammad Al-Khalifa leads the Bahraini Olympic Committee and at the same time occupies military positions. The most recognizable figure is unquestionably Sheikh Nasser, the fourth son of the Bahraini King Hammad bin Salman Al-Khalifa. He was born on May 8, 1987 and graduated from Sandhurst Royal Military Academy in 2006. When he was only 23 years old, he was appointed as Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

The other significant and overlapping sport and military positions he occupies include: leader of the Royal Endurance Horse Riding Team, Commander of the Royal Guard, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Royal Charity Organization and he is a member of the Economic Development Board (Bahrain News Agency 2011; Nasseralkhalifa 2014). For the Al-Khalifa family members, senior positions in sport are as important as military positions.

The Al-Khalifa family is the main player in the Bahraini sport scene. The Al-Khalifa family direct 18 of 26 sports federations. Figure 5 shows some of the royal family members who are at the helm of the major federations. The influence of the Al-Khalifa family on sport has allowed its members to use sport as a vehicle for its own propaganda to control the nation. For instance, sporting success is generally and deferentially attributed to "the wise leadership" of the King, the Prime Minister and

the Crown Prince as if they were the main cause of success rather than individual athletic prowess.

After being appointed the President of the Bahraini Olympic Committee, Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad has been considered to be one of the main reasons for Bahrain's sporting success. The President of the Athletics Federation Sheikh Talal bin Mohammed, for instance, announced that the wins of Bahraini athletes in an Asian competition were the result of the "great support" offered by Sheikh Nasser (*Al-Watan* 2012).

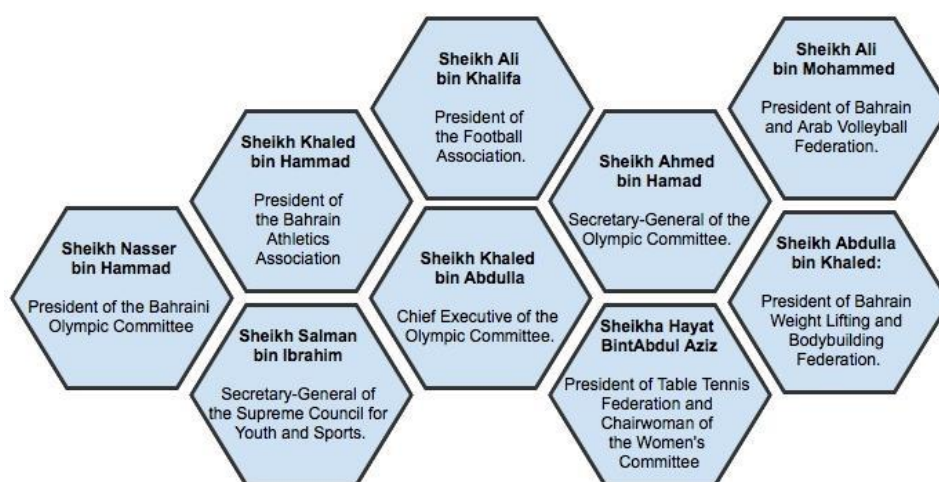


Figure 5: An overview of the senior positions in sport occupied by royal family members

Al-Khalifa family members' sport activities receive special media coverage. Sporting activities of the royal family members, particularly those who are close relatives of the king, occupy prime place in the sports pages. For instance, Figure 6 shows an official news article that covers an Endurance Race of the Crown Prince Cup. The article is accompanied by two photos of the king's son Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa (left and centre) and one other photo (right) of The Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad with his brother Sheikh Khaled bin Hamad. Using photographs of the same figure is normal when the news covers senior sports figures such as Sheikh Nasser or his brother Sheikh Khaled bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. The text of the article and pictures would have been sent to the local newspapers by the media office of Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and it would have been published without editorial changes, as is typical of "official news" stories. Official news articles that rely on official sources or pro-regime figures are also sent by sports federations and clubs.



أعرب عن تقديره لدعم سمو ولي العهد للقدره

ناصر بن حمد يشيد باستعدادات الاتحاد الملكي لسباق كأس ولي العهد برعاية درة البحرين

[illegible][illegible]

**تعليق: قللت الامامي**  
 قال مدير الامامي في دبي، والعضو في اللجنة التنفيذية لجمعية الامامي، الدكتور محمد بن راشد، ان الامامي في دبي قد شهدت نمواً كبيراً في السنوات الأخيرة، حيث تم افتتاح 10 مراكز جديدة في مختلف مناطق الإمارة، بالإضافة إلى إنشاء 5 مراكز جديدة في مناطق أخرى. كما تم افتتاح 10 مراكز جديدة في مناطق أخرى، مما يجعل إجمالي عدد المراكز في دبي 15 مركزاً. وأضاف الدكتور راشد، ان الامامي في دبي قد شهدت نمواً كبيراً في السنوات الأخيرة، حيث تم افتتاح 10 مراكز جديدة في مختلف مناطق الإمارة، بالإضافة إلى إنشاء 5 مراكز جديدة في مناطق أخرى. كما تم افتتاح 10 مراكز جديدة في مناطق أخرى، مما يجعل إجمالي عدد المراكز في دبي 15 مركزاً.

[illegible]

Figure 6: An example of an official news article (*Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, April 12, 2011)

Official stories sent by the regime's media office to be published in local newspapers are not just about the ruling family members; they also cover sport clubs and federations. All official news is sent to the local newspapers via email or fax. An item about a senior figure such as Sheikh Nasser must be published in the foreground or at the top of any local sports page in the next day's issue with its photos and captions in exactly the same way as they were contained in the email or in the fax. Editors are expected, given their source, to always prioritize these stories. In contrast, the news about small sports club activities may not be published at all, or published at the bottom of the page, because the placement of news articles depends on the perceived importance of the sport figure. Usually, sport pages are divided into seven to eight columns.

It is worth noting (see Figure 6) that the official news article of Sheikh Nasser and his brothers occupied eight columns and almost three-quarters of the page. It is

common that Al-Khalifa family members share their greetings or praise through official stories as can be seen in the example of Sheikh Nasser in the article which has the commentary "ناصر بن حمد يشيد باستعدادات الاتحاد الملكي لسباق كأس ولي العهد برعاية درة" "أعرب عن تقديره لدعم سمو ولي العهد للقدرة..البحرين" which can be translated as "Expressing his Appreciation for the Support of His Highness the Crown Prince for Endurance Riding Sport: Nasser bin Hamad Praises the Royal Federation Preparations for the Crown Prince Cup Race Sponsored by Durrat Al Bahrain".

While politics was normally not explicitly foregrounded in Bahraini sports media, using sports media for political purposes during the first months of the 2011 uprising became what can be called an "official policy". Figure 7 shows a news article covering a football match in the month after the suppression of the Pearl Roundabout protest and when sport activities were resumed in mid-April. The accompanying photograph shows the Al-Hidd team players holding a banner before their match started in which is written in Arabic "ومنتسبيه ولاعبيه والثقافي الرياضي الحد نادي" "في الرشيدة وقيادتنا لمملكتنا مخلصين أوفياء جنوداً يكونوا أن الله يعاهدون الكرام الحد مدينة أهالي وجميع" "والضراء السراء" which can be translated as "Al-Hidd Cultural and Sports Club; its Players, Members and all Distinguished People of Al-Hidd City Pledge to God to Be Faithful and Loyal Soldiers to our Kingdom and our Leadership Through Thick and Thin". This explicit reference to the political situation and the team's political allegiance breaches paragraph 14 of International Federation of Association Football FIFA (2012) Code of Ethics which states that players should "remain politically neutral" during play and at public events. Indeed, even the lifting of political banners and slogans by spectators breaches paragraph 67 of FIFA Disciplinary Code (International Federation of Association Football 2011) which considers political slogans improper conduct. Despite this explicit sanction by FIFA against players' political interventions, this Bahraini sports team has never been formally reprimanded for the pro-regime message. As it turns out, many of these Bahraini players were not just involved in the political upheaval, but they also later participated in campaigns against their colleagues who demonstrated against the regime.

بعد توقف دام 45 يوماً

## الحياة الرياضية تعود إلى الملاعب من جديد

والبحرين، على أن يتم تأكيد مشاركة نادبي سمايج والدبر خلال الأيام القليلة المقبلة. أما اتحاد الطائرة فقد اعتمد جدول مباريات دوري الدرجة الأولى والثانية، حيث ستبدأ مباريات الدرجة الثانية بمسابقة الكأس اعتباراً من يوم السبت 23 إبريل، بينما ستطلق مباريات القسم الثاني لدوري الدرجة الأولى اعتباراً من يوم الاثنين 25 إبريل على أن تقام مباراة واحدة في اليوم.

وأخيراً فإن اتحاد السلة هو الآخر فقد حدد موعد استئناف نشاطه، حيث من المفترض أن يطلق الدوري في العشرين من الشهر الجاري بعد أن عقدت اللجنة الفنية اجتماعاً لمناقشة هذا القرار. وبعودة الحياة الرياضية إلى الملاعب في البحرين، يكون الرياضيون قد ودعوا أسوأ موسم رياضي مر عليهم، حيث لم يسبق أن توقفت المسابقات الرياضية بهذه الصورة من قبل.



حسن على: عادت الحياة الرياضية إلى الملاعب في البحرين، عندما استأنف دوري الدرجة الأولى لكرة القدم يوم الجمعة الماضي، بعد توقف دام حوالي أكثر من 45 يوماً.

وكانت الاضطرابات السياسية التي عصفت بالبلاد منذ 14 فبراير الماضي أدت إلى توقف النشاط الرياضي بالكامل. واستأنف النشاط الرياضي بانطلاق دوري الدرجة الأولى بلقاء جمع العنقاء أمام البستينين انتهى بالتعادل الإيجابي 1/1، وسط حضور قليل العدد من قبل الجماهير.

وحضر المباراة الأمين العام للمجلس الأعلى للشباب والرياضة رئيس الاتحاد البحريني لكرة القدم الشيخ سلمان بن إبراهيم آل خليفة، ورئيس المؤسسة العامة للشباب والرياضة هشام الجودر.

ولأنها للقيادة السياسية. وفي مباراة الأس التي جمعت الحد أمام المحرق، رفع لاعبو الحد لافتة كتبوا فيها "جميع منتسبي نادي الحد يعاهدون الله أن يكونوا جنوداً أوفياء مخلصين لمملكتنا وقيادتنا الرشيدة في السراء والضراء". في المقابل رفع لاعبو نادي المحرق أعلام البحرين.

وقبل بداية المباراة رفع الفريقان لافتات تعبر عن حبهم وولائهم للوطن، مجددين البيعة والولاء للقيادة السياسية في البلاد، ورفعوا صور الملك ورئيس الوزراء وولي العهد الأمين، وانتشرت في سماء البحرين الوطني الكثير من اللافتات التي عبرت عن تأييد الأندية الوطنية

Figure 7: A sport news article accompanied by a photograph of players carrying an anti-protesters banner (Al-Bilad, April 15, 2011)

### 1.3 The state of Bahrain

Understanding the media situation in Bahrain requires an understanding of the social, legal and political contexts of Bahrain. Khaldon Al-Naqeeb (1989, p. 100) has noted that the tribal families who control the five states in the Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United States of Emirates) live in "tribal blocks", or small societies, where each ruling tribe and its immediate members share common interests that differ from the interests of the rest of the population. This tribal blocks' superiority is enforced both socially and legally. Article 1-A of the Bahrain Constitution of 2002, for instance, stipulates the king's person is inviolate and he cannot be questioned about his decisions.

Moreover, the constitution states that the regime is a hereditary constitutional monarchy so that the throne moves from the king to his oldest son unless he decides in his lifetime to appoint another son (Chapter 1, Article 1-B). The king has wide authorities to appoint and dismiss not only the Crown Prince, but also the Prime Minister and all ministers.

The Al-Khalifa Sunni family stabilizes its rule by using financial endowments. According to Fuad I. El-Khury (1983) in his book *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transition of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, the ruling family has strong ties with some Sunni and Shiite families in which financial interests play a significant role in the coalition. While the Al-Khalifa's allies receive preferential treatment, Shiite opposition families are forced to pay higher taxes (p. 67). For the Al-Khalifa family loyalty is not ensured by religion or doctrine.

Bahrain has thrived on strong diplomatic ties with the United States and the United Kingdom. This has, according to observers, impacted negatively on the democratic process as the governments of both the United States and the United Kingdom continue to support the Al-Khalifa regime in order to protect their political and military interests (Kode 2014; Wearing 2014). The United Kingdom has remained on friendly terms with the Al-Khalifa regime since the amicable end of British colonial rule in 1971. Although Bahrain is only a small archipelago located in the Persian Gulf with a territory of about 717 square kilometres, it has been a "major non-NATO ally" of the United States since 2002 (The White House 2002). Bahrain hosts the American Fifth Fleet, a naval base that is responsible for naval forces in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea and part of the Indian Ocean. According to observers, the base plays an important role in protecting American interests in the region and in turn provides support to the Bahraini regime:

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have long sought the comfort of American security guarantees. The Arab Gulf states have never possessed the military ability to protect themselves from regional threats and so depend on the U.S. (Jones 2011)

The Al-Khalifa family has enhanced its dominance on Bahrain through alliance with local figures including Sunni tribes and Shiite figures, and through their alliance with international powers such as the U.S.

#### **1.4 Media in Bahrain**

The newspapers currently published in Bahrain have been in print for about 40 years. The British first encouraged the establishment of media outlets in the 1930s. According to Al-Shaiji (1989), the institutionalization of the press in Bahrain began during the First World War when traders who were exchanging letters about the war quoted news from Reuters as well as some Egyptian and Indian newspapers. Al-Shaiji claims that the British encouraged local publishers in Bahrain to establish newspapers to counter the German and Italian propaganda that was targeting the Bahraini people. In 1939 Abdullah Al-Zayed established the first print newspaper, the weekly the *Bahrain Newspaper* and a year later the British authority established a radio station called Gulf Radio. According to Al-Shaiji, during the Second World

War, *Bahrain Newspaper* was inciting Bahrainis to stand against the Axis powers. The newspaper continued to be printed for about five years before ceasing publication due to technical problems. However, it was rumoured that the newspaper was shut down by the local authority after publishing an article encouraging the union of Bahrain with the United Arab Emirates (Al-Shaiji 1989, pp. 103-110). In 1950, a monthly magazine called *Voice of Bahrain* was established. The magazine stood against colonialism, defended the rights of Arabs and criticized the Gulf States regimes. The magazine was shut down by the authorities in 1954 (Al-Shaiji 1989, pp. 136-137). Another two pro-opposition magazines were also shut down between 1952 and 1955 (Ezzat 1983, pp. 352-353).

More newspapers were subjected to censorship during the 1960s until *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Gulf Daily News* were established by Mahmood Al-Mardi in 1976 and 1978 respectively (Al-Wasat 2005). Currently, there are five private daily newspapers, published in Arabic: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, *Al-Ayam*, *Al-Wasat*, *Al-Watan* and *Al-Bilad* and there are two daily newspapers published in English: *Gulf Daily News* and *Daily Tribune*.

When it comes to the official media and according to official information, Bahrain started its first radio broadcast in 1940 and its first television broadcast in 1973. The national news agency, *Bahrain News Agency*, was launched in 1976 under the name *Gulf News Agency* (Information Affairs Authority 2015). *Here Bahrain*, the oldest magazine in Bahraini media history was established by the Public Relations Department (currently known as Information Affairs Authority) in 1957 (Ezzat 1983, pp. 192-194).

At present, there are nine radio channels: General radio, Quran radio, Youth radio, Bahrain FM, Songs radio, traditional music radio, English radio, Indian radio, and Live Radio. There are also three television channels: Bahrain Television (Arabic), Bahrain Television (English) and Bahrain Sports Channel. Television and radio channels in Bahrain are owned and directed by the regime. The only sports channel in Bahrain is controlled and directed by the regime. During periods of increased sport activity, a secondary sports channel is activated to cover the sports news, but this is a subsidiary of the main sports channel and does not offer an alternative perspective. Overall, sports media in Bahrain is divided into two major

categories: television and newspapers. All sport newspapers in Bahrain are liftouts in the main newspapers.

The current ownership situation in Bahrain raises questions about the pluralism of local media. Gillian Doyle (2002) defines pluralism within the media as the diversity of opinions diverse voices, different political views and independence of affiliation. Doyle indicates that pluralism grants the public access to a range of content in terms of political opinions and cultural reflection. She argues that without an open system of media ownership, a small group may be granted the right to control the media (pp. 11-12). In Bahrain, the opposition voice is almost prohibited from appearing on the national television.

### **1.5 The press law**

Ezzat Ali Ezzat (1983) pointed out that the first press law in Bahrain and in the Gulf States was established in 1930 by the British adviser to the government of Bahrain. The intent behind the legislation was to monitor journalists. This was evident in the provision that "any correspondent who works for a newspaper, or a freelance reporter, must record his name and the newspaper he works for in the department of the Bahraini government". The penalty for breaking this press law could be a fine or imprisonment for a period of 6 months (pp. 111-112). The second press law that was established in 1953, granted the local authorities the right to refuse to provide press licenses without having to give a reason, and the power to suspend and confiscate the property of a newspaper that broke the law. In 1954, another law was announced before it was replaced in 1965 by a new press law that was declared by the Prince of Bahrain, Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa to become the first law to be announced by the royal family itself (pp. 112-114). This 1965 law granted the manager of the Information Department the power to suspend the publication of newspapers, or to revoke a newspaper license (pp. 116-118). A television report produced in 1966 by BBC about the political situation in Bahrain showed that the ruling family rejected the concept of freedom of press early (Ibnkan 2012b).

The 2002 the *Press, Printing and Publishing* law replaced the 1965 law. This new legislation was ratified by the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, and grants wide powers to his government as represented by its Information Affairs Authority. Control of the media is given to the regime with the power to refuse or

suspend licenses for media outlets: Article 4 of the law states that "Anyone who wishes to establish a printing press, before carrying out any business in it, shall obtain licensure for this purpose from the Ministry." The law also closely monitors journalists' work. For example, Article 68 paragraphs (B) and (D) states that a journalist can be punished for criticizing the king or for instigating the overthrow of the regime. This new level of regulation encourages self-censorship by both journalists and editors. As a 2014 report by the US State Department comments, the current press law grants wide control to the regime over media in Bahrain:

The government did not own any print media, but the Information Affairs Authority (IAA) and other government entities exercised considerable control over privately owned domestic print media. The government owned and operated all domestic radio and television stations. (U.S. Department of State 2014).

Moreover, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (2011) that was established by the King of Bahrain reported that the regime, through its control over media, launched media campaigns to vilify the opposition (p. 178). A recent example of the strict control by the regime is that a new pan-Arab news television channel Al Arab owned by the Saudi Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal was halted by the regime hours after it started airing live from its offices in the capital Manama. While several media reports suggested "technical and administrative reasons", other reports cited an "offending interview" with an opposition leader (Black 2015; Omran 2015; BBC 2015; Khalifa and Schreck 2015). With such strict control over the media, anti-government activists have had to resort to social media to organize their activities and to exchange news about the uprising. This use of social media is in line with the activities of many opposition campaigns to organize demonstrations in "The Arab Spring". However, what is somewhat unusual in the Bahrain context is that the regime also incorporated social media into its strategies to crack down on the uprising.

While other national governments, such as the former regime, attempted to block satellite coverage nationally to prevent the opposition from using social media to organize protests (Freedom House 2012a), in Bahrain the regime itself used the online social networking service Facebook to identify protesters (Welsh 2011).

Within days of The Athletes' March, a Facebook page was set up to post images of activists, or sometimes even peripheral participants photographed during the protest marches, who were labelled as "traitors". Bahrainis were called on to look through the images to see if they recognized their neighbours or colleagues, and then to post information about their names, age or work place. Some of those people who were identified were sacked from their jobs or detained.

Bahrain has one of the best levels of the Internet coverage in the Middle East countries and there are a number of service providers including Batelco, a company that is operated through the royal family. This, however, does not mean that all Bahraini had access to social media or alternative political websites during the uprising. According to the Reporters Without Borders report (2012a), the level of Internet filtering and surveillance in Bahrain is one of the highest in the world and Bahrain was added to the list of "Internet Enemies" in 2012. The regime also targeted pro-opposition activists to stop online activities. The online surveillance has increased since the 2011 uprising:

The National Safety Status (emergency law) was initiated in March 2011 for two and a half months, leading to an intensive punitive campaign against bloggers and internet users (among others) that was characterized by mass arrests, incommunicado detention, torture, military trials, harsh imprisonment sentences, and dismissal from work and study based on online posts or mobile content. (Freedom House 2012b).

The screenshot presented in Figure 8 shows an example of a Facebook page that was created to target protesters. The page was titled "Together to Unmask the Shiite Traitors" with an image of the King, the Bahrain flag, the map of Bahrain and the subtitle "The Kingdom remains for Al-Khalifa". The page was soon closed by the Facebook management after reports sent by pro-opposition activists but another page was later created titled "Together to Unmask the Shiite Traitors 2". Thousands of pictures and large amounts of personal information about people who participated in the demonstrations or those who attended the Pearl Roundabout were posted and made public to facilitate arrest of the protesters who were called "betrayers".



Figure 8: A Facebook page that included protesters' personal information. The still taken from the Al Jazeera English documentary *"Shouting in the Dark"* (Welsh 2011)

The screenshot in Figure 9 shows a photograph sample of the social media campaign launched against the protesters. It shows a protester carrying a sign in Arabic that states: "الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام" which can be translated as: "The People Want to Topple the Regime". The photograph was posted on Facebook and eventually ticked "تم اعتقاله" which means "arrested" after the individual in the screenshot was successfully identified via social media networks. The protester's name, his job and work place had been identified. In comments on Facebook, pro-regime users called for the death or imprisonment of those who participated in the uprising or those who visited the Pearl Roundabout.



Figure 9: A photograph of a protester posted in a Facebook page and ticked "arrested". The still taken from the Al Jazeera English documentary *"Shouting in the Dark"* (Welsh 2011)

Journalists were also the target of pro-regime Facebook campaigns. For example, pro-regime Facebook users created a page titled "Nicholas D. Kristof – A true Liar of the Media". Nicholas Kristof is an American journalist who was detained and deported from Bahrain after reporting about the crackdown and banned from entering the country. This page, although no longer active, was created on February

22, 2011 only 8 days after the beginning of the uprising. It was posted on April 15, 2011. All posts were in English including the following:

Nicholas D. Kristof is a man of lies, all his news about Bahrain is bull.... This makes me think, what about the other so called undercover missions he did that brought good to the society? probably was all lies as well.. I'm glad now I know. Media can never be trusted! specially with one as an imbecile as this one!

There are no official records of the pages that were created by the pro-regime activists during this time; however, a pro-opposition online forum listed 106 pages and 15 personal accounts on Facebook that were removed by the Facebook management in the period between March and July 2011 as a result of an anti-government activists' campaign (Fajrbh 2011). While there is no evidence to link the regime to the publication of these Facebook pages, it was clear from the site visitors and comments that ministries and government officials were following the posts to gather information about their employees who had participated in the demonstrations (Welsh 2011).

Most significantly for this present thesis, are many of the edited digital images of sports figures and journalists that were shown in the "special" broadcast on Bahrain Sports Channel, an official channel owned by the regime, on April 4, 2011. Days after the broadcast of these images during a special televised event, the identified sports figures were arrested or singled out to be subjected to an investigation by their teams and to public prosecution.



Figure 10: A still from the Bahrain Sports Channel *With the Event* broadcast on April 4, 2011 (Bahrain Sports Channel 2011)

After the Pearl Roundabout crackdown, some official figures of the Al-Khalifa regime appeared in public in the company of those who were believed to be the online activists who launched internet campaigns against pro-opposition activists. For instance, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, the Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, on June 23, 2014 met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Salman, one of the royal family members who is believed to be "Mnarfezhom" (the one who jitters them) and a Twitter user who led a campaign against the protesters by circling their faces and publishing private information about them (Bahrain Mirror 2014). In fact, "Mnarfezhom" and other users such as "Hareghum" (the one who burns them), "Grandchildren of Omar" and "Grandchildren of Al-Waleed" are anonymous online social networking users believed to be answerable to the regime. The real personalities of "Mnarfezhom", "Grandchildren of Omar" and "Grandchildren of Al-Waleed" were revealed after Sheikh Mohammed bin Salman alongside others were interrogated for their online activities against some pro-regime figures.

While he was not asked about his activities against regime opponents, some pro-regime figures sued "Mnarfezhom" for accusing them of planning secret activities against the regime (*Al-Watan* 2014; *Al-Wasat* 2014; Manama Voice 2014).



Figure 11: The Prime Minister of Bahrain Prince Khalifa bin Salman (left) meets Mohammed bin Salman who is believed to be Mnarfezhom (Bahrain News Agency 2014a)

The regime in Bahrain has also been accused of using social media to spy, identify and monitor pro-opposition users by sending malicious spy links. As Bahrain Watch reported in 2013:

Since September 2011 or earlier, Bahrain's Government has been targeting anonymous social media accounts, apparently in an effort to identify their operators. The Government targets accounts using malicious links and social engineering. It appears that the Ministry of Interior's Cyber Crime Unit is orchestrating the attack. (Bahrain Watch 2013).

Reports from non-governmental organizations have raised concerns about the use of special software to crack down on online activists in regional countries such as Saudi Arabia. With the increase of protests against the Saudi regime, Human Rights Watch has investigated whether surveillance software was used to identify Shiite online activists in this country.

According to the Human rights Watch, independent security researchers reported on June 24, 2014 that the Saudi government has been hacking into mobile phones by creating a malicious application that provides access to the Al-Qatif Al-Youm (Al-Qatif Today), an Arabic language news and information network of the Eastern Province town of Al-Qatif. The report indicates that the spyware enables the government to access the phone's files of applications such as Facebook, Whatsapp or Skype, messages, contacts and call history, the phone's email. The report also suggest that the spyware can operate the phone's camera or its microphone to take pictures or record conversations without the holder being aware (Human Rights Watch 2014). This shows that the regimes in both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are monitoring, not just the mainstream media, but also online media. While the troops of both regimes' were involved in the crackdown on the opposition in Bahrain, the human rights organizations reports show that both regimes have used the same methods to identify online opposition.

## **1.6 Significance of this study**

While there is a large body of scholarly works about the role of social media during The Arab Spring (Wolfsfeld et al. 2012; Campbell and Hawk 2012; Aday et

al. 2012), this thesis focuses on mainstream media, and the sports media in particular which has been generally overlooked. Given the importance of sport and sports media in Bahrain, this thesis sheds new light on Bahrain's mainstream sports media engagement with The Arab Spring. It does not aim to examine the impact of propaganda in its various forms on the people of Bahrain, nor does it examine how journalists individually responded to the pressure of politicization of media. Instead, this project examines the use of the sports media in Bahrain by the ruling family to manipulate public opinion and to stay in power. It is argued that the Al-Khalifa regime has used the sports media to suppress the demonstrations by framing them as "illegal movements" that aimed to target the country and its people and to frame protesters as unpatriotic citizens. Meanwhile, the Al-Khalifa family was framed as the only legitimate authorities in Bahrain and their supporters as loyal citizens. This project highlights the significance of sports media to the royal family in Bahrain.

Given the repressive reaction by the regime to the participation of sports figures and sports media in the political protest, this thesis examines the link between the ruling Al-Khalifa family and sports media in Bahrain, particularly during the first three months of the uprising between March and May in 2011. It investigates how the uprising was framed by sports media then examines the strategies used by the Al-Khalifa regime to politicize the sports media during this period of social unrest. Content analysis is used to examine sports sections of two mainstream Bahraini newspapers, *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* and two pivotal television programmes which were broadcast on Bahrain Sports Channel, *With the Event* aired on April 4, 2011 and *Special Event* aired on April 11, 2011, in order to identify how the protests, the Al-Khalifa family, the protesters and the supporters of the ruling family were referred to in the sports sections of the printed media and the two television programmes.

I am Bahraini, a native Arabic speaker. I am now a research student in exile in Australia with no possibility of returning to Bahrain. As a journalist newspapers in Bahrain such as *Al-Wasat* (from 2002 to 2004), *Al-Meethaq* (from 2004 to 2006), *Al-Watan* (from 2007 to 2008) and *Al-Bilad* (from 2008 to 2010), as well as numerous other print, radio and online media outlets in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. I have a detailed understanding of Bahraini culture and society, customs, traditions, language nuances, religious beliefs, political parties, the

history of the Shiite /Sunni conflict and the role of the royal family within this context. It is hoped that the findings of this thesis will provide future media scholars and political scientists with useful primary information in understanding the link between sports and politics in Bahrain, and the broad political influences of sports media in Gulf State countries.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter reviews the literature that informs examination of the impact of politics on sports media, with a particular focus on the political uprising of 2011 in Bahrain. Studies that examine the link between legacy media, social media, politics and uprisings in the Arab World are discussed. The review includes scholarly publications, conferences papers, reports, legislations, media reports and a documentary. This chapter focuses on six main themes that have a bearing on the role of sports media in the Bahrain uprising. The six themes are: the state-controlled media and The Arab Spring; social media and The Arab Spring; Arab states regimes and the use of social media; sports media and public opinion; sport, human rights and politics; and the uprising and foreign influence.

### **2.1 State-controlled media and The Arab Spring**

The role of mainstream media during The Arab Spring has received little critical attention compared with the role of social media, although some scholars have examined the mainstream media *modus operandi* and how it is affected by the relationship between Arab regimes and the nation's media. Chiba Yushi (2012) points out that the Arab media have been dominated by its regimes. Tourya Gaaaybess (2013) notes this relationship, pointing out the importance of analysing the coverage of Arab media during The Arab Spring. Djankov et al. (2003) argue that countries with state-controlled media are more likely to have less freedom and fewer rights for its citizens. As Carlos Lauria (2012) points out in his article titled "State-Owned Media and the Public Interest", state-owned media outlets are not just controlled, but also manipulated by regimes in order to impose their own agendas on the public. In this way, Lauria contends, the media end up serving the interests of the regimes instead of the public.

The uprisings that swept the Arab World have highlighted the role that mainstream media can play. Simon Cottle's (2011) paper written at the beginning of The Arab Spring assumed that studying the *modus operandi* of mass media would elucidate the causes for The Arab Spring (p. 650). He offers ten different ways in which media and communications networks were involved in The Arab Spring and makes some suggestions about how these might be more closely examined. These

suggestions include the need to consider the absence of critical media in The Arab Spring countries (p. 650), through study of the increasingly complex relationship between mainstream media and social media (p. 651), by examination of the use of social media to censor and suppress oppositions (p. 653), and by considering how social media was used by activists in other countries in similar circumstances (p. 654). Cottle's essay highlights the complicated relationship between mass media and social media and how this relationship contributed in the demonstrations.

Omair Anas (2012) suggests that state control of media in the Arab World is coming to an end because of the proliferations of satellite channels, industry competition, and the proliferation of social media and new communication technologies that have helped the emergence of citizen journalism. While Anas cites the amendments of the press laws in Gulf State countries as an effort by the regimes to engage with media rather than control it, he raises concerns about the future of media in the Gulf States countries (where most of what he calls "critical media" are based) as the "Arab Spring has not yet touched the political climate" (p. 43).

The study by Khalil Rinnawi (2012) explored the use of dominant television channels and its impact on the Arab society during The Arab Spring and focused on the role of the Al Jazeera channel during the Egyptian uprising. As an Arab native speaker, Rinnawi had a full understanding of the language and the social and cultural contexts of the situation in Egypt. His article "Cyber Uprising: Al-Jazeera TV Channel and the Egyptian Uprising" covers the main evening newscasts in the channel and other programmes related to the Egyptian uprising from January 25 to February 11, 2011. Following analysis of the narrative and visual features of the selected samples, Rinnawi argues that Al Jazeera played a crucial role in overthrowing Hosni Mubarak's regime. He points out that Al Jazeera deliberately directed in one way or another the protesters toward toppling the former Egyptian regime.

Studies completed prior to The Arab Spring, particularly those that discuss Bahrain's neighbours Egypt (Amin 2009), Jordan (Abu Arja 2000) and Morocco (Arab Center for the Development and the Rule of Law and Integrity 2009) indicate that the mainstream media in these three countries are controlled by the state through a range of different mechanisms including legislation, state ownership of major shares in media outlets and publishing houses, and the political appointment of

editors-in-chief. Hussein Amin in his *Report on the State Media in Egypt* (2009) points out that prior to the 2011 uprising in Egypt, the nation's regime had a stranglehold on communication lines to the Egyptian people through the national mainstream media of radio, television and newspapers. It was this media exploitation, Amin argues, that allowed the former Egyptian regime to mobilize public support for the regime's political agenda (pp. 6-7). While Amin acknowledges that anti-regime media enjoyed some freedom prior to 2011, he also points out that the mainstream state-controlled media were successful in distracting the public's attention to marginal topics and away from significant political or social issues (pp. 9-10). Amin ends his report with a number of recommendations for a free media in Egypt including eliminating state control of media and reducing censorship on the Internet.

Amin's recommendations may be usefully applied to nations like Jordan where the government's intervention is even more pronounced than it was in Egypt. Tayseer Abu Arja (2000) discusses the way in which the regime in Jordan has enforced its own agenda on the local print media (pp. 58-60). When their licenses were revoked in 1967, the local newspapers were forced to merge into two major newspapers that were partially owned by quasi-governmental companies (pp. 65-66). This, according to Abu Arja, granted the regime in Jordan the opportunity to control the local newspapers. Some ensuing changes to the Jordanian press law in the 1980s and the 1990s guaranteed greater freedom to new newspapers, however, according to Abu Arja the regime maintained its control of the print media.

*The Report on the State Media of Morocco* (Arab Center for the Development and the Rule of Law and Integrity 2009) highlights the importance of developing legislations to protect freedom of the media and to improve the media modus operandi by fostering the relationship between journalists and media outlets by modifying working conditions of journalists, and by improving their training programmes. State-controlled media, therefore, has been exploited by the Arab States regimes to impose the state agenda on the people and to direct them toward marginal issues. It is worth noting that the Arab Center for the Development and the Rule of Law and Integrity ACRLI sponsored both the Egyptian and Moroccan media reports discussed above, but while the author of the Egyptian report was acknowledged by

name, the Moroccan report was issued without an author's name which may indicate the author's fear of being targeted for repercussions.

Despite the development of new technologies, the media's role as a mouthpiece for the Gulf State regimes has not significantly changed. Marwan M. Kraidy (2013) points out that the Saudi regime understands the important role that media plays as a "key instrument to hold on to power". Muhammad I. Ayish (2013) believes that the media in the United Arab Emirates has contributed to an economic and social shift. However, he argues that media in this country still represents the regime's views both locally and internationally (p. 14). Matt J. Duffy (2013) disagrees with Ayish's point of view and argues that the lack of free media in the Gulf States has exacerbated social, economic and political problems. Duffy argues that media is overlooking essential economic and political issues and points out that with independent media, issues such as corruption, discrimination and a lack of jobs are more likely to be addressed and redressed (p. 8). Duffy believes that freeing mass media would help Arab countries solve economic and social problems as the people's voice would be part of social movement.

To date there are a very few studies that examine the situation of mainstream media, including journalism, in Bahrain. Two in-depth studies of print media in Bahrain have focused on the nation's history of journalism since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and both were conducted in the 1980s. The first looked at the rise of print media in Bahrain through a larger study by Ezzat A. Ezzat (1983). *The Press in the Arabic Gulf States* and the other was the book by Helal Al-Shaiji (1989) *The Press in Kuwait and Bahrain From its Inception to the Era of Independence*. Both studies discuss the technical and legal obstacles for newspapers and magazines that were considered the mother of the modern press in Bahrain. However, the studies paid little attention to the adversarial relationship between pro-opposition journalism and the Bahraini authorities, or to the development of laws that would control the print media. Neither Ezzat, nor Al-Shaiji clearly explained the factors that led to the shut-down of opposition newspapers in the 1940s and 1950s. Ezzat claimed that most newspapers in the Gulf States were partially financed by the regimes, including newspapers that were considered anti-regime, but she provided no empirical evidence to support this claim (pp. 92-94).

In his book *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*, William A. Rugh (2004) describes newspapers in Bahrain as "loyalist press" (p. 59). Rugh argues that while newspapers in Bahrain are privately owned, they are loyal and supportive of the regime. Despite the multiplicity of newspapers in Bahrain, Rugh points out that the content is exceedingly similar (p. 66). While there is a focus on the role of political media, this present thesis fills the gap about the political role of sports media particularly during the protests that swept the Arab countries.

## **2.2 Social media and The Arab Spring**

Recent scholarly debates have focused on the increasingly political role of social media during The Arab Spring as these new non-mainstream platforms have become a public sphere in their own right and are at least partially out of the regimes' control. While social media are generally seen to have had an impact on mobilizing the masses during the unrests, researchers differ in their assessment of the level of this influence. Some argue that social media played a significant role (Storck 2011; Faris 2012; Breuer et al. 2015), while others argue that its influence is overstated (Wolfsfeld et al. 2012; Campbell and Hawk 2012; Aday et al. 2012).

In her dissertation, *The Role of Social Media in Political Mobilization* (2011), Madeline Storck focused on the 2011 uprising in Egypt as a case study to examine how social media was used to organize and mobilize political protests. She focused on three identifiable trends in the use of social media: as an organizational tool, as a road to citizen journalism and as a means to generate awareness of the uprising locally and internationally. While Storck acknowledges that the protests that brought down the former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak had actually been ongoing for years (p. 19), she does not explain in detail the factors such as poverty and the absence of social justice that facilitated the rise of people's anger against the regime before the 2011 uprising. David M. Faris (2012) argues that social media significantly facilitated the organization of protests against the regimes in Egypt and Tunisia. Although Faris notes that there was less internet censorship in Egypt than in Tunisia, he argues that social media and blogs raised the awareness of democratic and human rights in both societies as well as paving the way for the uprising because it was used to share political aspirations and organize the oppositional activities.

Faris points out that the impact of social media on the uprisings was due to the work of pioneering digital activists over several years (2012, p. 6). On the other hand, Wolfsfeld et al. (2012) insist that social media was not the cause of the protests that spread across the Arab World in 2011. They point out that there were other principles related to collective action that should be taken into account and suggest that the political environment in which social media operate and the increased use of social media is more likely to be a reflection of the increase of opposition activities than to precede them. Similarly, Campbell and Hawk (2012) argue that the role of social media during the uprising in Egypt was exaggerated. In their analysis of the Al Jazeera Arabic channel coverage of the Tahrir Square protest in the three week period between January, 25 and February 18, 2011, they found that the role of the social media was not only simply described as a facilitator element, but was represented as "the advent of an Internet revolution". Aday et al. (2012) suggest that social media did not play a major role in collective action or regional diffusion during The Arab Spring (p. 3). Instead, they argue that social media was used as a tool to spread information to the international community more than it was used to communicate locally inside the region which made it less important to the actual protest. However, Cottle's (2011) study indicates that social media alongside online bloggers and mobile telephony played an important role in bypassing state-controlled media (p. 648).

Counter to the point of view that plays down the role of social media during The Arab Spring, an article by Breuer et al. (2015) argue that social media was an important resource for mass mobilizations against the rule of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia. Based on "background talks" with 16 Tunisian digital activists and a survey of 437 Tunisian internet users conducted in early 2012, the article argues that social media activities allowed a "digital elite" to break the national media blackout, provided a medium for protesting groups, enhanced the sensation of the success of the revolution and provided "emotional mobilization" by showing the regime's violent crackdown against the protesters. The use of social media was also a case study for Henk Huijser and Janine Little (2012) who compared the approaches to the use of social media in the different political contexts of Australia and Bahrain.

Huijser and Little point out that while social media facilitated the mass political mobilization in The Arab Spring countries, the use of social media for

political purposes is reduced to "special interest groups", or political campaigns in Australia. Huijser and Little point out that while social media play a significant role in the political life in Bahrain, it is diminished to limited political events in Australia. The significant role of social media has led to it being exploited by regimes in order to confront the democratic demands of the people.

### **2.3 The regime's use of social media**

There is a growing concern that social media is used by regimes to control citizens. For instance, in an interview with *Russia Today* (2011) WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange argues that social media and Facebook in particular is "the most appalling spying machine that has ever been invented". Assange points out that Facebook and other social media are "the world's most comprehensive database about people, their relationships, their names, their addresses, their locations and the communications". Studies have found that users of social network sites like Facebook are aware of the potential risk of their private data being tracked and used by strangers. For instance, David J. Houghton and Adam N. Joinson's (2011) study found that users are conscious of the privacy issues even as they share information with friends. Similarly, Alyson Leigh Young and Anabel Quan-Haase's (2013) study based on surveys and in-depth interviews with university students in Canada, found that the majority of participants took some steps to protect their personal information. These two studies emphasize findings of an earlier study by Hoadley et al. (2010) which found that the news-feed or mini feed established by Facebook management in 2006, actually facilitated access to users' information by others. The risk of private information being violated by other parties during using the Internet was addressed early. Herman T. Tavani's (1999) articles titled "Informational privacy, data mining, and the internet" discussed issues related to user's private information and monitoring of users' activities on the Internet. Tavani pointed out early that the Internet was considered to be at the time a surveillance medium.

Recently, scholars have studied how social media has been used by both oppositions and regimes during political uprisings. However, there are only a small number of studies that have investigated the use of social media to suppress the uprising in the Middle East and North Africa region by the regimes themselves. For instance, Alex Comninou (2011) study during the first wave of the Arab Spring

uprisings, draws attention to the way that governments quickly filtered online content or blocked Internet access. Comninos' reports on how governments and their intelligence agencies used social media to identify and locate protesters. Comninos explains that activists in Sudan were duped and then arrested by intelligence through a fake protesting event that was organized by agents employed by the government (p. 10). He also discusses how in Tunisia, the regime hacked citizen's social media accounts, while in Egypt Hosni Mubarak's regime shut down the Internet for three nights to prevent protesters from contacting each other. Comninos argues that the use of mobile technologies and social media actually enhances surveillance capabilities where there is a link between the mobile operator and the regime (p. 12). In a similar vein, Ian Gallagher (2011) claims that the Egyptian police tracked down activists through Facebook and Twitter by identifying their names (p. 11). Christopher Soghoian, the privacy researcher, suggests in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, that Internet users could be stalked or subjected to torture or arrest as a result of their data being disclosed by governments (Angwin 2011).

In Bahrain, the use of social media to crack down on the uprising was even more explicit and effective. According to the documentary *Shouting in The Dark* by May Ying Welsh (2011), Bahraini pro-regime activists used Facebook, among other social media platforms to identify and penalize protesters. For instance, Facebook pages were created to post images and the personal information about protesters. The information was then used by the regime and other ministries to arrest or penalize anti-regime protesters. The article of Marc Owen Jones (2012) is significant to an understanding about how social media was used to crackdown opponents in Bahrain. The article addresses the negative use of social media during the 2011 uprising. Jones, whose PhD research project is on the history of suppression and social control in Bahrain, points out that social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook were used by the Bahraini regime and its supporters as a means of surveillance, censorship and propaganda.

Jones interviewed online activists from February 2011 to December 2011 and found that social media was used to crackdown on anti-regime protesters by trolling, naming and shaming, passive observation, intelligence gathering and offline factors. Sanja Kelly and Sarah Cook (2012) note, also, that the Bahraini authorities have employed trolls to attack websites users who criticize the regime. This shows how

social media can be used as a double edged sword. While it is a means to overcome state-controlled media, it is also taken advantage of by regimes.

The way that government's track Internet use and violate the privacy of individual users in the name of circumventing potential terrorist acts has raised the concern of human rights organizations as they question the methods used to monitor and exchange the personal information of individuals. While agreeing that regimes have the right to protect their citizens, they insist that protecting the public interest should not be at the expense of an individual's privacy. For instance, the Australian Human Rights Law Resources Centre's (2010) policy paper addresses the steps that should be taken by the Australian government to protect the public's interests. It recommends that security monitor laws should be reviewed to ensure that they are precise and proportionate to the security threat as well as provide appropriate safeguards against abuse. The report insists that civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring governments. However, but such organizations are not allowed in autocratic countries.

The regimes in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have been accused of unregulated tracking of Internet users. Reports show that the regime in Bahrain has been using software to spy on dissenters and to collect personal information. Media reports indicate that private European companies from England and Germany have helped the Bahraini regime to violate personal privacy of dissenters (Perlroth 2012; Bahrain Watch 2012a; Doward 2013; Clark 2014). These allegations have never been discussed openly in the national media of Bahrain although this invasion of privacy breaches Article 26 of the Bahrain constitution that guarantees the secrecy of postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and electronic communications.

## **2.4 Sports media and public opinion**

Sports media is, in the context of manipulation of citizens by dominant political entities, a particularly useful subset of mainstream media for distracting the public. Toby Miller (2010) points out that live sport is essential to television since the early coverage of competitions in the 1930s. Miller indicates that "sport is an intensely emotional program-type, but without recourse to close-ups or personal verbalization in quite the same way as drama" (p. 94). John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (2007) argue that sports media is not immune to being manipulated to

serve the elites who control sport activities in their sphere of influence. Sugden and Tomlinson point out that the focus on sport stars and the celebration of sport events overlooks the economic and political context in which the sport occurs, and that this can be advantageous to those who would manipulate public opinions (pp. 58-59). The impact of sports media on its audience is a relatively overlooked topic. One case study of the impact of sports media on implicit racial stereotypes is offered by Matthew J. Kobach and Robert F. Potter (2013) who explored the connection between mediated sports programming and implicit racial stereotypes in the U.S. They compared the media portrayal of the achievements of black athletes as "natural" to those of white athletes, whose success is more likely to be reported as the result of "hard work and intelligence" (p. 1414). This reporting has an influence on the public perception of both groups. Kobach and Potter claim that the more a person views sports programmes in an average week, the stronger their belief in the stereotypes of black athletes as "natural" athletes and white athletes as "clever" athletes becomes (p. 1422).

Similarly, Nereshnee Govender (2010) examined how print media influences the public perception of women in sport in her analysis of the South African newspaper *The Independent on Saturday*. Govender analysed the media framing of women in the choice of words and visual imagery in sports news reports, finding that sport women are regularly infantilized and portrayed in emotional terms. Govender concludes that print media lacks objectivity and that this has a potent impact on women's socialization into sport (p. 128). According to David Rowe (2003), the perception of sports journalism has changed in recent decades from being entertainment-oriented to having a social responsibility. Rowe discusses the professionalism of sports journalism as it moved beyond the cliché that was the "toy department" of the mainstream news media.

Rowe explored the other roles for sport journalism, such as engaging in investigation, analysis and criticism. He concludes that sports journalism should not be excluded from professional standards for media and journalism more broadly, as it operates in very similar ways to political, business and economic media departments. For Rowe, the main question is not whether sports journalism is the toy department but whether sports media editors and journalists are "content to operate within the self-imposed and isolating limits that leave it continually open to professional

challenge and even contempt" (p. 401). This points to the responsibility of sports media practitioners.

Mahmood Abo Drees' (2004) master's dissertation is one of a few studies that examined sports media in Bahrain. This study of sport departments in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Ayam*, the only newspapers existed at that time. The study focused on the technical and professional obstacles that faced sports newspapers in the period between 1997 and 2001. However, the study overlooked the regime's manipulation of sports media. Another study of Saudi Arabia sports newspapers indicates that over than 26% of the sport columnists are not expert in sports and 63% of them have never engaged with sport before practising journalism (Al-Ghiamah 2014). This study analysed columns in four popular newspapers for 35 days, finding that less than 30% of the columns addressed local sport issues in an objective manner, while about 70% used emotional discourse. The findings suggest that sports media is being used to manipulate the audience.

The shifting perception of sports media raises questions about the use and impact of sports media as a political tool during The Arab Spring. Khir Eldeen Awis and Atta Hassan Abdulrahim (1998) addressed the potential for political impact of sports media in one of the few Arabic studies that discuss the relationship between sports media and its audiences. They focused on sports media in Egypt over two decades prior The Arab Spring and the advent of social media. Similar to Rowe (2003), they argue that sports media is not just for entertainment as it is capable of affecting or directing public thoughts and attitudes (1998, pp. 51-52). They found that sports media has a significant impact on audience's opinions and their capacity to assess information. In other words, the psychological influence of sports media is evident as it presents ideas as objective "truth". However, Awis and Abdulrahim did not precisely define what this "truth" might be.

## **2.5 Sport, human rights and politics**

The uprising in Bahrain has provoked debate about the relationship between sport and human rights on the one hand, and politics on the other. Following the crackdown and then the Bahraini insistence on hosting the Grand Prix in 2012, opinion columns and politicians alike have asked the question, should sport mix with human rights or politics? Laurie Whitwell (2013) argues that sport has been used for

political and nation-building purposes, since the establishment of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece. Whitwell argues that the impact of politics on sport should not be denied. On the other hand, it is common practice for sports officials to insist on the separation of sport and politics. Bernie Ecclestone, the president and CEO of Formula One Management and Formula One Administration, made public statements rejecting the politicization of his sport, insisting that Formula One did not implicitly support or influence the on the national politics of the hosting country (Yoon 2012). Michel Platini, the former French football player and the current President of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) also argues that football should be distanced from politics (Rainbow 2013).

Scholars have discussed the consequences of the involvement of politics in sport (Tomlinson and Young 2006; Dousti et al. 2013; Bravo and Silva 2014; Merkel 2014). Historically, sport has regularly been exploited for the benefit of political regimes. For instance, Miller (2010) points out that sport was part and parcel of the German Nazi regime's television propaganda (p. 94). Also, Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young (2006, p. 141) examined how sporting success was considered because of administrative prowess of the military regime in Argentina, where, according to Bravo and Silva (2014, pp. 130-131) achievements in sport were explicitly paralleled to the war in Chile. Similarly, Dousti et al. (2013) argue that until 1979 in Iran, during Pahlavi's regime, sport reflected the dynastic ideology. They claim that the Iranian government and politicians are still involved in sport to achieve a wide variety of their political and cultural objectives through this connection (p. 165).

The relationship between sport and national identity has also been widely discussed. Udo Merkel (2014) examined the multidimensional relationship between sport and national identity in the divided Korean Peninsula. Merkel analysed the North Korean regime's identity management and discourses in three different contexts: the daily life in the capital Pyongyang, the local sports events, and international sports events. Merkel found that sport can enhance the harmony, the unity and the celebration of a common cultural denominator between the people of two countries which are otherwise at conflict (in this case, North and South Korea) (p. 386). Merkel points to the example of the North Korean athletes who credited their sporting success in the 2012 London Olympic Games to the love, support and

inspiration of their leader Kim Jong-un, and his father and grandfather (pp. 386-387). Similarly, athletes and sports figures in Bahrain regularly credit their sporting success to the "wise leadership" of the Al-Khalifa regime (*Al-Bilad* 2012; *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* 2012; *Al-Watan* 2013a and Bahrain News Agency 2014b).

A number of scholars have discussed the specific sport of football (soccer) and politics, arguing that football stadiums are effectively a political forum. Dag Tuastad (2014) examined the capacity of football to make an impact on the political situation in Egypt and Jordan. Tuastad notes that the main protests in Egypt's Tahrir Square in 2011 against the rule of then the president Hosni Mubarak were organized by Al-Ahli Club ultras who are a group of loyal football supporters (p. 378). Tuastad points out that tens of thousands members of the Al-Ahli ultras played a fundamental role in the success of the revolution. In Jordan, Tuastad indicates that football is an arena for breaking political taboos such as criticizing the king. He cites football matches where Jordanian club supporters chanted political slogans and raised public debate about the limits of the king's powers (pp. 383). In the Egyptian case, Tuastad assumes that the protesters represented their sport identity, while it could be argued that they participated in protests as Egyptian citizens rather than as football supporters. However, Matthew Guschwan (2014) extends Tuastad's argument about the political role of football by arguing that the public forum offered by football stadiums is a vital political space. Guschwan points out that football is inextricably entangled with everyday Italian social and political life, and that stadiums in Italy are a space for political expression. Nevertheless, Guschwan acknowledges that there are limitations to the stadiums as a political forum because they are not designed for group discussion. Therefore, the term "political expression" can only refer to banners or "vulgar" chants (pp. 893-894).

While the scholars referred to above focused on different roles of sport in politics, other scholars have explored the link between sport and diplomacy. For example, Steven J. Jackson and Stephan Haigh (2008) examined the relationship between sport and foreign policy, pointing out that sport plays a strategic role in international relationships. They also note that sport has become an important aspect of global tourism and what they called the "branding" of cities and nations (p. 335). Arguing that the relationship between diplomacy and sport is still relatively under-theorized, Stuart Murray and Geoffrey Allen Pigman (2014) agree that regimes use

international sport events as instruments of diplomacy. They go further to argue that sport plays a significant role in diplomatic missions because of the opportunities for communication and negotiation that take place during international sport events (p. 1098). Murry and Pigman argue that understanding the relationship between diplomacy and international sport will not only help governments use sport for diplomacy more efficiently, but it will also be a significant factor in understanding the impact of sport on society (p. 1115).

In his article "When the Arab World Was Mobilized Around the FIFA 2006 World Cup" (2007) Mahfoud Amara discusses the elites' agenda to keep their citizens locked to their broadcasting domain and market share. Amara argues that the regimes sought to slow down the establishment of new television channels that threatened their interest. Amara examined the public's reaction to the Arab Radio and Television Network (ART) exclusive rights to broadcast the 2006 World Cup Finals in North Africa and the Middle East. Amara noted the mass focus by people, media, political parties and Arab governments on World Cup while the Arab nations were going into a period of social, economic and political crises. This indicated, according to Amara, the use of sport and sports media by Arab states to impose regimes' agenda on public opinion (pp. 420-421). The argument about using sports media as a political means and as a tool of distraction can be linked to the present thesis as it indicates the role that sports media plays in politics where the status quo exploit media to mobilize public opinion toward their private agenda.

## **2.6 The 2011 uprising and foreign influences**

Fuad I. El-Khury's *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transition of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State* (1983) is one of few books that examine Bahrain under the rule of Al-Khalifa family. The book explores the transformation of the Al-Khalifa family from a tribe to a "modern state". Aiming to understand the social and political situation in Bahrain, El-Khury explores the relationship between Al-Khalifa members and the conflicts between them about resources, the relationship between the Al-Khalifa family and other tribes in Bahrain and the relationship between the ruling family and the opposition and the people. El-Khury examined the political, social and economic shifts of Bahrain from the 18th Century to the 20th century. He discusses the causes of the previous unrests in Bahrain such as the pearl divers'

movement in 1932, civil unrest in 1934, 1935 and 1938, and the Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) unrest in 1942, 1948 and 1965. El-Khury indicated that the sequential unrests in Bahrain called for political, judicature and economic reforms (pp. 320-323). Despite the importance of the study to researchers who aim to examine the history of Bahrain, there is a concern about the book. El-Khury acknowledges that he was provided logistical assistance from Al-Khalifa family's members to write it (p. 7).

There are as yet relatively few scholarly publications that examine the protest movement, the political context, or the role of mainstream social media and its impact in Bahrain. Alfred Stepan et al. (2014) study the uprising in Bahrain and other uprisings by offering a three-part ideal-type typology to distinguish between "ruling monarchy", "constitutional monarchy" and what they called "democratic parliamentary monarchy". The aim of their article is to help researchers who focus on boundary changes between different types of monarchies. They point out that the rulers in Bahrain, sectarian factors and the royal family's allies, all combined to thwart the transfer to democratic parliamentary monarchy (p. 47). The study of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad by Tooba Khurshid (2011) draws attention to the sectarian reasons for the uprising in Bahrain and Syria. Khurshid argues that there were strong economic and social circumstances that led Bahraini and Syrian people to protest against their rulers, noting that in Bahrain specifically freedom of expression is restricted and private print media are constrained by the 2002 press law (p. 45).

Miriam Joyce's recent book, *Bahrain from the Twentieth Century to the Arab Spring* (2012), is one of the few studies to explain the reason behind the unrest by reviewing the historical context of the regime in Bahrain, including the British colonization and the influence of the United States. She discusses the relationship between the regime and people of Bahrain by focusing on the political reasons for demonstrations that have occurred since the 1970s. What is missing from this study, however, is a consideration of the influence of media in Bahrain or, in particular, a closer understanding of the contribution of sports media to the current political events.

On the other hand, a number of scholars have discussed the Saudi's intervention in the Bahraini uprising, and America's role and its fear of a democratic

regime that may conflict with its interest in the Persian Gulf. For instance, the Saudi-born social anthropology scholar Madawi Al-Rasheed (2001), argues that the other scholars often ignore sectarian strategies used by the House of Saud as a counter-revolution to create a rift between the Sunni majority and the Shiite minority in Saudi Arabia. This strategy was also used, according to Al-Rasheed, by the Saudi regime to halt to the democratic movement in Bahrain. However, following the publication of Al-Rasheed's article, more commentators have noticed the sectarian factor in the Saudi intervention. Brandon Friedman (2012) is one of the earliest scholars to point to the Gulf State's fear of the uprising in Bahrain while protesters were still going on the Bahraini streets. He believes that the regimes in the Persian Gulf responded to what they considered to be an Iranian attempt to exploit the uprising led by the majority Shiite in Bahrain. Similarly, Simon Mabon (2012) points out that the Bahrain uprising is a conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. According to Mabon, the conflict between the Sunni ruler Al-Khalifa and the Shiite opposition in Bahrain epitomizes the tussle between the Sunni regime in Saudi Arabia and the Shiite regime in Iran. Besides this sectarian factor, Mabon claims that Bahrain is considered to be of paramount importance because its geostrategic significance in the Persian Gulf (p. 95).

Other studies have pointed to the strong relationship between the rulers in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and the influence of this relationship on the uprising. Mohammed Nuruzzaman (2013) argues that the Saudi's intervention was not only for political and strategic reasons, but also for economic reasons. Nuruzzaman, a lecturer in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, at the Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait, goes beyond the political and economic reasons of the intervention to link it with interior Saudi religious reasons. Nuruzzaman points out that the Wahhabi would not allow the Bahraini Shiites to rule the country (p. 376). Also, the author of *Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Iraq War to Arab Uprising*, Frederic Wahrey (2013) notes that the regime in Bahrain and Saudi backed the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists to stand up against Shiite MPs in the parliament prior the 2011 uprising in Bahrain.

On the other hand, Stephen Zunes (2013), as a specialist in Middle Eastern politics, has identified three factors for the failure of the uprising in Bahrain: the ruthless crackdown on the street movement, the Saudi's intervention, and the U.S.

refusal to support the democratic movement. Zunes, who is known for his criticisms of the U.S foreign policy argues that, if successful, the uprising in Bahrain could have established a promising democratic state. Zunes believes this democracy would not necessarily have been anti-American (p. 162). Thomas Ambrosio's (2014) article "Democratic States and Authoritarian Firewalls: America as a Black Knight in the Uprising in Bahrain" discusses the hidden role of democratic states to effectively underpin autocratic regimes. Ambrosio draws attention to the U.S. government's diplomatic and political support for the Bahraini regime's crackdown of the uprising arguing that the U.S. patronized the Bahraini autocrat regime to protect its own interests (p. 5).

While scholars have linked the Saudi fear of the uprising in Bahrain with sectarian factors, Toby Matthiesen (2012) gives more depth to the discussion of the connection between the 2011-12 protests of the Eastern Saudi Province in Saudi Arabia with the uprising in Bahrain. He outlines the historical, family and religious ties between Saudi and Bahraini's Shiite populations. Matthiesen, a research fellow at University of Cambridge, argues that The Arab Spring and the demonstrations in Bahrain clearly contributed to the Saudi Shiite's movement or what he called the "Saudi Spring" (p. 629). While Matthiesen acknowledges the benefit of new media and its impact on the "Saudi Spring", he argues that personal networks such as religious' gatherings were more significant in facilitating the political protest movement in Saudi Arabia.

Amal Khalaf (2013) focuses on the local angle of the conflict, drawing attention to the symbol of Bahrain's Pearl Roundabout protest in terms of a "war of ideas" between the regime and the protesters. Khalaf examined the conflict between the reality that is controlled by the regime and the virtual reality represented by social media where protesters have a greater freedom. While the Bahraini regime strongly controls mainstream media, protesters bypass censorship to confront the official propaganda by using social media. In this context, the demolition of the pearl monument was considered by the regime as removing "a bad memory" (p. 273), whereas the flood of videos, images and 'baptizing' the logo of the Pearl Roundabout was the protesters' response. Khalaf calls for review of the relationship between "the image and the visual's conditions of the existence in the digital universe" (p. 279) as she points out that images have become an integral part of any political struggle.

Khalaf's article points to the tussle between regimes and protesters in the era of the Internet where cyberspace is less-controlled by the regimes.

In conclusion, this review of the literature highlights the role that mainstream media and, particularly, state-controlled media played during The Arab Uprising (Rinnawi 2012; Anas 2012). The review shows that state-controlled media is exploited for the benefit of regimes (Amin 2009; Guaaybess 2013). It also discussed the scholarly debate about the role of social media during The Arab Spring, whether it was significant, and how social media has become a battlefield between regimes and protesters (Storck 2011; Faris 2012; Wolfsfeld et al. 2012; Campbell and Hawk 2012; Aday et al. 2012). The review also shows there was a research focus on the role of social media and political media during The Arab Spring, while the role of sports media particularly is overlooked during this era. Scholars argue that sports and sports media play several political roles (Tomlinson and Young 2006; Whitwell 2013; Tuastad 2014) and they are not immune to manipulation and exploitation for political purposes.

Scholars and journalists have examined the political situation in Bahrain in light of the uprising, pointing out that Bahrain's allies have had a strong influence on the political process (Khurshid 2011; Joyce 2012). While Khalaf (2013) examines the uprising in Bahrain from a local angle as a conflict between the regime and the protesters in the virtual reality of the Internet, Al-Rasheed (2001), Mabon (2012) and Nuruzzaman (2013) focus more on the regional impact in the conflict that symbolizes the regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. While the argument about the foreign factors that have helped the Al-Khalifa family to confront the protesters is substantial, the ruling family has also employed local power elements such as sports media to maintain power. The reliance on sports media as a means to repel the political movement in Bahrain shows the significant importance of this type of media during social movements.

## **Chapter 3: Theoretical framework and news framing**

This chapter introduces Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model (2008) as a theoretical framework. It discusses the five filters of the Propaganda Model (PM) and applies them to the Bahraini sports media context in order to examine the Bahraini media situation during the 2011 uprising. This chapter also discusses the use of news framing by the media and explains the techniques used in covering the protest. The chapter then examines the relationship between news framing and propaganda and language choice to understand how these techniques are employed to serve the elites' agenda.

### **3.1 Theoretical framework**

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's propaganda model (2008) was developed in the 1980s to explain how media institutions are structured to serve the political and economic interests of dominant elites. The five main elements of Herman and Chomsky's PM are "ownership" of media, "funding", "sourcing", "flak" and "ideology".

The first filter in the PM is "ownership" of mass media. Herman and Chomsky (2008, p. 2) argue that mainstream media outlets are either conglomerates or corporations where media work for their proprietors' interests. Thus, the content that is broadcast to the public by media outlets may serve the proprietors' agenda. When the interests of shareholders of media outlets are compatible with politicians' interests, media content that imperils these shared interests could be subjected to censorship. This can result in the cover up of information that is in the public interest and can also grant corporations the power to shape the public agenda.

In their critique of the PM, Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang (2004, p. 109) explain that the American media are not fully even-handed in their reporting on other countries, pointing out that neither the government nor any party in the United States fully controls the news. On the other hand, Sheldon Rampton (2007) argues that while propaganda remains alive in the Internet era, ownership works differently with social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or blogs. Rampton points out that media content is not as strongly controlled as it has previously been with mainstream media when the PM was introduced for the first time whereas Lang and Lang

indicate that there is no one party that controls the media and this invalidates the "ownership" filter in the PM. Nonetheless, in the Bahraini case, ownership and therefore control of media is clearly observable even in the Internet era. According to a report by Freedom House (2013a), online content is censored under Bahrain's Press, Printing and Publishing Law 2002. For instance, the report indicates that since 2010, the authorities have banned the BlackBerry news bulletin service and blocked more than 1,000 pro-opposition online forums and news websites.

Indicating just how much the Al-Khalifa family controls the mass media, all television and radio channels in Bahrain are owned and directed by the regime. Additionally, the Press, Printing and Publishing Law 2002 grants the Ministry of Information (now known as Information Affairs Authority) the right to reject licenses for press houses and newspapers. Rejected press license applicants have the right to appeal in the High Civil Court; however, the Information Affairs Authority (IAA) that represents the regime retains the power to grant a printing license or reject an application even at higher level. The Bahraini authority's moves to control the media have drawn criticism from human rights organizations such as Article19 that accused the regime of not only controlling media but also systematically attacking activists and dissidents. In a 2011 report, Article19 describes how until 2002 Bahrain had only two newspapers that were controlled by the Ministry of Information and the establishment of *Al-Wasat* allowed the opposition to run the first independent newspaper in the country. Despite allowing for a potentially pro-opposition newspaper, independent media and journalists in Bahrain are, according to Article19, persistently vilified in the official media as traitors with the accusation that they are "receiving funds and instructions from foreign powers" (Article19 2011).

Article19 notes that the regime has restricted television broadcasting from abroad. For instance, the Bahraini channel *LuaLua TV* that airs from London was repeatedly denied permission to broadcast in Bahrain and its satellite was jammed within four hours of the launch the channel on July 17, 2011. The channel website where viewers could stream the programmes online, was also blocked within Bahrain (Beyer 2013). Similarly, film production is also closely monitored by the authorities and films cannot be produced without a license.

As the Press, Printing and Publishing Law of 2002 notes:

No movie, reference to a movie or commercial ad shall be displayed on a cinematic poster at cinemas unless a license is obtained from the cinematic movies and recorded publications control committee pointed to in the following article. Recorded publications shall not be circulated either before a written permission is obtained from the directorate beforehand. The directorate can place the recorded publication before the afore-mentioned committee before licensing its circulation. (Article 23 of the Press, Printing and Publishing Law 2002)

It is clear that the authorities in Bahrain have well established systems in place to control or monitor the mainstream media, the Internet and film production which allow the authorities to own the media outlets in Bahrain, or control the content.

The Propaganda Model's second filter "funding" stems from the reliance of media on advertising licenses. Media rely on advertising revenue to cover the costs of their production. Hence, the news eventually becomes a commodity to serve the advertiser. As advertisers target their goods and services to specific consumers, they are inclined to advertise during television programs that are compatible with their own commercial interests. Herman and Chomsky argue that corporations will rarely sponsor programs that are critical of commercial activities that impact on problems of environmental degradation, the working of military-industrial complexes, or corporate support of Third World authoritarian states (2008, pp. 13-15). As mainstream media serve their advertisers' interests, these may conflict with the public interest.

In an interview with Andrew Mullen in 2010, Herman and Chomsky argued that the impact of advertising was an even more important force in 2008 than it was in 1988 because of the increased competition among traditional media outlets on the one hand and between media outlets and the Internet on the other hand. In his review of the PM, Joan Pedro (2011) points out that the influence of advertisers may occur directly and indirectly. "Media content must conform as much as possible to what sponsors are looking for in an outlet to advertise their products" (p. 1881). Statistics released by The Arab Media Outlook in 2013 show that more than 65% of Arab print media revenue, including newspapers in Bahrain, rely on advertising. The report shows that less than 35% of the revenue comes from newspaper circulation (p. 32).

Another report shows that the 2012 advertising market in the Gulf States countries reached about 5 billion US dollars. The two biggest markets were the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia with USD1.5 billion and USD1.42 billion respectively, whereas the market in Bahrain reached about USD90 million, including over USD16 million governmental or semi-government advertising (Salman 2013). These statistics show that the Bahraini regime directly controls about 20% of the advertising market. They also show that the newspapers in Bahrain take about 70% of the total advertising market compared with other media outlets.

According to Abdullatif Hamza (1960), Salama Mossa (1963) and Awatif Abdulrahman (2002) the reliance of Arab media on advertising has led to situation where journalists are bribed and the media outlets that are considered pro-opposition are penalized by the autocrat regimes. According to Freedom House and Article19, media outlets in Bahrain therefore engage in self-censorship to avoid being framed by the official media as being anti-regime. Freedom House (2013b) online report explains that this self-censorship is a deliberate strategy "to avoid offending advertisers that do not want their businesses associated with critical reporting".

The third filter of the PM is "sourcing" as "the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest" (Herman and Chomsky 2008, p. 17). According to Herman and Chomsky, mass media outlets have demanding news schedules that need to be met. However, in the 1980s media outlets could only afford reporters at significant events or where press conferences were held, such as at the White House and the Pentagon. Regular news bulletins from these sources filled the news demands which led to growing dependence by the media on the official line.

Another reason for the dependence of media outlets on "official" sources was to avoid criticism of being biased or to protect themselves from the threat of libel suits. In this way, according to Herman and Chomsky, mass media outlets needed material that could be portrayed as being presumptively accurate to maintain the image of impartiality (p. 18). Of course, media outlets may also be manipulated into following the agenda of "powerful sources" (pp. 22-23). Problematising sourcing as a filter, Rampton (2007) argues that in the Internet era there are an increasing number of sources other than the "official" line. Rampton gives, as an example, the controversial first photograph of flag-draped coffins of American soldiers returning

from the recent Iraq war that was taken by a cargo worker in Kuwait. The picture was published in the *Seattle Times*, despite an official sanction against images of coffins that would remind the American public of the cost of war. Even more challenging to the official sourcing of news, the recent Abu Ghraib photos of prisoners were taken by the abusers themselves before being reproduced by news media in the public domain. While Rampton believes that the sourcing filter of the PM should be reconsidered, he does acknowledge that Tami Silicio, the cargo worker in Kuwait, was sacked from her job as a result of the pictures. Thus, although official sources may not have the same stranglehold on the news as they did before the Internet era, the dominant elites still have power to influence the media content.

While Rampton considers the control of the source of news as a slightly outmoded filter for the Propaganda Model for the USA, this control continues to be strong in the Bahraini context. Newspapers continue to receive daily news updates from the Royal Court, the Crown Prince's Court, the Prime Minister's Court and other ministries. In an unwritten understanding, newspapers in Bahrain are not allowed to publish any other news related to the King, the Crown Prince or the Prime Minister without permission. During the uprising in 2011, sports news was also expected to follow the official line and they did so by publishing official sport news about the involvement of many sports figures and athletes in the uprising.

The fourth filter of the PM is "flak", which involves the negative responses to media reporting on television or radio programs. Flak may occur directly or indirectly and may take the form of complaints, threats, lawsuits, and penalties. According to Herman and Chomsky (2008, p. 24), flak increases "in close parallel with business's growing resentment of media criticism and the corporate offensive of the 1970s and 1980s". Oliver Boyd-Barrett (2004) has expanded flak to include fear of top editors and voices in the right-wing media. Boyd-Barrett also adds the impact of powerful voices, such as those of President, Vice-President or the Secretary of Defence, on the choice of questions or specific journalists during press conferences. He points out that using privileged voices to embarrass journalists who ask "wrong" questions or adopt the "wrong" tone is just another form of flak (p. 446).

While most manifestations of "flak" in the Propaganda Model as envisaged by Herman and Chomsky remains at the level of non-physical threats, some aspects of flak in Bahrain go beyond this to physical abuse, torture and even death. Bahrain

has one of the world's worst records of press freedom, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (2011) report. It cites statistics from 2011 when two Bahraini journalists were killed, about 110 journalists were arrested or threatened and twenty foreign reporters from media outlets including the BBC, CNN, *McClatchy* Newspaper and CBS were denied entry into the country to cover the uprising.

Other human rights organizations, such as Reporters Without Borders, Human Rights Watch and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, have similarly accused the Bahraini authorities of violating human rights and press freedom during the uprising in 2011. These organizations registered hundreds of cases of press violations where journalists and bloggers were killed, detained, tortured or sacked from their jobs as a result of covering the uprising. Violations against journalists, in general and sports journalists in particular have included physical and psychological torture, sexual harassment, dismissal from their job and threats to their families.

Faisal Hayat is one of the Bahraini sports journalists who was jailed and tortured for his journalistic activities during the 2011 uprising. He recounted his experience to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights:

...they dragged me to the torture room again, and there they resumed beating me on my feet by a hose. Then the executioner asked me: "Which hand you write with?" I said to myself: "I won't sacrifice one hand, so my both hands should share what will strike them of punishment for the act of writing". I replied: "I write with both hands". He rushed beating both of them until I felt that I had lost feeling my hands. (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2011b).

The way that Faisal Hayat and other journalists were treated shows how the Bahraini regime responded to criticism by the media. Clearly "flak", the fourth filter of the PM, is an ongoing concern in Bahrain where it is aimed at penalizing journalists who were involved in the uprising.

The fifth filter in the PM was presented by Herman and Chomsky as the control of mechanism of "anticommunism". While this term was topical in the 1980s, it was more recently revised to encompass the broader term "ideology". While the PM was originally developed during the Cold War period examined the ideological fear of Communism as a clear antagonist to the U.S pro-democratic government, Herman and Chomsky did point out that the dominant elites of any nation, through

their control of mass media outlets, mobilize a sense of fear towards "enemies" or those that threaten their status quo:

It's the idea that grave enemies are about to attack us and we need to huddle under the protection of domestic power. You need something to frighten people with, to prevent them from paying attention to what's really happening to them. You have to somehow engender fear and hatred, to channel the kind of fear and rage – or even just discontent – that's being aroused by social and economic conditions. (Chomsky et al. 1998, p. 42).

Thus, according to Herman and Chomsky, fear can be used to mobilize the populace against an enemy. As the concept is "fuzzy", the ideology can also be used against those who threaten the dominant elites' interests (pp. 27-29). In his retrospective of the PM, Herman (2000) explains that propaganda campaigns occur only when the interests of those controlling and managing the filter are consistent with the campaigns.

The fifth filter of the PM can be seen in operation in Bahrain, as propaganda campaigns are used by the Al-Khalifa family regime to manipulate public opinion against democracy that would threaten their interests and autocratic control. Pro-regime figures and journalists routinely attack opposition leaders and protesters, calling for the death penalty, imprisonment or exile. For example, a former member of the Bahraini parliament Tweeted on August 10, 2012 "teargas will not help with the terrorist Iran slaves who want to kill security men ... Shotgun, live bullets and deportation is the medicine they deserve" (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2013).

Overall, the Propaganda Model provides an appropriate framework to understand how mass media serves political and economic power brokers in a particular national context. The PM, however, has its limitations. As Herman and Chomsky acknowledged, the PM does not study the effects of the media on the public. In their introduction to the recent reprint of the book *Manufacturing Consent* (2008, p. xii) they indicate that the PM does not imply that any propaganda emanating from the media is always effective. In addition, in his critical review and assessment of the PM, Jeffery Klaehn (2002) points out that the PM does not presume that newsroom journalists routinely take mindful decisions that are consistent with the interest of dominant elites: "Rather, it assumes that elite media

recruit right-minded personnel to fill staff positions. Its overarching concern with the broader issue of social class firmly distinguishes the PM from the gate-keeper model" (p. 151).

Other scholars have criticised several aspects of the PM. For instance, Boyd-Barrett (2004) accepts the basic premises of the PM but believes that it does not pinpoint methodologies for determining the relative weight of independent filters in different contexts which would be beneficial to developing the model in the future. Boyd-Barrett adds that there is a lack of precision in the characterization of some of the filters, so that "the model privileges the structural factors that determine propagandized news selection, and therefore eschews or marginalizes intentionality" (p. 435).

In light of this, Boyd-Barrett proposed intentionality as a sixth filter for the PM, arguing that Herman and Chomsky seemed to avoid what he called direct purchase of media, or "buying out" of individual journalists or their media by the intelligence agencies or related authorities. To illustrate his point, Boyd-Barrett refers to revelations in the 1970s that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) published hundreds of books in order to undermine both the Soviet Union and communism and Boyd-Barrett also refers to the *Rolling Stone* article by Carl Bernstein on October 20, 1977 which disclosed that the CIA worked closely with 400 journalists from a range of media outlets such as Associated Press, ABC, CBS, *Hearst Newspapers*, NBC, *The New York Times*, Reuters, United Press International and others (p. 436).

Annabelle Lukin (2012) criticises the absence of a consideration of language or discourse in the PM. Although Chomsky is considered "the father of modern linguistics" (p. 100), Lukin points out the use of language was essentially ignored by the PM. Lukin indicates that while language is indisputably the carrier of the PM, Herman and Chomsky's analysis does not recruit a single theoretical method from the discipline most directly engaged in understanding and describing the nature of the language used in propaganda, and its relationship to notions such as ideology (p. 100). The use of language in propaganda has an important role in confronting the protesters in Bahrain. Since the uprising started in 2011, the opposition and protesters have been described in the pro-regime media as traitors, insurrectionists, terrorists and killers. For instance, a news article that was published in *Al-Watan*

(2013b) headlined "تجمع الوحدة: خونة الوطن يُسقون لحلقات التآمر الخارجي على البحرين" which translates to "The Unity Gathering: Traitors Coordinating a Conspiracy against Bahrain". While Herman and Chomsky ignored the use of language, this example evidences how, in Bahrain, the PM fifth filter of ideology is clearly at work as the pro-regime media uses extreme language as propaganda and as a weapon to resist political reform. This will be analysed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model to "manufacture consent" provides a useful theoretical framework to understand how the media in Bahrain including sports media has been politicized to serve the dominant interests of the elites. The PM points to the use of framing in news agenda. Herman and Chomsky discuss how victims of humanitarian catastrophes were "worthy" and sometimes "unworthy". Chomsky points to the performance of media outlets as "they determine, they select, they shape, they control, they restrict in order to serve the interests of dominant, elite groups in the society" (cited in Wintonick and Achbar 1994, p. 55). It is believed that the PM has strength to be applied in different ways:

The model's general argument, then, is that how victims and events are portrayed within mainstream media discourses will largely be dependent upon the interests of power within specific time/place contexts. This area of focus could also be significantly broadened and expanded to include events, issues and other groups of actors (beyond victims). (Klaehn 2009, p. 49).

Eric Herring and Piers Robinson (2003) point out that the Propaganda Model explains why framing news reports about US foreign policy is often consistent with the agenda of U.S corporate and political elites. Also, Andrew Mullen and Jeffery Klaehn (2010) argue that the PM could be bolstered and its analytical capability could be enriched by other theories such as framing and agenda-setting (p. 223). The structure of the PM can be seen in action in the Bahrain context, where the control and the use of media as a political means of propaganda is explicit. It is therefore important to closely examine framing and how it operates within media.

### **3.2 Use of framing in media**

Framing has been applied as a research methodology in a range of disciplines (Benford and Snow 2000), including politics and political psychology (Iyengar 1990;

Nelson et al. 1997), economic psychology (Gonzalez et al. 2005); communication and media studies (Entman 1991; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007; Cissel 2012), sociology (Al-Rawi 2014), and linguistics and discourse analysis (ed. Tennen 1993; Hope 2010; Mahfouz 2013).

The founding of framing theory has been attributed to the sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) who pointed out in *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, that framing is a "schemata of interpretation" used by individuals or groups to interpret or understand events (p. 21). Shanto Iyengar's (1990) study of poverty as a political issue showed how people's perspective about an issue depended on the way the issue was framed by media. Poverty, according to Iyengar, was not considered a private problem when it was framed as a social problem. Thus, framing, according to Robert M. Entman (1993), presents a way to illustrate the power of a communication text (p. 51) and it involves manipulating the text for the benefit of the medium or the message sender (p. 52).

Framing has developed as a particularly useful theory in media over the last three decades. While early studies that examined the concept of framing concentrated more on the power of a media text and how it was shaped and presented (Iyengar 1990; Entman 1991), scholars in the 2000s have paid more attention to the impact of framing on audiences (Brewer et al. 2003; Gonzalez et al. 2005; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Some scholars have argued that framing is a two-sided relationship where media outlets frame messages focusing on certain aspects, while the audience interpret the message by using their educational and cultural background and experiences (Baresch et al. 2011; Van Gorp and Vercruysse 2012). It is worth noting that scholars have generally agreed that framing has the power to influence an audience's beliefs (Scheufele and Iyengar 2011; Lecheler and Vreese 2012; Arvizu 2013). However, while they agree that framing affect people's perceptions, they differ about the level of effectiveness of framing.

Scholars and journalists agree that all news stories are framed and it is a crucial process for journalists to choose how to frame their stories. For instance, Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog (2005) explain that news framing is the way that a news story is organized "thematically, stylistically, and factually, to convey a specific story line" (p. 313). Steve Smith (1997) argues that framing stories could be

"the most important" issue in newsrooms. Smith indicates that choosing the story frame is "the most powerful" decision that any journalist makes.

Andrew C. Billings (2004) points out that media has the power to frame a story positively or negatively (p. 203). In their article "The Future of Public Engagement", Matthew C. Nisbet and Dietram A. Scheufele (2007) argue that framing involves shaping an issue as a problem, what or who is responsible for it, and what should be done about it. While Baldwin Van Gorp and Tom Vercruyssen (2012) believe that framing appears to be to some extent manipulative, Margaret Cissel (2012) argues that framing is set to meet the goals of the providing source (p. 67). This argument brings the discussion back to the early study of Entman (1991) who showed how media content could be framed and presented to the audience for the benefit of the news makers, corporations or dominant powers. Entman compared the coverage by the U.S. media of the shoot-down of the Korean Air Lines KAL Flight 007 in 1983 by a Soviet fighter plane, and the shoot-down of Iran Air Flight 655 in 1988 by a U.S. Navy ship.

Entman's analysis of the framing of these two very similar stories in the coverage of the *Times*, *Newsweek*, CBS Evening News, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* showed that the KAL incident was portrayed by American media as more important than the Iranian Air incident as it occupied more space in the print media and was given more time in the CBS evening news show telecast. While his analysis relied rather simply on how much material on the event was available and how prominently it was displayed, Entman argues that this frame data helps to determine the political importance of a news event (p. 10). The coverage of the two events also showed different uses of words, images, graphics, naming of victims and publication of their pictures. Overall, Entman found that the KAL incident was framed by a moral discourse about a deliberate/ premeditated incident, while the Iran Air incident was framed by technical discourse as an accident.

Entman's study shows that the use of news framing aims to focus the audience's attention on a particular event by using various methods; for instance, by occupying more space in print media or by giving more time to television coverage. The way that media outlets edit and place news is determined by the importance given to particular news stories by the media outlet. Entman's study of media framing is helpful to understand the use of framing during the 2011 uprising in Bahrain. As

Entman has indicated, media uses a specific language to describe events for particular purposes. Media outlets also focus their coverage on particular issues and overlook others. Entman showed how narrative text can be framed and produced for the audience. In his case study of the media coverage of the two airplane accidents, Entman modelled how framing news narratives can be identified by studying keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images. Entman illustrated how frames "work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so- (sic) and other entirely invisible" (p. 7).

This thesis argues that sports media in Bahrain has used specific key phrases to vilify the demonstrations and the protesters on the one hand and to glorify the Al-Khalifa family and their supporters on the other. It also examines techniques including the use of symbols and visual images in the television coverage of the 2011 uprising in Bahrain to inspect the official propaganda during the uprising.

### **3.2.1 Framing and social movements**

The relationship between social movements and news framing has been discussed by scholars who examine how protests, protesters and their demands are framed in media coverage. Murray Edelman (1993) discussed the role of framing in the social world where dominant elites have the power and the ability to shape public perceptions in order to serve their own agenda. Tim Baylor (1996) agrees with Edelman as he indicates that social movements being framed by media outlets is a "fact beyond dispute" (p. 242) and he believes that some events are deliberately selected, covered and timed. Understanding how framing techniques are employed by elites to achieve their goals and to influence public opinion is important according to Matthew C. Nisbet (2011) because it informs efforts to hold those in power accountable.

According to Sydney G. Tarrow (2011) in his book *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, there are three mechanisms to portray social movements: framing, identity construction, and emotional work (pp. 142-143). Tarrow argues that framing in a movement's structure of conflict and alliances distinguishes between identities and defines 'us' from 'them' in order to determine the enemy (p. 31). Tarrow's argument explains why, for example, a group frames itself as a "legitimate authority" and its opponents as "outlaws".

There are several techniques employed by media to target protests such as to focus on marginal issues or the nuisance made by protests, to emphasise violence, require reliance on official sources, and to speak of a lack of patriotism of the protesters and a lack of effectiveness of the protests (Ashley and Olson 1998; Brasted 2006; Boykoff 2006; Jha 2007; Di Cicco 2010; Boyle 2014). Laura Ashley and Beth Olson (1998) who examined how the *New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* framed the women's movement between 1966 and 1986, found that the U.S. media tended to delegitimize the movement and its objectives. Monica Brasted (2005) agrees with Ashley and Olsen as she explains that media outlets focus on marginal issues such as the protesters' appearance rather than on their motivation and demands. This technique presents protesters to the audience as outsiders.

Jules Boykoff's (2006) content analysis of the news coverage of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in the 1999 and the World Bank/IMF protests in Washington, DC in 2000, shows other techniques used by the U.S. media to undermine social movements. Beside the use of the violence frame, the disruption frame was used to portray the movements as not only disrupting the two meetings, but also disrupting the lives of the local people (p. 214). Damon T. Di Cicco's (2010) study of the newspapers coverage of protests between 1967 and 2007 supports Boykoff's findings as the media coverage of protests framed the movements as an "irritation" and a "hindrance" to daily life (p. 137). Di Cicco points to framing protests as unpatriotic as another techniques used by media when covers protests (p. 138). He notes that the authorities' voice in coverage is louder than the protesters' voice and sometimes the protesters' voice is neglected.

The use of official sources in protest coverage was an issue discussed by Sonora Jha (2007) who examined the difference in reliance on official sources for coverage of the anti-WTO protests in 1999 and the anti-Vietnam War protests in 1967. Jha's study shows that journalists who covered the 1999 protests relied more on official sources compared with the 1967 protests despite the availability of the Internet that grants access to a variety of sources. Donohue et al. (1995) explains that during protests, controlled media outlets align themselves with elites and the status quo (p. 116). Michael P. Boyle (2014) agrees with Donohue et al. and argues that the more protesters threaten the status quo, the more likely they are framed as outsiders in order alienate the public from the protesters' demands.

Another important study that discusses the 2011 uprising in Bahrain but that disagrees with the literature presented above suggests that protest coverage relies on unofficial sources and neglects pro-regime sources. Brian J. Bowe and Jennifer Hoewe's (2011) content analysis of the three large newspapers, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* from January 1, 2011 to March 10, 2011, found that the U.S. newspapers relied on non-official sources more than on official sources to cover the 2011 uprising. Bowe and Hoewe argue that the coverage of the U.S. media was biased to the protesters. Their study identifies five frames used to cover the protests: slightly against the government of Bahrain, strongly against the government of Bahrain, strongly in favour of the government of Bahrain, slightly against the United States' involvement in Bahrain and slightly in favour of the United States' involvement in Bahrain. Bowe and Hoewe suggest that the statistics show that the frames that are against the government of Bahrain and in favour of the protest appeared more than the frames that are in favour of the Bahraini government and shows a "lack of fairness in news coverage of the conflict in Bahrain" (p. 33).

Counterpoint to Bowe and Hoewe's argument, it has been pointed out that media outlets do occasionally criticize those in power in favour of their opponents (McLeod and Detenber 1999, p. 5). Moreover, Brasted (2005) raises an interesting point that counters Bowe and Hoewe's view by suggesting that balanced reporting leads to biased coverage in favour of elites as they are well-known to the public and their challengers need more time to explain their views to the public (p. 384). In addition, Bowe and Hoewe's study may have overlooked the fact that several foreign journalists, including those who had intended to cover sports events that coincided with the uprising were prevented from entering Bahrain by the authorities during the first months of the 2011 uprising (Associated Press 2012; Reporters Without Borders 2013). There were 221 cases including 22 media organizations, of people who were denied entry to Bahrain in 2011 and 2012 without being given a reason. Journalists who worked for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, CNN and Reuters were prevented from covering the uprising or targeted as a result of their journalistic activities (Gutman 2011; Human Rights Watch 2011c; Bahrain Watch 2012b; Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2012). Not having reporters when and where the major events of the 2011 uprising occurred may have resulted in the U.S. newspapers relying on non-official or pro-protesters sources.

Similarly, Naila Hamdy and Ehab H. Gomaa (2012) studied framing techniques used by semi-official and independent Egyptian newspapers and social media platforms during the coverage of the 2011 Egyptian uprising in order to undermine the protests. Hamdy and Gomaa coded their data into four main framing categories: "conflict", "responsibility", "economic consequences", and "human interest". They found that the "conflict frame" was used by semi-official newspapers to portray the 2011 Egyptian protests as a "harmful catastrophe" that had an enormous negative consequence on the economy whereas the independent newspapers framed the uprising more squarely through using the four frames mentioned above. Hamdy and Gomaa point out that while the independent newspapers covered the protests from the beginning, the semi-official newspapers hesitated to clearly explain what was happening (pp. 207-208). Their study indicates that the Egyptian semi-official media countered the demonstrations by framing it as a movement "harmful" to the economy and the country's stability. In a related study, Refaat Mahfouz (2013) examines the coverage of the Egyptian police news prior to 2011 uprising. Mahfouz's study compared how events involving clashes between protesters and policemen were portrayed in the state-controlled newspaper *Al-Gomhuria* and the independent newspaper *Al-Dostour*. For instance, an event between Egyptian policemen and Bedouins was framed in the pro-regime newspaper *Al-Gomhuria* as "riots", whereas the same event was framed in the pro-opposition newspaper *Al-Dostour* as a "confrontation" (pp. 316-318).

### **3.2.2 Framing and propaganda**

There is a strong relationship between news framing and language choices, phrases, words and connotations. According to Teenie Matlock (2010), the way the message is worded can set up very specific "interpretations" and "inferences". George Lakoff agrees in an interview with Bonnie Azab Powell (2003) that language and framing are correlative:

Every word is defined relative to a conceptual framework. If you have something like "revolt," that implies a population that is being ruled unfairly, or assumes it is being ruled unfairly, and that they are

throwing off their rulers, which would be considered a good thing. That's a frame. (Powell 2003).

Matlock and Lakoff believe that the role of language in framing news stories is to encourage the audience or the public to interpret the message in a certain way. Ray Eldon Hiebert (2003) believes audiences do not think about facts as our minds "switch to the way those facts are framed" (p. 242) and this shows, according to Hiebert, that framing influences our thoughts about an issue. In his discussion of the propaganda at the beginning of the Iraq war, Hiebert links propaganda with framing arguing that the U.S. government portrayed the war in Iraq in a way that served its goals (p. 244). Hiebert discusses the way that issues, story lines, slogans and phrases were framed. For instance, he notes how the U.S. army characterized the Iraqi resistance as "Saddam's Fedayeen" before changing "Fedayeen" (that gives a positive connotation in Arabic to "paramilitaries") to "terror-like death squads" (p. 245).

In addition, Brian Baresch et al. (2011) raise an interesting point about the use of the term "The Arab Spring" in Western and Arabic media. They point out that the uprisings that swept the Arab World were labelled in a "favourable and democratic light" (p. 637). The term is meant to evoke the season of rebirth and the Prague Spring of 1968 and reflects a social value of the Western culture which is the struggle for self-determination in the face of subjugation:

That is the sort of thing news frames do: They highlight some aspects of the events behind a story and downplay others, often with the effect of supporting a certain way of looking at the world. This is accomplished by word choice (e.g. using language of "awakening" rather than "chaos" to describe the Middle East uprisings) and by source selection (e.g. quoting more democracy activists than state security officers). (Baresch et al. 2011, p. 637).

According to Joshua Keating (2011), the term "The Arab Spring" was used in 2005 for the first time when referring to the democracy movements in the Arab World, including elections and woman's rights, by the columnist Charles Krauthammer (2005). The term then was used by the Professor of Political Science and Director of Institute for Middle East Studies Marc Lynch (2011) in an article published in the *Foreign Policy* magazine who called it somewhat dismissively as "Obama's Arab

Spring?". Not surprisingly, many Arab politicians and journalists rejected the use of "The Arab Spring", some going as far as to call the demonstrations a "bloody and sectarian winter" (CNN 2014), "The Alleged Arab Spring" (Mohi Al-Deen 2012), "Arab Autumn" (Nafei 2013), and "Bloody Spring" (Al-Qudat 2014).

The politicians and journalists who used the negative connotations in the examples listed above were all against the demonstrations in the Arab World and accused the protests of being planned and led by the U.S. and Israel. The study of Susan Dente Ross (2003) is also worth considering in this context. Ross analysed the framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in *New York Times* editorials after 11 September 2001. In a 30 months period after the attack, Ross analysed 34 editorials that discussed or engaged with Israel, Israel and Palestine, the Saudis or the Arabs. She concluded that Palestinians were likely to be famed as "aggressors" rather than "victims" and while Arabs and Palestinians were portrayed as "terrorist criminals intent on undermining calm" while others such as the former Palestinian president Yasser Arafat, Arabs, and the Saudi were "legitimate brokers of peace" (p. 6).

Following this argument, it is interesting to compare phrases used by a state-controlled media outlet and a foreign media outlet to frame an event of the 2011 Bahrain uprising. For instance, in a news article published on the Bahrain News Agency (2011) website on March 16, 2011 about the removal of the protesters' camps from the Pearl Roundabout, the protesters were described as "outlaws who terrorize the citizens and the residents and harmed the national economy", whereas a France24 (2011) news article published on the same day more neutrally described the participants as "protesters majority Shiite demanding reforms". The removal process was portrayed by the Bahrain News Agency as "تطهير" which can be translated as "disinfection" while it was portrayed by France24 as "إخلاء" which can be translated as "evacuation". These two examples show the use of different key phrases to frame the same event. While the use of "إخلاء" in Arabic or "evacuation" does not have a negative meaning, the use of "تطهير" or "disinfection" suggests bacteria or a group of intruders and is clearly negative.

It is clear that the use of language in framing such as an "illegal movement" to indicate to a protest or "unpatriotic citizens" to indicate to protesters is in fact propaganda that reflects an ideology. While Noshina Saleem (2007) asserts that media frames reflect a specific ideology, George Lakoff (2004) has a clearer grasp for

the relationship between framing and propaganda. In the book *Don't Think of An Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, Lakoff states:

Propaganda is another manipulative use of framing.  
Propaganda is an attempt to get the public to adopt a  
frame that is not true and is known not to be true, for the  
purpose of gaining or maintaining political control.  
(Lakoff 2004, p. 100).

Lakoff believes that propaganda is not a frame; rather it is an endeavour to build a perception of an event in the public mind to achieve specific objectives. This argument partially corresponds with David Barnhizer's (2013) view that propaganda experts frame everything "into thematic propaganda 'missiles' that we launch to 'sell' our positions or sabotage those of our opponents" (p. 1). John B. Parrott (2009) believes that framing and propaganda seek to "instil a politically relevant disposition into an audience" (p. 419). Raluca Cozma (2014) agrees with Barnhizer and Parrott, indicating that there are several devices involved in propaganda including "name calling" which is the technique of labelling ideas or people, for example, as "fascist", "radical", or "terrorist" in order to make the audience rebuff or denounce them without examining any evidence (p. 435). Maria Bondes and Sandra Heep (2012) argue that framing is used as a foundation of regime legitimacy as "the ruling elites in authoritarian regimes propagate official frames in a continuous effort to reproduce the belief of the populace in the elites' leadership qualities and their determination to serve the common interest" (p. 4).

In summary, elites who control media tend to target social movements that threaten their interests. There are several strategies that are used by media to undermine social movements in the coverage of protests including: portraying protests as illegal or illegitimate movements, framing the consequences of a movement negatively, portraying the status quo as legitimate while labelling protesters as outlaws. While framing protesters as deviant aims to protect the elite and to separate protesters from the public, Baresch et al. (2011) believe that media content reflects social meanings through the selection of words, news sources and metaphors. In light of the relationship between framing and propaganda that has been outlined above, this thesis will investigate just how news framing was employed by sports

media in Bahrain to serve the regime's propaganda and in order to maintain status quo.

While acknowledging that a range of frames were used by media outlets to cover protests, this present thesis focused on three main frames to examine how the 2011 uprising in Bahrain was covered and the strategies were used during the coverage. The three frames are: the characterization frame, the consequences frame, and the unpatriotic frame. These frames help answer the thesis' research questions as they cover the four major elements of the uprising: the demonstrations, the Al-Khalifa family, the protesters and the supporters of the ruling family. According to Sanda Kaufman et al. 2013, the characterization frame is linked to the identity of the rivals and it is used by them, either positively to justify the party/person's actions against others, or negatively to undermine the legality of the opponent cast doubt on their motive. It is important for a movement to select its own framing before its enemies do so. As George Lakoff (2011) suggests that unless a movement frames itself "others will frame you -- the media, your enemies, your competitors, your well-meaning friends". Lakoff believes that framing has major positive or negative consequences on a movement as it tells the character of a movement. In light of this, this thesis uses the characterization frame to examine the key phrases used to frame the 2011 uprising in Bahrain. This frame was also used to investigate how the Al-Khalifa family was framed by the local sports media.

This thesis also examines how the consequences of the 2011 uprising were framed. Patti M. Valkenburg et al. (1999) point out that media outlets present an issue to the audience in terms of the consequences that may occur as a result of the issue. They suggest that the consequences frame is used to make an issue relevant to the audience (p. 552). In light of this, the present thesis investigates how the consequences of the uprising were framed. For instance, did the consequences of the uprising 'unite the country or encourage political reforms', or did it 'destabilize the security and the national's unity'?

This thesis also uses the unpatriotic frame to examine how the protesters were framed. While Di Cicco (2010) applies the unpatriotic frame to political movements, the present thesis applies it to the protesters in Bahrain. Douglas M. McLeod and James K. Hertog (1992) stated that "one of the keys to whether a protest group is 'isolated' or 'accepted' by the larger society is the mass media's treatment of the

protesters" (p. 260). Thus, through analysis of the unpatriotic frame, this thesis examines whether the protesters were framed as "loyal to their country", or "disloyal". This frame was also applied to the Al-Khalifa family supporters to enable a comparison with its use when applied to the protesters.

## Chapter 4: Newspaper data analysis: methods and findings

This chapter explains the reasons behind the selection of the two newspapers *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad*. A content analysis provides quantitative and qualitative descriptions of the selected sports news articles of the two newspapers to examine how the 2011 uprising in Bahrain was framed by the sports media and to assess the strategies used to politicize the sports news.

The data collected from *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* covers the period from March 2011 to May 2011. Because a literal translation to English of Arabic text might lead to some misrepresentation, considerable effort has been made to translate the meanings of words, terms and sentences. For instance, the word 'الإساءة' in the sentence 'الإساءة إلى الرموز الوطنية' can be translated as "insult". In this sentence, the term frames the consequences of the protests as an insult to the Bahraini figureheads and leadership. This translation keeps the intended meaning of the sentence. More examples of translations from Arabic to English used in this thesis can be found in Appendix 1.

### 4.1 Rationale for selecting *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad*

There are currently seven daily newspapers in Bahrain with five published in Arabic and two in English. They are: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, *Gulf Daily News* (in English), *Al-Ayam*, *Daily Tribune* (in English), *Al-Wasat*, *Al-Watan* and *Al-Bilad*. Newspapers of Bahrain are privately owned. However, except for *Al-Wasat* which is considered a pro-opposition newspaper, they are directly controlled by the regime (Reporters Without Borders 2012a; Freedom House 2013b; Kafai 2014; Front Line Defenders 2014). The table presented in Figure 12 provides an overview of the daily newspapers including the year they were first published, their publication language, distribution, political stance, number of the issue and sports pages. It should be noted that the newspaper pages increase or decrease according to occasion (such as public holidays) and the numbers stated in the table gives an average number of pages in each of the six newspapers.

No.	Newspaper	First issue	Language	Distribution	Type	Identity	Number of pages	Number of sports pages
1	<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>	1976	Arabic	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	36 to 40	8 to 12
2	<i>Gulf Daily News</i>	1978	English	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	30	5
3	<i>Al-Ayam</i>	1989	Arabic	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	36 to 40	8 to 12
4	<i>Daily Tribune</i>	1997	English	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	32	8 to 12
5	<i>Al-Wasat</i>	2002	Arabic	National	Print + online	Pro-opposition	36 to 40	8 to 12
6	<i>Al-Watan</i>	2005	Arabic	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	36 to 40	8 to 12
7	<i>Al-Bilad</i>	2008	Arabic	National	Print + online	Pro-regime	24 to 32	8 to 12

Figure 12: Daily newspapers in Bahrain in order of first publication

As for *Al-Wasat*, a pro-opposition newspaper was excluded from the analysis because it was forced to shut down by the regime for one day on April 3, 2011 after its editorial board including the editor-in-chief Mansoor Al-Jamri were sacked. *Al-Wasat* was then allowed by the Information Affairs Authority (IAA) to publish again after another editor-in-chief was appointed (Al-Ayam 2011). This editor-in-chief was considered a pro-regime figure, which raised concerns at that time that *Al-Wasat* was being influenced by the official line as with other pro-regime newspapers. From the pro-regime Arabic newspapers, *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* were chosen for this thesis for several reasons. *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* is the oldest newspaper in Bahrain and it was established in 1976 by Mahmood Al-Mardi. The newspaper claims to circulate a daily average of 42,000 copies to reach a readership of 170,000 that makes about 28% of the population of Bahrain (*Akhbar Al-Khaleej* 2014). Also, the newspaper claims to be a market leader in print production in the country through Dar *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* Printing & Publishing House (Dar *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* 2014). *Al-Bilad* was chosen because it was the most recent (in 2008) newspaper to be established. It was started by several businessmen including Moanes Al-Mardi son of Mahmood Al-Mardi, the establisher of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*. Moanes Al-Mardi is also the current editor-in chief of the newspaper. The online archive of *Al-Bilad* for the period of study was available on the newspaper's website. Although the Chairman of the Board of the newspaper Abdulnabi Al-Shoala is a former Cabinet Minister of State and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (Nabialshoala 2014), the newspaper claims that it is not subject to censorship and protects free speech (*Al-Bilad* 2014). In addition, the regime praises the efforts of the newspaper. During an official meeting with the *Al-Bilad* editor-in-chief, the former

President of the Information Affairs Authority (IAA) Sheikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa acknowledged the "crucial role played by *Al-Bilad* in highlighting the kingdom's landmark achievement at all gatherings" (Bahrain News Agency 2010). While the readership figure of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* is known, there is no official figure for the *Al-Bilad* readership. Additionally, the two newspapers are controlled by the regime and this present and so they are appropriate for study of the performance of the state-controlled sports media.

Both *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* have a supplement of sports news with 8 to 12 pages depending on the scheduled sports activities that day. For instance, when Bahrain host an international sports event such as the Bahrain Grand Prix the number of pages increased to 20, but they can be also be as few as four pages on public holidays. Sports pages are divided into two sections: 'local news' and 'international news'. On ordinary days the two sections share equal numbers of pages but when a local event occurs such as the King's Cup Football Final, local sports news occupy most of the sports section. However, in the days immediately after the 2011 uprising, sports activities were suspended and the sports pages in the two newspapers were cut to about four pages each. For instance, the *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* sports section supplement issued 12 sports pages in the first eight days of March 2011, later dropped to eight sports pages in the second week of March, and then dropped again to three pages inside the main newspaper issue until the end of May 2011.

#### **4.2 Collecting newspaper data**

The newspaper data were collected from several sources. Portable Document Format (PDF) versions of the hardcopy of *Al-Bilad* issues cover the period of March 1, 2011 to May 31, 2011 were downloaded from the newspaper website <http://www.albiladpress.com>. Issues of *Al-Bilad* of March 11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24, 26 and May 3, 2011 were not uploaded on the newspaper website and were not available in the newspaper archives. For *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, the PDF version of the hardcopy archive was not available online at the newspaper website; therefore the issues were downloaded from a temporary website <http://influx.bh/resources/jazeeri/> that was established by an activist who has been archiving the newspaper issues for her private project. It should be noted that <http://influx.bh/resources/jazeeri/> is not working anymore. Issues of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* of March 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 were not

available at the website <http://influx.bh/resources/jazeera/>. The missing issues were sent by a journalist colleague who lives in Bahrain and has access to the newspapers archives (Figure 13). To verify the validity of the data, two issues of every week of the 14 weeks that cover the period of the study were sent to the colleague to confirm it matched with the issues in the newspaper archive. Although the colleague had access to the newspaper archives, he had difficulty to sending all issues from March to May 2011 as it could have put him in trouble with the newspaper's management.

Despite the difficulty accessing the archives and collecting the full issues of *Al-Bilad*, only 3.8% of the data is missing, and according to Yiran Dong and Chao-Ying Joanne Peng (2013), this percentage is insignificant. The PDF version of the hardcopy of the newspaper issues are essential for this project for several reasons. Firstly, the PDF version show the size of the news article relative to other articles on the same page. Secondly, they show the photograph/s that accompanied the news article. Thirdly, they show where on the page the news article was placed (top, middle or bottom). Fourthly, they show how the news article was placed that is, foregrounded on the first pages above the fold or hidden on the second page and so on. In the sports supplements that were examined, articles made up about 97% of the material and 3% were opinion columns that did not cover the uprising. It should be noted that there were very few opinion columns during the period of the study that discussed unrelated issues.

No.	Newspaper	Date	Note
1	<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>	1 March 2011 to 31 May 2011	All hard copy issues have been saved in PDF files
2	<i>Al-Bilad</i>	1 March 2011 to 31 May 2011	All hard copy issues have been saved in PDF files except issues of 11 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> , March and the 3 <sup>rd</sup> of May

Figure 13: Newspaper material: Data collection summary

### 4.3 Sports sections and types of articles

The total pages in the collected sports section supplements from *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* was calculated and categorized into either local sports pages or international sports pages (the newspapers organises the sports sections). Local sports pages covered local sports events and international sports pages covered international sports events. However, occasionally both sports sections published

local and international news on the same page. For instance, the activities of the Bahrain sports teams and figures abroad were categorized as local news. The page was considered 'local' when it had more local news than international news and vice versa. The first page of the sports section in both sports sections supplements was always considered a local page even when it included more international news articles. With the exception of special events, the first page is often published local news. Although sports pages were numbered by the newspaper, every sports page was recounted to confirm the overall numbers of pages in the sports section of the two newspaper newspapers. Every published sports article was read. International sports articles were excluded from the study whereas local sports articles were classified into four main categories: explicitly about the uprising, implicitly about the uprising, explicitly about the regime, and unrelated sports news articles that did not belong to any of the other three categories.

#### **4.3.1 Explicit coverage of the uprising**

This category included sports news articles that explicitly covered the uprising and its consequences for the local sports events (for instance, articles that covered events such as The Athletes' March, other protests or reported on the uprising such as sanctions that were applied on the athletes and sports figures). These news articles pointed to the uprising by using explicit political terms such as "demonstrations", "The Athletes' March", "the unlicensed marches", "the political crisis", or "the illegal gatherings". Figure 14 is an example of a sports news article that explicitly covered the uprising titled "Commission of Inquiry Decides to Suspend 150 Athletes Who Participated in the Abusive Acts to the nation". The news article announced the suspension of 150 athletes and sports figures by the commission of inquiry for participating in "مسيرة الرياضيين غير المرخصة و المسيرات غير المرخصة" that can be translated as "The unlicensed marches and the unlicensed Athletes' March". These protests, according to the news article, offended "The wise leadership and the nation". The news article also announced that there would be more athletes to be suspended in the following days.

## لجنة التحقيق تقرر إيقاف ١٥٠ رياضيا شاركوا في الأعمال المسيئة للوطن

قطعت لجنة التحقيق الرسمية في تجاوزات الرياضيين المسيئة للوطن وقيادته الرشيدة شوطا كبيرا في حصر المخالفات التي ارتكبتها عدد من منتسبي الحركة الرياضية في الفترة الماضية تمهيدا لاتخاذ العقوبات بحق كل من يثبت قيامه بأفعال مسيئة أثناء الأزمة الأخيرة. وقد عقدت لجنة التحقيق سلسلة اجتماعات على امتداد الأيام الماضية تم خلالها رصد العديد من المخالفات التي قام بها عدد من منتسبي الحركة الرياضية من خلال المشاركة في مسيرة الرياضيين غير المرخصة بالإضافة إلى بعض الأعمال المخلة بالنظام العام في الفترة الماضية.

وعكفت لجنة التحقيق على إجراء التنسيق اللازم مع الجهات الرسمية ذات العلاقة بالإضافة إلى معاقبة العديد من الدلائل والبراهين التي أثبتت بصورة واضحة مشاركة العديد من الرياضيين في مسيرة غير المرخصة إبان الأزمة الأخيرة، وبناء على تلك المخالفات فقد اتخذت اللجنة قرارا بإيقاف عدد (١٥٠) من اللاعبين والإداريين والمديرين بصفة

فورية وقد تم إبلاغ بعض الاتحادات الرياضية والأندية الوطنية بخصوص هذا القرار على أن يتم إبلاغ كافة الاتحادات والأندية المعنية مطلع الأسبوع المقبل.

وأكدت لجنة التحقيق على أن هذه القائمة من الرياضيين المؤهلين تعتبر قائمة أولية إلى حين الانتهاء من إجراءات التحقيق، كما أن إيقاف هؤلاء الرياضيين يعد إجراء مبدئيا إلى حين اتخاذ العقوبات الرادعة التي تتناسب مع مستوى التجاوزات والأعمال المسيئة للوطن والقيادة. وفي الوقت الذي أكدت فيه لجنة التحقيق على نهجها الثابت بإتباع أسس العدالة والمهنية والوضوح والعدل عن تصفية الحسابات في عملها فإنها وجهت الشكر الجزيل لكافة الجهات الرسمية والرياضية وعموم فئات المجتمع البحريني الأصيل على تعاونهم المستمر مع اللجنة في سبيل إنجاز المهام الموكلة لها بمحاسبة كل من ثبت إسهامه لهذا الوطن الغالي وقيادته الرشيدة.

Figure 14: Sample of a sports news article that explicitly covers the uprising (*Al-Bilad*, April 5, 2011)

### 4.3.2 Implicit coverage of the uprising

This category included sports news articles that implicitly covered the uprising and its consequences on the local sports activities without using explicit or direct political terms such as "demonstrations", "uprising", "protests", "protesting", or "The Athletes' March". It included sports news articles that used indirect terms such as "the events" to describe the uprising without indicating to the nature of these events. For instance, a news article published in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* on March 6, 2011, covered the impact of the suspension of the local football league on the athletes' fitness and used the term "emergency circumstances" to describe the protests. The nature of these circumstances was not clarified. Most of these articles were published before the broadcast of the television sports programme *With the Event* on April 4, 2011.

The news article titled "صعوبة إيجاد حلول ناجعة: الإسكافي تعليق المسابقات يفرض نفسه" "على اتحاد اليد" which can be translated as "The Handball Federation Has no Choice than Suspending the Competitions" (see Figure 15) is an example of an article that implicitly covered the uprising. It discussed the possible return of the handball competitions after "الوقفة الاضطرارية" which can be translated as the "compulsory suspension". The article does not explain why the handball competitions were suspended in the first place. Reading this article as a discrete stand-alone piece does not explain the political conditions of Bahrain at the time.

## صعوبة إيجاد حلول ناجحة

### الإسكافي: تعليق المسابقات يفرض نفسه على اتحاد اليد

أحمد عان:  
جند رئيس لجنة المسابقات بالاتحاد البحريني لكرة اليد عبد الواحد الإسكافي تأكيده على صعوبة تسيير مسابقات الموسم الحالي لجميع الفئات بعد الوقفة الاضطرارية للنشاط الرياضي في البلاد، وما أعقبه من تداعيات على الاتحادات والأندية.

وقال الإسكافي إن الأمر معلق عند المربع الأول وهو انعقاد اجتماع مجلس إدارة في الشأن، غير أن ذلك لا ينفي صعوبة إيجاد حلول ناجحة لتخطي هذا المأزق بعد أن خرجت الأمور عن إرادة الاتحاد ولجنة المسابقات وذهبت جميع المؤشرات نحو تعليق المسابقات للموسم الحالي ولجميع الفئات، بما فيها مسابقات الدوري والكأس للدرجة الأولى والثانية لم تنطلقاً أساساً.

وأضاف الإسكافي أن المشكلة لا تقتصر على جهة معينة دون الأخرى فالأمر مربوط ومتشعب بين اللاعبين والأندية والاتحاد، وربما أكثر من ذلك، خصوصاً وأن 7 أندية من أصل 12 منضوية تحت مظلة الاتحاد قد علقت نشاطاتها، فيما لا يعرف وضع الأندية الخمسة البقية ومدى قدرتها على المشاركة في المسابقات.

واعتبر الإسكافي بعدم وجود أي حل أو مقترحات في الوقت الحالي، وذلك لخصوصية الظروف التي مرت بها اللعبة خلال لعبة الألعاب الجماعية التي أعلنت عن مواعيد لاستئناف مسابقاتها.

ولم يبد رئيس لجنة المسابقات باتحاد اليد أي تفاؤل حول إمكانية تسيير الموسم المحلي لهذا العام، وقال: "الواقع يفرض نفسه علينا ولا يوجد لدينا أي خيار فالمشكلة أكبر مما قد يتصوره البعض، نحن في مأزق خطير والباب الوحيد

المفتوح أمامنا للخروج منه هو تعليق المسابقات والنظر قدماً للموسم المقبل".

وسبق للاتحاد البحريني لكرة اليد أن عجز عن اتخاذ قرار رسمي في الشأن بسبب تأجيل اجتماع مجلس الإدارة نتيجة عدم اكتمال النصاب.

وبالنسبة للاتحاد يعاني من عدم قدرة عدد اجتماع لمناقشة الأمر بعد التأجيل للمرة الثانية على التوالي، سيكون من الصعب عليه جداً أن يسيّر مسابقاته في ظل الفراغ الرياضي للعبة وإيجاد الخيارات الممكنة لواجهة من أكثر المواسم تعقيداً بعد تأجيل الدوري الذي كان من المفترض انطلاقه في فبراير الماضي، المرحّل أصلاً لهذا الوقت المتأخر من العام بسبب مشاركة منتخبنا الوطني بطولة نهائيات كأس العالم ومن قبلها دورة الألعاب الآسيوية.

وعلى الأندية المحلية من صعوبة الإعداد للموسم الجديد واستئناف تدريباتها، الأمر الذي يدفع نحو تعليق مسابقات الدرجة الأولى والفئات للموسم الحالي، هذا إلى جانب معاناة الأندية من مشاكل عدة بسبب معاناة لاعبي المنتخب من الإزهاق لعدة مشاركاتهم هذا العام وابتعاد عدد كبير من اللاعبين الآخرين عن التدريبات منذ أشهر طويلة.

وكان الاتحاد البحريني لكرة اليد قد اعتمد موسماً استثنائياً لمسابقات الدرجة الأولى، كان مقرراً له أن ينطلق الشهر الماضي بسبب مشاركة المنتخب الوطني الأول في بطولات كأس آسيا المؤجلة لكأس العالم ودورة الألعاب الآسيوية في دoha وبنمايكات كأس العالم المتعززة في السويد ومشاركة نادي الأهلي والشباب في بطولة مجلس التعاون لكرة اليد للدرجة الأولى، غير أنه عاد ليقرر تأجيل نشاطاته لأجل غير مسمى بسبب الأوضاع التي تمر بها البلاد.

Figure 15: Sample of a sports news article that implicitly the uprising (Al-Bilad 5, April 2011)

#### 4.3.3 Explicit coverage of the regime

This category included sports news articles that explicitly covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports events. It covered sports news articles that were accompanied by Al-Khalifa family members' photos or photos with Al-Khalifa family members' in the background, or with their names in the headline or the text. It should be noted that the news articles that covered the uprising explicitly were categorized into "explicitly about the uprising" not "explicitly about the regime" even when they were accompanied with an Al-Khalifa family member's name or photo. The majority of this category included official news articles that were usually unedited news sent by official offices, ministries, or clubs via email or fax to the newspapers accompanied by particular photos and their captions. Official sports news articles are not limited to an unedited story as they are occasionally written or edited by journalists who follow the official line including addressing the Al-Khalifa family member "His Highness", presenting Al-Khalifa members' names as they are presented in official news and accompanying the news article with official photos which are usually sourced from the Bahrain New Agency website or drawn from the newspaper archive.

Figure 16 shows an example of a news article that covered the king's sons Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and Khalid bin Hamad Al-Khalifa's event in an Endurance Riding competition. The news article was accompanied by three photos and occupied three-quarters of the page. The headline and the two sub-headlines contained 31 words in total "ناصر بن حمد يشيد بجهود رئيس الاتحاد الملكي للفروسية والاستعداد " للسباق السبت" that can be translated as "Nasser bin Hamad Commends the President of the Royal Equestrian Federation Efforts in Preparing for the Saturday Race". The by-

line was "covered by media office of Sheik Nasser bin Hamad" which meant that this article was written and sent by Sheikh Nasser's office to be published in the newspapers and it usually has priority over other local sports news. This category does not refer to the uprising or the political events at the time. This type of article is published in the local newspapers on a daily basis and is exploited in favour of the regime. However, these articles were not be analysed because they are published in the local newspapers on a daily basis and because they avoided covering the uprising and the related events, this thesis only examined the regime's propaganda that is linked to the 2011 uprising. In addition, while the number of the articles that explicitly covered the uprising rose, the number of articles that covered the sports activities of the Al-Khalifa family fell during the suspension of the sports activities which shows that they were not used to vilify the demonstrations or the protesters.



Figure 16: A sample of an official sports news article (Akhbar Al-Khaleej March 1, 2011)

#### 4.3.4 Unrelated news articles

This category included news articles of local sports events unrelated to the uprising or that do not belong to the other three categories (such as articles that covered local football or volleyball news and were not accompanied by any of the Al-Khalifa family members' photos or names). This category was excluded from the analysis as it is not related to the study. Figure 17 is an example of a news article that

covered the 2012 Youth Asian Nations Cup football qualifiers titled "الأحمر الشاب في" which can be translated as "The Young Red in Group Two of the Asian Cup Qualifiers". The headline consisted of eight words only and the news article was written by an *Al-Bilad* journalist, Ahmad Jaffar.



Figure 17: Sample of a sports news article that covers a local sports event (*Al-Bilad* March 31, 2011)

#### 4.4 Method of analysing newspaper data

The sports pages of the sports sections of the two newspapers were categorized as either local sports pages or international sports pages. The news read the news articles were then read and classified into the four categories: explicitly about the uprising, implicitly about the uprising, explicitly about the regime, and unrelated sports news articles. Subsequently, one sports article from every newspaper in each day of the period of the study was selected from the category "explicitly about the uprising" to answer the research questions:

RQ1: How did sports media frame the 2011 uprising?

RQ2: What strategies were used to politicize pro-regime sports media during the uprising?

In total, 46 sports news articles (19 from *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and 27 from *Al-Bilad*) were selected. An article from each day of the period of the study and from each newspaper was selected. When there was no article that explicitly covered the uprising in an issue, an article was selected from the next day's issue. The articles that covered the period from March 1 to May 31, 2011 were selected from the upper right side of the first sports page as Arabic is written and read from right to left. When there was no article in the upper right side of the page, the priority was to the article that occupied more space in the first page. When there was no explicit article

about the uprising on the first page, this method of selection was applied to the second page and so on. The 46 selected articles accounted for 58.9% of the total published articles that explicitly covered the uprising.

A quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data (Macnamara 2005; Bhattacharjee 2012). The analysis identified the use of the three frames: the first was the characterization frame (Lakoff 2011; Kaufman et al. 2013) that examined how the uprising and the Al-Khalifa family were framed by the sports coverage. The second frame was the consequences frame (Valkenburg et al. 1999) that identified how the consequences of the uprising were framed. The third frame was the unpatriotic frame (Di Ciccio 2010) that identified how the protesters and the pro-regime supporters were framed. Analysis of these three frames helps in an understanding of the propaganda of the Bahraini regime. The analysis also investigated the use of official, pro-regime, and pro-protesters sources to cover the uprising and the use of the protesters' photographs.

The reliability of coding was tested with the Ole Holsti (1969) intracoder reliability formula. To ensure that the process was not subject to bias and to ensure objectivity of the results, all of the total of 46 articles (100% of the selected newspaper data) were coded and analysed twice on separate occasions. The intracoder reliability agreement was 0.93 (where 1.0 shows a total agreement in the coding on different occasions).

#### **4.4.1 Newspaper coverage: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad***

Each page of each sports section was counted and categorized and then each article of the local news pages was counted and categorized. The next section shows the number and the type of the two newspapers pages and articles published in March, April, and May 2011.

#### **4.4.2 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* sports section: March 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 18 show the number and the types of the *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* pages in March 2011. In March, *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* published 936 pages of which 199 (21.2%) were sports pages. The pages split into 108 local sports pages (11.5%) and 91 international sports pages (9.7%). While the beginning of March witnessed publication of an average of 40 pages per newspaper issue, the average

dropped in the second half of March to 24 pages per issue after the suspension of the local sports events which had an impact on the sports section of the newspaper that decreased from 12 pages to 3 pages.

<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (March 2011)			
<b>Number of pages including sports pages</b>	<b>Sports section pages</b>	<b>Local sports pages</b>	<b>International sports pages</b>
936	199 (21.2%)	108 (11.5%)	91 (9.7%)

Figure 18: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: March 2011: Number of pages and types of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.3 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* sports section: April 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 19 show the number and the types of the *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* pages in April 2011. During this month, *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* published 812 pages which included 116 (14.2%). The sports section split into 60 local sports pages (7.3%) and 56 international sports pages (6.8%). The total number of pages of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* published dropped from 936 pages in March to 812 pages in April.

<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (April 2011)			
<b>Number of pages including sports pages</b>	<b>Sports section pages</b>	<b>Local sports pages</b>	<b>International sports pages</b>
812	116 (14.2%)	60 (7.3%)	56 (6.8%)

Figure 19: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: April 2011: Number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.4 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* sports section: May 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 20 show the number and the types of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* pages published in May 2011. In May, the newspaper published 972 pages of which 124 pages (12.7%) were for the sports section. The content of the sports pages split into 91 (9.3%) local sports pages and 33 (3.3%) international sports pages. The number of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* pages increased by 160 pages in May. In addition, there was an increase in the number of the sports section pages from 116 pages in April to 124 pages in May. While international sports decreased from 56 pages in April to 33 pages in May, local sports increased from 60 pages to 90 pages after the resumption of the local sports activities.

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (May 2011)</b>			
<b>Number of pages including sports pages</b>	<b>Sports section pages</b>	<b>Local sports pages</b>	<b>International sports pages</b>
972	124 (12.7%)	91 (9.3%)	33 (3.3%)

Figure 20: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: May 2011: Number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### **4.4.5 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* sports section: March to May 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 21 show the total amount and the type of sports coverage of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* during March, April and May 2011. Considering the suspension of the local sports events for several weeks, *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* published 439 sports pages (16.1%) with 259 pages (9.5%) for local sports activities and 180 pages (6.6%) of international sports activities. The remaining percentage of the newspaper content (83.9%) was shared by daily pages and sections including the first and the last pages, the local news section, the investigation section, the financial section, the opinions section, the international politics news section, the drama section and the readers' page.

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (March to May 2011)</b>			
<b>Number of pages including sports section</b>	<b>Sports section pages</b>	<b>Local sports pages</b>	<b>International sports pages</b>
2720	439 (16.1%)	259 (9.5%)	180 (6.6%)

Figure 21: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: March to May 2011: Total number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### **4.4.6 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: Types of sports news articles: March 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 22 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* in March 2011. The newspaper published 397 sports news articles including 46 (11.5%) news articles that implicitly covered the uprising, 105 (26.4%) news articles that covered the sports activities of the Al-Khalifa family members and 246 (61.9%) news articles that were not related to any of the other three categories. There were no articles that covered the uprising explicitly published during this month.

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (March 2011)</b>			
<b>Explicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Implicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Explicitly about the regime</b>	<b>Unrelated</b>
0 articles (0%)	46 articles (11.5%)	105 articles (26.4%)	246 articles (61.9%)
Total: 397 sports news articles in March 2011			

Figure 22: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: March 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### **4.4.7 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: Types of sports news articles: April 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 23 show the types and the total number of the published sports news articles in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* in April 2011. The newspaper published 392 sports news articles. The explicit coverage of the uprising began on April 6, 2011. *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* published 43 (10.9%) that explicitly covered the uprising, 46 articles (11.7%) that implicitly covered the uprising. This month witnessed a slight decrease in the articles that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities with 95 articles (24.2%) compared with 105 articles (26.4%) in March. Additionally, there was a slight drop in the unrelated sports news articles from 246 articles (61.9%) to 208 articles (53%) following the drop in the total number of published pages.

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (April 2011)</b>			
<b>Explicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Implicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Explicitly about the regime</b>	<b>Unrelated</b>
43 articles (10.9%)	46 articles (11.7%)	95 articles (24.2%)	208 articles (53%)
Total: 392 sports news articles in April 2011			

Figure 23: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: April 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### **4.4.8 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: Types of sports news articles: May 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 24 show the types and the total number of the published sports news articles in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* in May 2011. The newspaper published 477 sports news articles during this month with no articles (0%) that covered the uprising explicitly (compared with 43 articles (10.9%) that covered the uprising explicitly in April). Also, the sports news articles that implicitly covered the uprising dropped from 46 articles to 4 articles (0.8%) in this month. The number of articles that covered the Al-Khalifa's sports activities fell from 95 in April to 85

sports articles (17.8%) in May. In contrast, the unrelated news articles increased from 208 articles (53%) in March to 388 articles (81.3%) in April.

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (May 2011)</b>			
<b>Explicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Implicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Explicitly about the regime</b>	<b>Unrelated</b>
0 articles (0%)	4 articles (0.8%)	85 articles (17.8%)	388 articles (81.3%)
Total: 477 sports news articles in May 2011			

Figure 24: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: May 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### **4.4.9 *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: Types of sports news articles: March to May 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 25 show the types and the number of the published sports news articles published in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* from March to May 2011. The newspaper published 1262 news articles including 43 sports news articles (3.3%) that explicitly covered the uprising, 94 news articles (8.3%) that implicitly covered the uprising, 285 sports news articles (21.3%) that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports events, and 842 unrelated sports news articles (65.9%).

<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> (March to May 2011)</b>			
<b>Explicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Implicitly about the uprising</b>	<b>Explicitly about the regime</b>	<b>Unrelated</b>
43 articles (3.3%)	106 articles (8.3%)	285 articles (22.3%)	842 (65.9%)
Total: 1276 sports news articles in May 2011			

Figure 25: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: March to May 2011: Total types of sports news articles

#### **4.4.10 *Al-Bilad* sports section: March 2011**

Statistics presented in Figure 26 show number and the types of *Al-Bilad* pages in March 2011. *Al-Bilad* published 712 pages including 148 pages (20.7%) for the sports section split into 70 local sports pages (9.8%) and 78 international sports pages (10.9%). The newspaper pages of *Al-Bilad* dropped from 32 pages for an issue in the beginning of March to 24 pages for an issue by the end of the month. As a result, the sports section decreased from 8 pages to 4 pages and then to as little as two pages for several days. It should be noticed that there were seven issues (11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24 and 26) missing from this month that were not included in the statistics.

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (March 2011)			
Number of pages including sports section	Sports section pages	Local sports pages	International sports pages
712	148 (20.7%)	70 (9.8%)	78 (10.9%)

Figure 26: *Al-Bilad*: March 2011: Number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.11 *Al-Bilad* sports section: April 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 27 show the number and the types of *Al-Bilad* pages in April 2011. *Al-Bilad* published 796 pages including 120 pages (15%) for the sports section which was split equally into 60 local sports pages (7.5%) and 60 international sports pages (7.5%). Number of pages published increased from 712 pages in March to 796 pages in April. This was due to the seven missing issues in the previous. On the other hand, the sports section decreased from 148 pages in March to 120 pages in April due to the suspension of the local sports activities.

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (April 2011)			
Number of pages including sports section	Sports section pages	Local sports pages	International sports pages
796	120 (15%)	60 (7.5%)	60 (7.5%)

Figure 27: *Al-Bilad*: April 2011: Number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.12 *Al-Bilad* sports section: May 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 28 show the number and the types of the *Al-Bilad* pages in May 2011. The newspaper published 960 pages including 172 sports pages (17.9%) split into 89 local sports pages (9.2%) and 83 international sports pages (8.6%). The sports section of *Al-Bilad* increased from 120 pages in April to 172 pages in May after resumption of the local sports activities. The issue of May 3, 2011 was missing and it was not included in the statistics.

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (May 2011)			
Number of pages including sports section	Sports section pages	Local sports pages	International sports pages
960	172 (17.9%)	89 (9.2%)	83 (8.6%)

Figure 28: *Al-Bilad*: May 2011: Number of pages and type of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.13 *Al-Bilad* sports section: March to May 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 29 show the amount and the types of sports coverage of *Al-Bilad* during March, April and May 2011. In this period, *Al-Bilad* published 2468 pages excluding the missing issues. The sports coverage of *Al-Bilad* included 440 pages (17.8%) spilt into 220 local sports pages (8.9%) and 220 international sports pages or (8.9%) of the newspaper content.

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (March to May 2011)			
Number of pages including sports section	Sports section pages	Local sports pages	International sports pages
2468	440 (17.8%)	220 (8.9%)	220 (8.9%)

Figure 29: *Al-Bilad*: March to May 2011: Total number of pages and types of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.14 *Al-Bilad*: Types of sports news articles: March 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 30 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Al-Bilad* in March 2011. *Al-Bilad* published 237 sports news articles during March including 10 sports news articles (4.2%) that explicitly covered the uprising, 25 sports news articles (10.5%) that implicitly covered the uprising, 77 sports news articles (32.4%) that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities and 125 unrelated sports articles (52.7%).

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (March 2011)			
Explicitly about the uprising	Implicitly about the uprising	Explicitly about the regime	Unrelated
10 articles (4.2%)	25 articles (10.5%)	77 articles (32.4%)	125 articles (52.7%)
Total: 237 sports news articles in March 2011			

Figure 30: *Al-Bilad*: March 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### 4.4.15 *Al-Bilad*: Types of sports news articles: April 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 31 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Al-Bilad* in April 2011. The newspaper published 259 sports news articles including 24 articles (9.2%) that explicitly covered the uprising, 30 articles (11.5%) that implicitly covered the uprising, 68 articles (26.2%) that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities, and 137 unrelated articles (52.8%).

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (April 2011)			
Explicitly about the uprising	Implicitly about the uprising	Explicitly about the regime	Unrelated
24 articles (9.2%)	30 articles (11.5%)	68 articles (26.2%)	137 articles (52.8%)
Total: 259 sports news articles in April 2011			

Figure 31: *Al-Bilad*: April 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### 4.4.16 *Al-Bilad*: Types of sports news articles: May 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 32 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Al-Bilad* in May 2011. The newspaper published 343 articles during this month including one article (0.2%) that explicitly covered the uprising, five articles (1.4%) that implicitly covered the uprising, 96 articles (27.9%) that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities, and 241 unrelated articles (70.2%). The articles that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities increased from 68 news articles (26.2%) in April to 96 news articles (27.9%) in May. The unrelated news articles jumped from 137 articles (52.8%) in April to 241 articles (70.2%) in May after the resumption of the local sports activities.

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (May 2011)			
Explicitly about the uprising	Implicitly about the uprising	Explicitly about the regime	Unrelated
1 article (0.2%)	5 articles (1.4%)	96 articles (27.9%)	241 articles (70.2%)
Total: 343 sports news articles in May 2011			

Figure 32: *Al-Bilad*: May 2011: Types of sports news articles

#### 4.4.17 *Al-Bilad*: Types of sports news articles: March to May 2011

Statistics presented in Figure 33 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Al-Bilad* in March, April and May 2011. The newspaper published 878 articles including 35 articles (3.9%) that covered the uprising explicitly, 56 articles (6.8%) that covered the uprising implicitly, 241 articles (27.4%) that covered the Al-Khalifa family members' sports activities and 542 unrelated news articles (61.7%).

<i>Al-Bilad</i> (March to May 2011)			
Explicitly about the uprising	Implicitly about the uprising	Explicitly about the regime	Unrelated
35 article (3.9%)	60 articles (6.8%)	241 articles (27.4%)	542 articles (61.7%)
Total: 878 sports news articles in May 2011			

Figure 33: *Al-Bilad*: March to May 2011: Total types of sports news articles

#### 4.4.18 Total sports coverage of the two selected newspapers

Statistics presented in Figure 34 show the number and type of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* pages in March, April and May 2011. Together, the two newspapers published 5188 pages including 879 sports pages (16.9%) split into 479 local sports pages (9.2%) and 400 international sports pages or (7.7%) of newspaper content.

<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> and <i>Al-Bilad</i> (March to May 2011)			
Number of pages including sports pages	Sports section pages	Local sports pages	Unrelated
5188	879 (16.9%)	479 (9.2%)	400 (7.7%)

Figure 34: Newspaper coverage: March to May 2011: Total number of pages and types of sports news coverage

#### 4.4.19 Total types of sports news articles in the two selected newspapers

Statistics presented in Figure 35 show the types and the total number of published sports news articles in *Akbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* in March, April and May 2011. The two newspapers published 2155 local sports news articles including 79 articles (3.6%) that explicitly covered the uprising, 166 articles (7.7%) that implicitly covered the uprising, 526 articles (24.4%) that covered the Al-Khalifa members' sports activities and 1384 unrelated articles (64.2%).

<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i> and <i>Al-Bilad</i> (March to May 2011)			
Explicitly about the uprising	Implicitly about the uprising	Explicitly about the regime	Unrelated
78 articles (3.6%)	166 articles (7.7%)	526 articles (24.4%)	1384 articles (64.2%)
Total: 2155 sports news articles in May 2011			

Figure 35: Newspaper coverage: March to May 2011: Total number and of sports news articles

#### 4.5 Data analysis and findings

After classifying the newspaper data, 19 articles of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and 27 articles from *Al-Bilad* were selected from the category "explicitly about the uprising". In the selected 19 articles of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, each frame was used at least eight times (Figure 36). The characterization frame was used 19 times (100%) in the 19 articles of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*. The second most used frame was the unpatriotic frame that was used in 13 articles (68.4%) and the consequences frame was used in eight articles (42.1%).

Frame	Articles	Percentage of total articles
Characterization frame	19	100%
Consequences frame	8	42.1%
Unpatriotic frame	13	68.4%

Figure 36: *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*: Number and percentage of the use of the three frames

In the selected 27 articles of *Al-Bilad*, each individual frame was used at least in 10 articles (Figure 37). The characterization frame appeared in 26 articles (96.2%). The consequences frame was the second most used frame in the coverage as it appeared in 11 articles (40.7%), and then the unpatriotic frame that was used in 10 articles or (37%). Unlike *Akhbar Al-Khaleej*, the coverage of *Al-Bilad* began on March 4, 2011 as several articles referred to "political events", "political circumstances", "political activities" and occasionally "political crisis" in the sports news coverage that discussed the suspension of the local sports activities. It is noted that key phrases such as "protests", "marches", "demonstrations", and "The Athletes' March" were not used by *Al-Bilad* until the broadcast of the *With the Event* television programme on April 4, 2011 when explicit key phrases that referred to the uprising were used by the newspapers.

Frame	Article	Percentage to total articles
Characterization frame	26	96.2%
Consequences frame	11	40.7%
Unpatriotic frame	10	37%

Figure 37: *Al-Bilad*: Number and percentage of the use of the three frames

In the total of 46 articles (19 articles for *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and 27 articles for *Al-Bilad*), the characterization frame was used in 45 articles that made up 97.8% of the total, the unpatriotic frame was used in 23 articles (50%), and the consequences frame was used in 19 articles (41.0%) (Figure 38). The coverage delegitimized the uprising by framing it as "illegal marches", "unlicensed gatherings", or "the unlicensed Athletes' March". Articles that used neutral key phrases to portray the protests were mostly published by *Al-Bilad* in March 2011 when the protests were portrayed as "political events" or "political circumstances". The consequences frame was used in eight articles (42%) of the *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* coverage and 11 articles (40.7%) of the *Al-Bilad* coverage (a total of 19 times (41.3%) of the coverage of the two newspapers). In addition, the unpatriotic frame frequented 13 articles (68.4%) of the *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* coverage compared to 10 articles that made up (37%) of the *Al-Bilad* coverage. A total of 23 articles (50%) in the two newspapers used the unpatriotic frame. The protesters were framed as unpatriotic citizens who offended the nation and the wise leadership as the political movement aimed to harm the country and divide the society.

	<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>		<i>Al-Bilad</i>		<b>Total</b>	
Frame	Articles	%	Articles	%	Articles	%
Characterization	19	100%	26	96.2%	45	97%
Consequences	8	42.1%	11	40.7%	19	41.3%
Unpatriotic	13	68.4%	10	37%	23	50%

Figure 38: Newspaper coverage: Frequency of the three frames by number and percentage

#### 4.5.1 Use of the characterization frame for the protests

The coverage of the uprising by *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad* portrayed the protests negatively by focusing on the legal framework of the movement (Figure 39). The three key phrases of the characterization frame of the uprising "unlicensed gatherings" or "illegal gatherings" or "illegal marches" were used 25 times (33.3%) while the phrases "unfortunate events" or "security events" were used 11 times (14.6%). Additionally, the phrase "crisis" was used 9 times (12%) and "disturbances" was used 8 times (10.6%). The coverage targeted The Athletes' March by using key phrases such as "the wretched Athletes' March" or "what is called The

Athletes' March" 5 times (6.6%). In contrast, neutral key phrases such as "political event", "political activities", "political circumstances", and "political march" were used 11 times (14.6%). However, these neutral key phrases were often preceded or followed by a negative term each time. For example, while "the recent events" is considered a neutral key phrase, it was preceded once by "the abuses" to become "the abuses in the recent events" which showed that the recent events were harmful to the people and the country. Overall, the demonstrations were framed as "distressful acts" that breached the security of the country.

Key phrase of framing the uprising	<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>	<i>Al-Bilad</i>	Coverage	%
<b>The unlicensed marches</b>	14	11	25	33.3%
"The unlicensed Athletes' March"				
"The unlicensed protests"				
"Illegal marches"				
"Illegal gatherings"				
<b>The unfortunate events</b>	4	7	11	14.6%
"The recent security events"				
<b>The political events</b>	4	7	11	14.6%
"The recent events"				
"The political activities"				
"The political circumstances"				
"The political march"				
<b>The sit-in</b>	3	5	8	10.6%
"Disgraceful acts"				
"Security disturbances"				
"Marches that breached security"				
"Marches demand regime overthrow"				
<b>The political crisis</b>	3	6	9	12%
"The political unrest"				
"The crisis"				
"The security crisis"				
"The recent crisis"				
<b>The Athletes' March</b>	3	4	7	9.3%
"The wretched Athlete's March"				
"What is called The Athletes' March"				
<b>Irregularities and abuses</b>	3	1	4	5.3%
"The sports abuses"				
"Sports irregularities"				
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>99.7%</b>

Figure 39: Newspaper coverage: Key phrases and frequency of the characterization frame of the uprising

#### 4.5.2 Use of the characterization frame for the Al-Khalifa family

Key phrases to frame Al-Khalifa as a family or individuals were used 82 times (pointing to the Al-Khalifa family members within the selected articles with their real names or positions such as: the King, Prime Minister, or Crown Prince excluded from the analysis). There was a concentration on the sagacity and the nobility of the Al-Khalifa family (Figure 40). The key phrases of this frame included "the wise leadership", "the wise government", "the noble leadership", and "the noble Al-Khalifa" which were used 43 times (53%). The phrase "the leadership" was used 16 times (19.7%), "the regime" was used 12 times (14.8%) and "the nation's figureheads", and "the national figureheads" were used 10 times (14.8%). The newspaper coverage endeavoured to present the Al-Khalifa family as the sacred figureheads and the legitimate authorities that should not be challenged; targeting the family is targeting the legitimacy and civil peace. The frame, overall, was employed to protect the royal family and its members. It is noticed that the frame did not just focus on the strong figures of the royal family, but also the royal family as a whole. The protests criticized policies of the royal family, which justified the domination of the key phrase "the wise leadership or government".

<b>Kay Phrase of Framing Al-Khalifa</b>	<b><i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i></b>	<b><i>Al-Bilad</i></b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>%</b>
The wise leadership or government/ The noble Al-Khalifa or leadership	20	23	43	53%
The leadership	2	14	16	19.7%
The nation's figureheads / The national's figureheads	2	8	10	12.3%
The regime	4	8	12	14.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>99.8%</b>

Figure 40: Newspaper coverage: Kay phrases and frequency of the use of the characterization frame for the Al-Khalifa family

#### 4.5.3 Use of the consequences frame for the protests

The consequences of the uprising were labelled negatively 19 times (100%). The coverage ignored the protesters' demands and framed the consequences of the uprising as "sabotage" and "inciting sectarian strife" (Figure 41). The two key phrases "destabilization of the security and the stability" and "breaching the

national's unity" were used 13 times (68.4%). The uprising was accused of causing the suspension of sports activities three times (15.7%), influencing the local economy negatively two times (10.5%), and infringement the national's sovereignty once (5.2%). Overall, the uprising was framed as a movement that targeted civil peace. Overall, the frame aimed to stir people's fear of the immediate consequences of the uprising that "destabilized" the stability of the country and the society. This frame overlooked the consequences of actions taken by the regime to confront the protests. The message that purported to be sent was that the uprising targeted the social and economic interests of the people of Bahrain and that the uprising would negatively affect the daily life of Bahrainis.

<b>Key Phrase of the consequences frame</b>	<b><i>Akhbar Al-khaleej</i></b>	<b><i>Al-Bilad</i></b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Destabilize the security and stability</b>	6	7	13	68.4%
"Destabilizing the nation's unity"				
"Clashes between people"				
"Acts of sabotage"				
"Breach the nation's security"				
"Threat to the nation's security"				
"Targeting civil peace"				
"Inciting sectarian strife"				
<b>Economic losses</b>	0	2	2	10.5%
"Financial losses"				
"Wages of referees not being paid"				
<b>Suspension of the sports activities</b>	0	3	3	15.7%
"Players not attending trainings"				
<b>Infringement the national sovereignty</b>	0	1	1	5.2%
<b>Total frequency of the key phrases</b>	6	13	19	99.8%

Figure 41: Newspaper coverage: Key phrases and frequency of the use of the consequences frame

#### 4.5.4 Use of the unpatriotic frame for the protesters and the supporters

The protesters were framed as unpatriotic citizens who insulted the nation and the leadership. The unpatriotic frame was used in 23 articles (50%) of the newspaper coverage; 13 articles (56.5%) published in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and 10 articles

(43.4%) published in *Al-Bilad*. The demonstrations, including The Athletes' March, were framed as protests that offended the nation and the "wise leadership". "Al-Khalifa and the nation", "Al-Khalifa and Bahrain", "Al-Khalifa and the kingdom", or "Al-Khalifa and the dear land" were used in 43.4% of the newspaper coverage. Each time, the protesters were framed as unpatriotic citizens not only for "offending" the nation only, but also for "offending" the wise leadership or "the figureheads of the nation". It should be noted that while a key phrase such as "offending the figureheads of the nation" can be considered a consequence of the uprising, this key phrase, for example, was actually used in Arabic in what is considered as a noun to become "those who offended the nation" or "those who are disloyal to the nation and the leadership". On the other hand, the newspaper coverage did not focus on the supporters of the Al-Khalifa family or their roles during the uprising except for two articles where they were praised for attending training sessions during the general strike.

Key phrase of the unpatriotic frame	<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>	<i>Al-Bilad</i>	Coverage	%
Offending the figureheads of the nation	1	2	3	13%
Offending the nation/ the wise leadership	5	4	9	39.1%
Offending our figureheads/ the wise leadership	1	1	2	8.6%
Overthrowing the regime	1	0	1	4.3%
Offending the figureheads/ the political leadership	3	0	3	13%
Offending the wise leadership/ the dear nation	1	2	3	13%
Offending the regime	1	0	1	4.3%
Disloyal to the nation and its wise leadership	0	1	1	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>99.6%</b>

Figure 42: Newspaper coverage: Key phrases and frequency of the use of the unpatriotic frame

#### 4.5.5 Use of sources

The 46 sports news articles (100%) relied on official and pro-regime sources including Al-Khalifa family members, local clubs, sports federations, and commission of inquiry (Figure 43). Neither newspaper interviewed any of the protesters or the athletes involved in the demonstrations, even those who were accused of offending the nation and the leadership. The coverage of the protests

adopted the point of view of the regime. The findings show that only 4 articles (21%) from *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and 13 articles (50%) from *Al-Bilad* were accompanied by by-line. It should be noticed that 8 of 13 articles that were accompanied by by-line were published in *Al-Bilad* before April 6, 2011. After this date, *Al-Bilad* changed the tone of the coverage from using key phrase such as "political circumstances" or "emergency circumstance" to using key phrases such as "illegal gatherings/marches".

	Articles	Articles with by-line	%	Official and pro- regime sources	%
<i>Akhbar Al-Khaleej</i>	19	4	21%	19	100
<i>Al-Bilad</i>	27	13	48.1%	27	100
<b>Total</b>	46	17	36.9%	46	100

Figure 43: Newspaper coverage: The use of official and pro-regime sources

#### 4.5.6 Use of images of the protesters

The *Al-Bilad* newspaper coverage included five photos that accompanied several articles whereas *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* did not publish any of the protesters photos. One photo among the five was published three times. As shown in Figure 44, angry sports figures appeared holding a banner that states "مسيرة جميع الرياضيين تضامناً" "مع الشعب" which is translated as "All Athletes March In Solidarity with the People". The other small banner states "لن نرحل حتى تتحقق مطالبنا" which can be translated as "We Will not Leave Until our Demands Are Met". Another of the five published photos was not from anti-regime protests. The photo was taken before one of the local football league games and after the resumption of the local activities for players holding a banner. They vowed to be "loyal soldiers" to the leadership and to stick to them in thick and thin. The players framed themselves as "soldiers" who are "loyal" to the leadership and in response to the uprising that was framed as a movement that targeted the Al-Khalifa family.



Figure 44: One of The Athletes' March photos published in *Al-Bilad* on April 12, 2011

The findings presented in this chapter show that the characterization frame was used to undermine the protests by portraying the movement as "disgraceful acts", "security disturbances" and "unlicensed marches". Overall, more key phrases were used to portray the protests as having negative consequences. Furthermore, the characterization frame was used positively to frame the Al-Khalifa family as the representative of the legitimate authority and the figureheads for the nation so that the newspaper coverage associated the security and the stability of the country with the Al-Khalifa family. The unpatriotic frame was used to disparage the protesters who were framed as unpatriotic citizens. On the other hand, the Al-Khalifa family supporters were praised for their political stance and for standing against the protests. The newspaper coverage relied heavily on official and pro-regime sources and ignored the pro-opposition's view of the events. Given that the two newspapers are directed by the regime, it is not surprising then that the sports coverage of the uprising adopted the official line.

Overall, the newspaper coverage endeavoured to create a national identity that encouraged the people to stand up by the regime and to repudiate any attempt by the protesters to change status quo. The protesters were accused of harming Bahraini society, threatening national security and inciting sectarian strife. In directing the people toward its agenda, the Al-Khalifa regime offered the people two choices: stability or chaos. Supporting the royal family meant supporting a prosperous future where is no fear or suffering, while supporting the protesters meant slipping into national chaos.

## Chapter 5: Television data analysis: Methods and findings

This chapter explains how the television data was collected and the methods that were used to analyse this data in order to investigate how the sports media framed the 2011 uprising in Bahrain and to investigate the strategies used to politicize sports media. The chapter starts with a description of the television data and the rationale for the selection of the data of two sports programmes *With the Event* and *Special Event* that were broadcast on Bahrain Sports Channel on April 4 and April 11, 2011.

Careful attention was paid to select the right words and terms that is as close as possible to the English language. For example, a strong Bedouin expression was used during the two programmes by Al-Khalifa family supporters "ابشر بعزك يا بوسلمان" "حنا عيالك وعصاك اللي ما تعصاك" which are here translated as "At Your Own Sweet Will". This expression signifies that we are your men who strike your enemy and we will go with you to the end. More examples of television data translation from Arabic to English can be found in Appendix 3.

### 5.1 Description of television data

There is only one sports channel in Bahrain and it is controlled and directed by the regime. Bahrain Sports Channel, however, has an alternative channel that airs only when two events coincide. For example, when two important football matches are played at the same time, the main channel and the alternative channel air the two matches. The main focus of the channel is broadcasting sports events, mostly local matches, and covering pre and post-match, results and analyses. During the period of the study, Bahrain Sports Channel continued screening old archived programmes as the local sports activities were suspended due to the uprising. Besides the old programmes, two programmes that explicitly covered the uprising and mainly The Athletes' March were aired to discuss the involvement of athletes and sports figures in the demonstrations. The two programmes displayed images and personal information of individuals who participated in The Athletes' March with the panellists calling their clubs and the regime to take action against them.

*With the Event* programme was aired on April 4, 2011 about 21:00 and finished after 00:00 the next day. The length of the programme was two hours, 59

minutes and 30 seconds. The picture and the sound were clear except for a short cut in the picture for a few seconds in minute 1:45:10 and another a cut in the first few seconds of the show. In addition, there was a jam in the picture for 14 seconds in minute 02:53:30 before it resumed where it started. Additionally, the sound did not match the picture for the first six minutes (Figure 45). The programme was aired in Bahrain Sports Channel and Bahrain Channel (the main channel) at the same time except for the last 6 minutes when Bahrain Channel cut the transmission to broadcast the midnight news bulletin while Bahrain Sports channel continued airing the programme live. *With the Event* was aired about 45 days after The Athletes' March was organized on February 21, 2011.

The second programme *Special Event* was aired on April 11, 2011. It commenced about 22:00 and finished about 01:00 the next day. The length of the programme was two hours, 55 minutes and 27 seconds. The picture was clear, however, there was a cut for about 3 seconds at the beginning of the programme. As well, the sound does not match the picture until minute 00:06:25 of the programme as the sound was late for a few seconds.

Bahrain Sports Channel: Television data		
Data and source	The programme	Notes
Aired on April 4, 2011 and uploaded to YouTube in April 4, 2011	<i>With the Event</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duration: 2:59:30</li> <li>- Picture and sound: clear</li> <li>- A short cut in the first few seconds</li> <li>- A short cut in 01:45:10 for 3 seconds</li> <li>- A short cut in 02:53:30 for 14 seconds</li> <li>- The sound does not match the picture from minute 00:00:00 to minute 00:06:20</li> </ul>
Aired in April 11, 2011 and uploaded to YouTube in April 14, 2011	<i>Special Event</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duration: 02:55:26</li> <li>- Picture and sound: clear</li> <li>- A short for 3 seconds during the first minute of the programme</li> <li>- The sound does not match the picture from minute 00:01:00 to minute 00:06:25</li> </ul>

Figure 45: Television material: Data collection summary

Both programmes were aired live on Bahrain Sports Channel. The two programmes started with a wide-shot of the studio. The host was facing the guests who were seated in armchairs and separated by a small brown coffee table. Pro-regime sports figures guests were in the studio while others were interviewed on the phone. Three guests were in the studio of *With the Event* and four guests were in the

studio of *Special Event*; two in the first part and two in the second part of the programme. Between the programme breaks *Special Event* displayed a black background with yellow rings and Arabic writing carrying the programme title. The two programmes displayed "news ticker" and "crawler" bars on the screen. The news ticker announced news tips while the crawler showed messages sent by pro-regime supporters. While the panelists were addressing the audience, both bars were sending different types of messages dispraising the uprising and anti-regime protesters. The panelists and the two bars were meant to encourage the pro-regime audience to adopt the messages sent by the two programmes.

## 5.2 Collecting television data

Bahrain Sports Channel has an archive of television programs but as a research student in exile, I have no access to *With the Event* and *Special Event*. Thus, the two programmes were downloaded from a YouTube user called "B4HRAIN". The user joined YouTube on October 27, 2008 and their last video was uploaded on April 10, 2012. B4HRAIN has 215 videos, 986 subscribers and their videos recorded 1,094, 422 views. B4HRAIN has picked a profile picture of the King and the Crown Prince praying. It is notable that the user's videos included: speeches and interviews of the regime's figures including the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, military orders of the Bahraini Defence Force during the period of martial law, "patriotic songs" about Bahrain and the Al-Khalifa family, and news bulletins from Bahrain Channel and other pro-regime channels. *With the Event* was uploaded on April 4, 2011 and titled on YouTube "BTV Show on Sports Violations برنامج مع الحدث تجاوزات الرياضيين". The Arabic text is translated as "*With the Event* Show: Athletes Violation" and the programme can be found on: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXd6UQ5MAds>. *Special Event* was uploaded on April 14, 2011 titled "برنامج حدث خاص عن تجاوزات الرياضيين" which is translated to "*Special Event* programme about Athletes' Irregularities" and it can be found on: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-SH9oqgl84>. Both YouTube clips were last accessed online on November 15, 2015.

### **5.3 Rationale for selection of the two programmes**

The two programmes were significant as newspapers did not report on the uprising overtly until April 6, 2011 and after the King's son who was also the President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad was interviewed in *With the Event*. Nasser bin Hamad threatened those who were involved in the uprising would be punished. The establishment of commission of inquiry was announced during *With the Event* and those whose images appeared in the programme were suspended or arrested. In addition, several of sports news articles that covered the uprising pointed to the two programmes. For example, a news article published in *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* on April 7, 2011, stated that Al-Hala Sports Club Board of Directors had an immediate meeting to discuss what was displayed in *With the Event* including photos of the participants of "The paltry Athletes' March".

### **5.4 *With the Event* television Sports programme**

The opening sequence of *With the Event* started with a report about the king who confronted the protesters and saved Bahrain. The audience saw at the first glance of the programme a wide-shot showing the panellists while pictures of the King (right) and the Prime Ministers (left) displayed on a digital screen at the back of the studio behind the seated panellists (referred to here as the background set for the studio) beside another picture that had an unclear meaning of a person who came out of the dark and went back again (Figure 46). The programme hosted three guests. From left to right were Faiz Al-Sada (the host) who usually hosts social and sports programmes, Majid Sultan (a sports journalist), Abdullah Bo Nofil (a sports journalist) and Faisal Al-Sheikh (a sports journalist). The three guests wore Thawb and only Faisal Al-Sheikh wore a business suit. The guests were familiar to the audience and appear in different sports programmes. Faisal Al-Sheikh writes political columns in local and regional newspapers and he also appeared in political programmes in Bahrain Channel during the uprising. The Thawb and business suit are formal dress that people in Bahrain wear at weddings, funerals, television programmes, or formal parties. Many Bahraini wear Thawb or business suit whenever it is more comfortable as it is a personal decision that does not signify the person's academic or social background. In this context, the Thawb and business suit

do not symbolize or indicate any point linked with the study. The blue bar in the bottom of the screen stated in Arabic " للمشاركة في برنامج حدث خاص أرسل رسالة نصية على "الأر" which can be translated as "To participate in the *With the Event* programme, send an SMS on the numbers". The news ticker in red stated " تم التمديد ليومين وذلك رغبة "من الرياضيين" which can be translated as "(out of frame) Has Been Extended at the Request of the Athletes". As for the two programmes, in the top right corner of the monitor the word "مباشر" or "Live" as the programme was broadcasted live and in the top left corner of the monitor appeared the channel logo. "Zain" that appeared in the bottom left corner is a telecommunication company that operates in Bahrain and "94194" was the number that the messages should be sent to by Zain users. There were two more numbers of "VIVA 88082" and "Batelco 92345", but they do not appear in Figure 46. "VIVA" and "Batelco" are other telecommunication companies that also operate in Bahrain. In minute 00:04:10 of *With the Event* a red bar was displayed showing a phone line number with the international code for Bahrain calling on the audience to participate in the programme ("To participate: 0097317681058"). However, the phone line was limited in *With the Event* to sports figures and Al-Khalifa family members.

The host of *With the Event* interviewed three sports figures who participated in the Athletes' March over the phone: the National Football Team player Mohamed Sayed Adnan, the National Football Team Player A'ala Hubail, and Al-Ahli Club Manager Faisal Alali. The host of the programme also interviewed pro-regime sports figures, including Secretary-General of the Football Federation of Bahrain Abdulrahman Sayar, the National Handball Team player Saeed Joher and the National Handball Player Ahmed Abdulnabi over the phone.



Figure 46: *With the Event*: Screenshot of the panel of the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

During *With the Event*, edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed. The faces of the participants were circled and their names and/or sport were identified. Figure 47 shows an edited digital image of The Athlete's March from minute 01:36:38 of *With the Event*. Four sports figures' faces were circled and identified as from left to right Mubark Al-Haiki (a volleyball player), Hussain Al-Haiki (a volleyball player), Nader Abduljalil (a Manger in Al-Ahli Club) and Mirza Abdullah (a volleyball player).



Figure 47: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 01:36:38 identifying sports figures in The Athletes' March (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

### 5.5 Special Event television sports programme

*Special Event* started with a report about the feedback following *With the Event* that was aired a week earlier. *Special Event* was divided into two parts. The first part was about the legal aspect of the participation of the sports figures in the uprising and the legitimacy of the sanctions that would be applied to them. This part involved the host Faiz Al-Sada and two guests in the studio (Sheikh Rashed bin Abdulrahman (the Vice President of Al-Muharraq Club) and Mohammed Al-Mogbil (a counsellor)). The second part of the programme that started from minute 00:52:53 discussed the role of sport and sports media in the uprising and hosted Fouad Fahd (a sports critic) and Abdullah Ashour (a sports journalist). The guests often appeared in Bahrain Sports Channel prior the uprising. The programme also interviewed the pro-regime figures and the Al-Khalifa family members Mubarak Al-Sulaiti (FIFA Members), Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa (an Honorary Member of Al-Riffa Club), Majid Sultan (a sports journalist) and Sheikh Abdulla bin Khalid (the Al-Riffa Club President) over the phone. The phone line to the programme was available for

the audience in the second part of the programme. This was unlike *With the Event* in which the phone line was limited to sports figures and Al-Khalifa family members.

A wide-shot of the programme studio in Figure 48 shows from left to right Faiz Al-Sada (the host), Sheikh Rashed bin Abdulrahman (Vice President of Al-Muharraq Club) and Mohammed Al-Mogbil (a counsellor). A three dimensional digital waving flag of Bahrain was displayed in the background. The message in the crawler (top) stated in Arabic "اللهم احفظ البحرين وآل خليفة من صغيرهم إلى كبيرهم ويحفظ شعبها" which can be translated as "May God protects Bahrain and the Al-Khalifa Family young and old and protect the Bahraini people". The news ticker (bottom) stated "بتوجيهات من سمو الشيخ ناصر بن حمد آل خليفة تم تمديد برنامج" which can be translated as "Under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad, the event Has Been extended (cut in the sentence)".



Figure 48: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:23:00 shows the panel of the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

Edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed during the *Special Event*. A film clip of a "patriotic song" was also played as the song praised the Crown Prince and his personal qualities from minute 00:47:50 to minute 00:52:45. The song was performed during a festival of Independence Day that was held in Bahrain Stadium months before the programme was broadcast. Figure 49 shows an Iraqi artist called Majid Al-Muhandis wearing a black suit standing beside dancers wearing traditional clothes with open red waistcoats while they were performing a traditional dance. According to the authorities, songs and poetry that praise the Al-Khalifa family are considered "patriotic" and they are played in public spaces. For instance, during Independence Day, songs about the King and the Al-

Khalifa family are played on national television and broadcast in schools, universities, and shopping malls.



Figure 49: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:49:39 of the song played in the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

The festival was under the patronage of the Crown Prince. He appeared in Figure 50 wearing Thawb and holding Misbaha (prayer beads). He was smiling while listening to the song that sang in colloquial Arabic " حيا من جانا يا حيا نور الحفل بحضوره، " من كبر حبه انرسمه بعين كل بحريني صورة.. مرحبا مليون وأكثر باللي نتغنى بحبه، ذا ولي العهد ساكن قلبنا واحنا في قلبه " which can be translated as: "Oh Welcome Who honoured Us, the Party Brightens by His Presence, Who Is Beloved and His Image Is Drawn in Every Bahraini's Eye, Oh a Million Welcome to Who We Are Warbling Love For, He Is the Crown Prince Who Lives in Our Hearts and We Live in His Heart".



Figure 50: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:49:39 of the song played in the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

Additionally, scenes of a visit of the Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman to the Salmaniya Medical Complex were showed during the programme (Figure 51).

During a phone call made by the host, the sports journalist Majid Sultan was asked to comment on scenes from minute 01:37:27 to minute 01:38:36 of the Prime Minister shaking hands with the hospital officials while some of them kissed his hand. Sultan said that "This is very beautiful to see and not just the Prime Minister's hand deserves to be kissed. Khalifa bin Salman was reborn in this crisis. These are the men of Bahrain. Khalifa bin Salamn fears no one but the Lord of the worlds". Majid Sultan, also, called for the protesters to be punished saying that "We are not one people anymore".



Figure 51: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 01:37:28 of a scene of the Prime Minister that was displayed in the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

## 5.6 Method of analysing television data

The unit of analysis for the television data was a period of five minutes for every half an hour of each programme. To ensure that the data was not subjected to any selection bias, the selection covered the elements of the two programmes including the opening and the closing sequences, the panel discussion, the crawler, the news ticker, the background, the use of The Athletes' March edited images, the use of music, the phone interviews of the pro-regime sports figures and the participants in The Athletes March sports and phone calls from the audience. In total, 35 minutes of *With the Event* and 35 minutes of *Special Event* including the first and the last five minutes were analysed. This approach to selection and reduction of television data for analysis purposes was adapted from Jewitt (2012, pp. 18-19) and Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10). It should be noted that The Athletes' March edited images were displayed in *Special Event* during the opening sequence and none of the images of the march were displayed during the other selected minutes of the programme. Additionally, the last five minutes of *With the Event* were dedicated to

the phone call of Sheikh Nasser and a song about the king and was analysed as an individual closing sequence. This is unlike the last five minutes of *Special Event* that was dedicated to the panellists and was analysed within the stated elements.

Quantitative and qualitative content analyses were used to analyse the data (Macnamara 2005; Bhattacharjee 2012). The television data was analysed in light of three frames. The characterization frame (Lakoff 2011; Kaufman et al. 2013) was used to examine how the uprising and the Al-Khalifa family were framed. The consequences frame was not used explicitly during the two programmes and thus it was not included in the analysis as an individual frame. However, this does not downplay the importance of this frame as the two programmes were broadcast in response to the uprising in order to vilify the demonstrations and its consequences. The use of the unpatriotic frame (Di Cicco 2010) was used to identify how the protesters and the pro-regime supporters were framed. Additionally, the use of the crawlers and news ticker during the broadcast of the two programmes was examined. Local and international news headlines that were not related to the uprising were excluded and only those related to the uprising were analysed. For the crawler, the message sender's name or nickname was removed (although not all messages were accompanied with a name). The visual elements that distinguish television from other mediums (Kepplinger 1989, pp. 179-180), such as the use of the images of the Al-Khalifa family and The Athletes' March, the use of the background set, and the use of music during a key period of the two programmes, were also examined.

The reliability of my coding was tested with the Ole Holsti (1969) intracoder reliability formula and considerable effort went into ensuring that the coding and the analysis process were not subject to bias. The selected television data that totalled 70 minutes of the two programmes. The selected minutes of the television data was coded and analysed on two separate occasions. The intracoder reliability between the two occasions was 0.94 (where 1.0 shows a total agreement in the coding).

### **5.7 Findings: *With the Event*: Use of the characterization frame for the protests**

The analysis examined the use of the characterization frame by the panellists, the sports figures, and the report of the opening sequences during the selected time of *Special Event* (35 minutes). Key phrases of the characterization frame were used 17 times including 16 times (94.1%) negatively and 1 time (5.8%) neutrally. During the

programme several key phrases of the characterization frame including "an act of treachery", "malice", "greed" and "betrayed and perfidy" were used to portray the uprising. The uprising was also framed as a "fright", "sadness", "chaos", "a tense atmosphere" and "tough days". The key phrase "The Athletes' March" was used only one time during the selected time (Figure 52).

<b>Minute 00:00:00 to minute 00:05:00</b>	
00:00:24	The security events
00:00:29	The treachery
00:00:44	Clouds of fear
00:00:51	Malice and greed
00:01:22	Treachery and thanklessness
00:01:25	Sadness
00:01:47	The big challenge
00:02:31	Betrayed and perfidy
00:04:57	The crisis
<b>Minute 00:30:00 to minute 00:35:00</b>	
00:30:27	Chaos
00:31:57	Harsh lesson
<b>Minute 01:00:00 to minute 01:05:00</b>	
01:03:57	The crisis
<b>Minute 01:30:00 to minute 01:35:00</b>	
01:31:06	The Athletes' March
<b>Minute 02:00:00 to minute 02:05:00</b>	
02:03:01	The security circumstances
02:03:26	The crisis
<b>Minute 02:30:00 to minute 02:35:00</b>	
02:33:34	Sadness and tense atmosphere
<b>Minute 02:54:29 to minute 02:59:29</b>	
02:57:17	Tough days
<b>Total</b>	
No. and percentage of frequency	17 times: (16 times negative: 94.1%), (1 time neutral 5.8%)

Figure 52: *With the Event*: Key phrases of the characterization frame of the uprising

### 5.7.1 *With the Event*: Use of the characterization frame for the Al-Khalifa family

Key phrases of the characterization frame of the Al-Khalifa family were used 36 times by the panellists, the sports figures during the phone interviews, the opening and the closing sequences reports (calling the family members by their real names or positions were excluded). The king was framed individually 23 times (63.8%), while the Al-Khalifa family including the king was framed 13 times (36.1%). The king was frame individually 22 times (95.6%) in the first five minutes when a film clip about him was played in the opening sequence. The king was praised for his personal qualities such as his "kindness", "gorgeousness", "compassion" and his "big heart" (Figure 53).

Minute 00:00:00 to minute 00:05:00	
00:00:42	The wise leadership
00:01:40	The most honest man (the king)
00:01:47	The great Bo Salman (the king's agnomen)
00:02:52	The king who has the best personal qualities
00:02:55	Kind
00:02:57	Gorgeous
00:02:58	Eminent
00:02:59	Sweetheart
00:03:00	Compassionate
00:03:01	Hamad who has a big heart (4 times)
00:03:07	The king who has the best personal qualities
00:03:10	Kind
00:03:12	Gorgeous
00:03:13	Eminent
00:03:14	Sweetheart
00:03:15	Compassionate
00:03:16	Hamad who has a big heart (4 times)
Minute 00:30:00 to minute 00:35:00	
00:32:02	Our leadership
00:34:02	The regime
Minute 01:00:00 to minute 01:05:00	

01:00:06	The regime
01:00:26	Our Sheikhs
01:02:13	The regime
01:03:16	The compassionate father (the king)
01:03:43	The figureheads
01:04:19	The nation's leadership
<b>Minute 01:30:00 to minute 01:35:00</b>	
01:30:16	The royal family
01:33:15	The nation's figureheads
01:33:18	The royal family
<b>Minute 02:00:00 to minute 02:05:00</b>	
/	/
<b>Minute 02:30:00 to minute 02:35:00</b>	
02:31:14	The leadership of Bahrain
02:32:50	The regime
<b>Minute 02:54:29 to minute 02:59:29</b>	
02:54:58	The regime
02:56:31	A man son of a man
02:56:50	O long life
02:58:00	The regime
02:58:05	The regime that has manner and ethics
<b>Total</b>	
No. of and percentage of frequency	36 times: The king (23 times 63.8%); the Al-Khalifa family including the king (13 times 36.1%)

Figure 53: *With the Event*: Key phrases of the characterization frame of the Al-Khalifa family. (/)= no key phrase of frame was used.

### 5.7.2 *With the Event*: Use of the unpatriotic frame for the protesters and the supporters

During *With the Event*, the host, the guests and pro-regime figures, and the opening and the closing sequences used the key phrases of the unpatriotic frame 39 times. Pro-regime supporters framed themselves as "us" or good citizens and they framed their opponents as "them" or the outsiders. "Us" recurred 17 times, whereas "them" recurred 22 times (Figure 54). While key phrases of the frame of the pro-

regime supporter were "white", "loyal", "faithful", "honourable soldiers", or "patriotic", the protesters were portrayed as "spiteful and ungrateful people", "hypocrites", "against the regime", or "unpatriotic people".

00:00:00 to 00:05:00		
The Al-Khalifa family's supporters		The protesters
00:01:51	The king's honourable soldiers	/
00:02:15	Bahrain's lovers	/
00:02:25	/	Spiteful people
00:30:00 to 00:35:00		
00:31:48	Patriotic people	/
00:32:04	/	Hypocrites
00:33:06	With us	Against us
00:33:51	/	Hypocrites
00:34:01	With the regime	Against the regime
00:34:06	/	Hypocrites
01:00:00 to 01:05:00		
01:02:00	/	Ungrateful people
01:02:09	White	Black
01:02:25	/	Unpatriotic people
01:03:51	People with patriotic attitudes	/
01:04:16	Patriotic people	/
01:04:32	Honest men and loyal to Bahrain	/
01:04:45	Sports role models	/
01:04:45	Youth's role models/loyal and faithful	/
01:30:00 to 01:35:00		
/	/	/
02:00:00 to 02:05:00		
/	/	/
02:30:00 to 02:35:00		
02:31:13	Loyal to Bahrain and its leadership	/
02:54:29 to 02:59:29		
02:55:00	Well done/loyal/love Bahrain, its	May a wall fall on him

	leadership and people	
02:55:15	/	They lost love of their fans
02:55:19	/	They lost their way
02:55:29	/	They will be held accountable
02:55:36	/	They will be held accountable
02:55:57	/	They will be held accountable
02:56:03	/	They will be held accountable
02:56:11	/	They will be held accountable
02:56:14	They will be awarded	/
02:56:22	With us	Against us
02:56:41	/	Offended Bahrain
02:56:48	Thanks you/well done	/
02:57:23	Honourable people who love this country	/
02:57:27	/	Traitors/do not wish good to Bahrain
02:58:17	/	They will be held accountable
02:58:24	/	They will fallout
<b>Total</b>		
<b>No. and percentage of frequency</b>	<b>17 times (100% Positive)</b>	<b>22 times (100% Negative)</b>

Figure 54: *With the Event*: Key phrases of the unpatriotic frame. (/)= no key phrase of frame was used.

### 5.7.3 *With the Event*: The opening sequence report

*With the Event* started by presenting the guests and then a report of 3 minutes and 35 seconds that was titled "Bahrain is Healing". The king and the royal family members' scenes occupied 2 minutes and 11 seconds whereas scenes of a fountain, happy people, children playing in a shopping mall, helicopter views of the capital Manama, and another view of one of the king's palaces occupied 1 minute and 24 seconds. The report also showed scenes of the king performing a traditional Bedouin dance called Ardha, or of him surrounded by school students, people acclaiming the king while following his parade, and a scene of the king reading a book in his private office. Moreover, the report presented the king as an athlete as he welcomed the National Football Team players at his palace. The report framed the king as a potent,

prudent, and loveable gentleman on one hand and a courageous military commander on the other (Figure 55).

Time	The king's scenes during the opening sequence report	Duration
00:00:35 to 00:00:41	/	6 seconds
00:00:41 to 00:00:44	The king wearing a military dress while the Prime Minister wearing Thawb	3 seconds
00:00:45- 00:01:29	/	44 seconds
00:01:30- 00:01:35	The king and some of Al-Khalifa members dancing Ardha	5 seconds
00:01:36- 00:01:38	/	2 seconds
00:01:39- 00:02:20	The king in a car waving to people; the king riding a horse with companions; the king wearing Thawb and walking while carrying sword; the king looking from the car sunroof and waving to people; the King kissing a child; the king shaking hands and kissing school girls; the King walking beside the Prime Minister and the guards following them; the king in a meeting with royal family members	41 seconds
00:02:21- 00:02:24	/	3 seconds
00:02:25- 00:02:29	The king in his private office reading a book	4 seconds
00:02:30- 00:02:32	/	2 seconds
00:02:33- 00:02:51	The voiceover stops: A big smile on the king's face while listening to a school girl praise him and his political project	18 seconds
00:02:52- 00:03:33	A song about the king with no voiceover: the king welcoming the national football team in his palace; the king standing on a boat and waving to people; the king looking from the car sunroof and waving to people; people raising the king's photo while following his parade; the king looking from the car sunroof and waving to people. The end of the report	41 seconds
Total scenes duration of the king and the royal family members: 2 minutes 11 seconds		
Total scenes duration without the king and the royal family members: 1 minute 24 seconds		

Figure 55: *With the Event*: the king's scenes in the opening sequence report

A scene of the king walking alongside the Prime Minister while the Crown Prince appears in the background was displayed during the report (Figure 56). The king wears a military dress is followed by guards. The Prime Minister and the Crown Prince were wearing Thawb. The voiceover commented: "Supported by will of the people and the sagacity of the leadership, our motherland is healing from the wounds of betrayal". The location where the scene was filmed is not clear.



Figure 56: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:00:42 shows the king (left) walking alongside with the Prime Minister (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

In another sequence, the king was shown dancing the Ardha with his family members (Figure 57). The Ardha is a traditional Bedouin dance. The king appears wearing Thawb and carrying a sword alongside one of his sons. Another man appears behind the king holding a giant flag of Bahrain while several of Al-Khalifa family members perform the dance. The location where the scene was filmed is not clear.



Figure 57: *With the event*: Screenshot from minute 00:01:35 shows the king dancing Ardha with his family members (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

In another sequence, the king was shown wearing a military dress while riding a horse alongside two unknown guards who are carrying swords (Figure 58). The red dress and the saddle of the king's horses represent the colour of the flag of Bahrain. The scene signifies the strength and leadership qualities of the king. The location where the scene was filmed is not clear.



Figure 58: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:01:49 shows the king (middle) riding a horse while wearing a military dress (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

In another scene, the king appeared as walking while wearing traditional clothes with a dagger (or Janbiya) and holding a sword (Figure 59). The Crown Prince appears in the background followed by guards. The voiceover on Figure 58 and 59 commented "Sir how great you were when confronting the big challenge, riding your purebred horse and leading your honourable soldiers. You swore you will not soften". The location where the scenes were filmed is not clear.



Figure 59: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:01:53 shows the king carrying a sword (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

In another sequence, the king appeared in the *With the Event* opening sequence report receiving the national football team (Figure 60). The king wore a red sports jacket while some players and the team's coach appear in the background. This scene showed the sports qualities of the king who takes care of athletes and appreciates their sporting achievements.



Figure 60: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:03:00 shows the king with the national football team of Bahrain (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

Overall, the voiceover of the *With the Event* opening sequence report praised the noble and the brave leader who conquered the "traitors" and saved the country supported by his "honourable soldiers". Showing scenes of the king dancing the Ardha symbolizes war as this Bedouin dance that originates from the Arabian Peninsula, takes place when a tribe is heading to war or after defeating the enemy. The dance is performed by the tribe's members to get them ready to face the enemy or to celebrate the victory over those who challenged the will the tribe. The weapons carried by the tribe's members are mainly swords. The members sing and praise the tribe, its heroes and current leaders (Asharq Al-Awsat 2008; Janin and Besheer 2003, p. 14). Usually, the performers of the dance that takes place in an open area dance with pride and vigour.

#### **5.7.4 *With the Event*: Use of the background**

The background during *With the Event* showed images of the king, the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince, and other Al-Khalifa family members. The event where the images were taken is not clear. As shown in Figure 61, the panellists appeared while an image of the Crown Prince smiling is displayed in the background. It seems from the black and white colours that the image of the Crown Prince was taken at a Bahrain Grand Prix event. This background often appeared during the discussion. Other images in the background beside the Crown Prince cannot be clearly seen.



Figure 61: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:34:52 shows an image of the Crown Prince smiling in the background (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

The three dimensional digital waving flag of Bahrain was also displayed several times in the background of the studio set including during the phone call with Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, pro-regime athletes, and athletes who participated in The Athletes' March. As shown in Figure 62, the digital flag of Bahrain is waving in a semi-clear sky behind the panellists which reinforces the 'patriotic' message and credentials of panellists and the programme.



Figure 62: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 01:00:53 shows the waving flag of Bahrain in the background (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

### 5.7.5 *With the Event*: Use of the crawler

The crawler placed at the bottom of the screen that showed messages sent by the audience was not displayed in the first five minutes of *With the Event*. There were 113 messages that were placed 164 times. Most messages were placed only once in the crawler but other messages appeared several times (Figure 63). On average each message contained ten words. Framing the Al-Khalifa family members and their supporters was 100% positive, whereas framing the protesters and protests was 100%

negative. The majority of the messages prayed to God to prolong the lives of the King, the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince and Al-Khalifa family members. The Al-Khalifa family was framed as "crown of the head" and the king as "the wise father" whereas the supporters of the family framed themselves as "loyal" and "patriotic people". They also prayed to God to protect the Al-Khalifa family and the country from all evil. The pro-regime supporters vowed to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Al-Khalifa family and the country. It was noticed that message 6 "May God Protects Bahrain and Keep it Khalifya Forever" was placed 11 times more than any other message (02:00:00 to 02:05:00). This message signifies that Bahrain must be ruled by the Al-Khalifa family forever. On the other hand, the Al-Khalifa family's supporters were aggressive toward the protesters and the athletes involved in the uprising as they were framed as "evil and enemies" who have a "lack of awareness" and who "must be persecuted and punished" as they harmed Bahrain and its people.

Some messages were accompanied by an author's name but there is no way of knowing if these names were authentic or pseudonyms, or if they were by real audience members or pro-regime staff of the broadcaster. As well, there were 22 messages without an accompanying name and it became evident that most of these messages were the ones that called out the protestors and demanded punishment. These messages were placed several times but not as many times as message 6 referred to above.

- Message 6: All those players who were involved in the events must be prosecuted (01:00:00 to 01:05:00).

- Message 12: Every player involved in the events must be prosecuted (02:00:00 to 02:05:00).

- Message 1: We demand a punishment for all ungrateful athletes starting from Hubail and Sayed Adnan (02:30:00 to 02:30:35).

- Message 2: The people demand punishment of the players, the people demand punishment of the players, they do not deserve clemency (02:30:00 to 02:30:35).

Message 1 and 2 (02:30:00 to 02:30:35) were screened in the crawler after the phone interviews with the two football players Sayed Mohamed Adnan and A'ala Hubail. The sanctions applied to some athletes were announced by the clubs during the programme. Message 4 in the closing sequence of *With the Event* encouraged this step and stated: "We thank the Al-Riffa and Al-Muharraq managements for the quick

response to take procedures against the violators". Overall, the crawler suggested that the uprising was an unpatriotic movement and that the people of Bahrain were demanding to punishment for the athletes involved in the demonstrations.

<b>The protesters</b>	<b>The Al-Khalifa family and their supporters</b>
100% negative	100% positive
Evil, enemies, must be persecuted, must be punished, lack of awareness, punishment, they do not deserve clemency, violator athletes	The wise leadership, your soldiers, long life, blessing, at your own sweet will, sacrifice ourselves for you, Crown of the head, blooming, champion, greetings, The wise father, the noble Prime Minister, Bahrain is Khalifya, Bahrain will remain Khalifya, patriotic, longevity, loyal people
<b>Total no. and frequency of messages</b>	<b>113 messages; 164 times</b>

Figure 63: *With the Event*: The use of the crawler

### 5.7.6 *With the Event*: Use of the news ticker

The news ticker at the bottom of the screen showed news headlines. During *With the Event* there was only one news headline that was related to the uprising and it was placed six times. The news headline was about an event that was organized in Bahrain Stadium to sign a huge kit of the national football team as a symbolic gift that would be presented to the king (Figure 64). The event was called "ما لها إلا حمدها" which can be translated as "Only for Hamad" and it meant that the king is the only legitimate ruler who should lead the nation. Praising and showing their obedience to the king and the royal family was considered a 'patriotic' act. Using a sports facility, Bahrain Stadium, the biggest stadium in the country, is allowed as long as it is used to host "patriotic events". The panellists did not discuss the event and also did not point to it during the programme.

No.	Time	News	Frequency
1	Minute 00:30:00 to minute 00:35:00	Due to a large turnout from the Bahraini athletes to sign a huge kit to support his highness the king under the title "Only for Hamad", the event will be extended to another two days at the request of the athletes.	1
2	Minute 01:00:00 to minute 01:05:00		2
3	Minute 01:30:00 to minute 01:35:00		1
4	Minute 02:00:00 to minute 02:05:00		1
5	Minute 02:30:00 to minute 02:35:00		1
Total frequency: 6 times			

Figure 64: *With the Event*: The use of the news ticker

### 5.7.7 *With the Event*: Use of images of the Athletes' March

*With the Event* displayed 22 edited digital images of The Athletes' March and several of them were displayed more than once during the selected minutes. The programme displayed ten edited digital images from minute 01:33:44 to minute 01:35:00, and 11 edited digital images were displayed during the phone call interview with the football player A'ala Hubail from minute 02:00:00 to minute 02:00:26 and from minute 02:01:14 to minute 02:01:52. Another digital edited image was displayed from minute 02:30:00 to minute 02:30:10. Figure 65 is a screenshot that shows an edited digital image of The Athletes' March that was displayed in minute 01:34:03. The image identifies four players and their sports club; from left to right Hasan Abdulnabi (a basketball player), Ahmad Hassan Al-Durazi (a basketball player), Sayed Hashim (Al-Ahli Club), and another whose first name was covered by the word "Live" at the top right while the second name was Ghoulom (basketball player). As the third identified person from the left appeared in the background, a black arrow was used to point to him. There was a fifth identified person on the right, but his face does not appear in this screenshot taken from the television programme.



Figure 65: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 01:34:03 shows an image of The Athletes' March that was displayed during the programme (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

Figure 66 shows another example of The Athletes' March edited digital images that was displayed in *With the Event*. Four athletes were identified and their faces were circled. Appearing from left to right are Ali Hassan (volleyball player), Shaker Salman (football player), Ahmed Hassan Al-Durazi (basketball player) and Mohammed Hassan (basketball player). The first player on the left Ali Hassan did not face the camera as he was walking in the background and thus a blue circle and

an arrow were used to draw the audience's attention to the target so he can be clearly identified.



Figure 66: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 01:34:20 shows an image of The Athletes' March (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

During the display of The Athletes' March edited digital images in *With the Event* and in *Special Event*, a soundtrack from the 2004 blockbuster American movie *National Treasure* starring Nicolas Cage (Turteltaub 2004) was played. This soundtrack was played several times in the movie particularly during the most exciting scenes of the adventurous movie. This soundtrack was used during the two programmes to create an atmosphere of excitement and to engage the audience with the messages being sent.

### 5.7.8 *With the Event*: The closing sequence

In the last five minutes of *With the Event*, Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the King's son and the President of the Bahraini Olympic Committee and the Commander of Bahrain's Royal Guard was interviewed over the phone. The phone call lasted for 2 minutes and 13 seconds from minutes 02:54:38 to 02:56:5. Before the programme ended, the producers played a film clip of a Bedouin song. Transcribed below is a translation of the phone call:

**The host:** Allow us to receive the president of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, his highness Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa may God protects him. Good evening Sheikh

**Sheikh Nasser:** Hello. Good evening.

**The panellists:** Welcome Bo Hamad (Sheikh Nasser's nickname).

**Sheikh Nasser:** Greetings. Thank you. I don't want to take up too much of your time. Well done guys. Good efforts all of you and all the supporters who declared their loyalty and love to the Kingdom of Bahrain, its leadership and its people. Everyone who called for a toppling of the regime; may a wall collapse on his head.

**The panellists:** Well-said. Amen.

**Sheikh Nasser:** We are the youth and sport has no relationship with politics and our approach is athletic, ethical and brotherly. People (athletes) have involved themselves in matters (the uprising), people lost the love of the fans, and other implicated themselves in troubles. I don't want to take up too much of your time. Excuse me, but anyone who has implicated himself in these matters and implicated himself in this net, shall be held accountable. Whether he was an athlete, socialite, politician, whatever he was, he will be held accountable at this time. Today is the judgment day, and may God grants patience and strength to all. May God keeps our Hamad, Khalifa bin Salman and Salman bin Hamad.

**The host:** Amen.

**Sheikh Nasser:** Thank you.

**The host:** Your Highness Sheikh Nasser, May God protects you. May be this is what people of Bahrain were waiting to hear that everyone who spoke about toppling the regime will be held accountable. This is what we thank you for. This reassured us and soothed our hearts.

**Sheikh Nasser:** Indeed, they will be held accountable. Bahrain is an island and there is nowhere to escape. Everyone involved in these matters will be held accountable and everyone who supported (the regime) will be rewarded. God willing, those who have been patient and stood up with my master His Majesty the King Hamad are known. As we knew who stood up against us, we know who stood up with us, and days will judge.

**Faisal Alsheikh** (a studio guest): Sheik I have one word to say if you allow me.

**Sheikh Nasser:** Please.

**Faisal Alsheikh:** You are a man son of a man. Your words are a crown for our heads. Today the speech of my master His Majesty the King who said that we would not forgive those who offended Bahrain. May God protects you and keep Al-Khalifa for us always.

**Sheikh Nasser:** Thank you and well done all.

**Faisal AlSheikh:** May God protects you.

**The host:** Thank you and may God prolongs your life. His Highness Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee. Thank you Sheikh.

Sheikh Nasser vowed that those who participated in the uprising would be held accountable. He repeated "will be held accountable" four times and threatened the protesters by saying that "Bahrain is an island and there is nowhere to escape" which implied that the regime was planning to prosecute the protesters. Sheikh Nasser differentiated 'us' as the regime and its supporters from 'them' the disloyal people who stood up against the regime. He praised the panellists for their efforts by saying "thank you, well done, and good efforts". At the end of *With the Event*, the host commented saying that: "We got to the conclusion of this programme by receiving the phone call from His Highness Sheikh Nasser, may God protects him. That phone call reassured us and soothed the hearts of those who are watching us as some will be held accountable" (02:58:03). The host also announced in the last minute that Al-Muharraq Club decided to suspend all those who participated in the Pearl Roundabout part of the protest, and that the player Mahmood Alojaimi from Al-Riffa Club was suspended. It was also announced that the next day an urgent meeting would be held by the Al-Hala Club and other clubs to discuss what was shown during the *With the Event* programme.

It should be noted that using "Amen" by the hosts or the studio guests during the phone call does not give sanctity on the issue or the person as religious expressions such as "Amen", "God Willing", and "Thanks God", are part of the local social culture and they are commonly used by all people in Bahrain even those who do not practise Islam. However, using verses of the Quran or Hadith (the prophet's

saying, teachings and deeds) in speeches frequently would give sanctity to the issue being discussed and to the spokesman.

From minute 02:57:08, a film clip of a Bedouin song about the king was played while displaying scenes of the king dancing Ardha (Figure 67). The lyrics said in Arabic " تسلم لنا يا حمد، للمملكة وللرعية، الكل غنى وقصد، تسلم لنا يا حمد للمملكة والرعية، اللي ونهضة قوية، وان انتخت يا حمد بحریننا العربية، لعيون داره حمد، درع البلاد الأبية، ونعم وفى بالعهد إصلاح والخليفة حمد دنوا له المعلقة" which can be translated as:

May God protect you Hamad for the kingdom and the people. All sing and recite may God protects you Hamad for the kingdom and the people. Who fulfils his promise, reform and strong renaissance, who fulfils his promise, and if our Arabic Bahrain seek help O Hamad, and for the sake of his eye Hamad the shield of the proud country. What a Khalify you are O Hamad, approach him the poetry.

The programme ended before the song ended. The lyrics of the song portrayed the king once again as a popular and loveable leader and prayed to God to protect him for the kingdom and the people. The lyrics of the song also pointed to the army when the performer sang "the shield of the proud country" implying to the power possessed by the king.



Figure 67: *With the Event*: Screenshot from minute 02:59:29 shows the king carries a sword. the Arabic writing states: "What a Khalify You Hamad" (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 4, 2011)

#### **5.7.9 Special Event: Use of the characterization frame for the protests**

The analysis examined the use of the characterization frame by the panellists, the sports figures, and the report of the opening sequences during the selected time of

*Special Event* (35 minutes). Key phrases of the characterization frame were used 31 times including 24 times (77.4%) neutrally and 7 times (22.5%) negatively (Figure 68). Key phrases of the characterization frame were not used before minute 02:30:00 to minute 02:35:00 and neither in the closing sequence between minute 02:50:26 to minute 02:55:26. "The march" that indicated The Athletes' March was the most used key phrase 14 times or (45.1%). While key phrases of the characterization frame such as "The Athletes' March", "The March" and "The Sports March" portrayed the uprising neutrally, these key phrases were followed or preceded with negative notions. For example, the voiceover of the opening sequence report said that The Athletes' March was organized by the athletes on the sideline of "the unfortunate events" (00:01:53).

<b>00:00:00 to 00:05:00</b>	
00:00:36	The security crisis
00:00:41	The Athletes' March
00:00:47	The sit in the GCC roundabout
00:01:03	The march
00:01:04	The Athletes' March
00:01:53	The Athletes' March
00:01:58	The unfortunate events
00:02:20	The spiteful march
00:02:21	The anti-regime march
00:03:28	The security crisis
<b>00:30:00 to 00:35:00</b>	
/	/
<b>01:00:00 to 01:05:00</b>	
01:01:44	The march
01:02:02	The crisis
01:02:09	The crisis
01:02:50	The sports march
01:03:01	The Athletes' March
01:03:13	The march
01:03:15	The march

01:03:29	Sports march
01:03:34	The march
01:03:39	The march
01:04:00	The march
01:04:08	The march
01:04:15	The march
01:04:17	The march
01:04:47	The march
01:04:57	The march
<b>01:30:00 to 01:35:00</b>	
01:30:37	The Athletes' March
<b>02:00:00 to 02:05:00</b>	
02:00:13	The march
02:02:04	The march
02:02:08	The march
02:02:14	The Athletes' March
<b>02:30:00 to 02:35:00</b>	
/	/
<b>02:50:26 to 02:55:26</b>	
/	/
<b>Total</b>	
<b>31 times: (0 time: 0% P); (7 times: 22.5% N); (24 times: 77.4% Neu)</b>	

Figure 68: *Special Event*: Key phrases of the characterization frame of the uprising. (/)= no key phrase of frame was used. (P)= positive, (N)= negative, (Neu)= Neutral.

#### 5.7.10 *Special Event*: Use of the characterization frame for the Al-Khalifa family

Key phrases of the characterization frame of the Al-Khalifa family were used 22 times (calling the family members by their real names or positions were excluded). Unlike the *With the Event*, the king was not framed individually in *Special Event*. The most used key phrase was "the wise leadership" that referred to the King, the Prime Minister, and the Crown Prince. Other key phrases including "the regime", "the leadership", and "the leadership of Bahrain" were also used to point to the Al-Khalifa family (Figure 69). During the programme, a member of the Al-Khalifa family threatened the protesters saying that that his family members would not

tolerate "the insult". Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa (the President of Al-Riffa Club) also said in a phone call that his family members have military skills as many of the Al-Khalifa family male members are subjected to military training and join the Bahraini army or special forces (02:30:24 and 02:30:29).

<b>00:00:00 to 00:05:00</b>	
00:02:20	The regime
00:02:46	The leadership
<b>00:30:00 to 00:35:00</b>	
/	/
<b>01:00:00 to 01:05:00</b>	
01:00:22	The regime
01:00:23	The nation's figureheads
01:01:09	The Khalify regime
01:03:01	The regime
<b>01:30:00 to 01:35:00</b>	
01:30:08	The leadership
<b>02:00:00 to 02:05:00</b>	
/	/
<b>02:30:00 to 02:35:00</b>	
02:30:16	The royal family
02:30:24	Most of us are soldiers
02:30:26	We are not luxuriant
02:30:29	Soldiers
<b>02:50:15 to 02:55:15</b>	
02:50:30	Our leadership
02:51:28	The leadership
02:52:01	Our Sheikh
02:52:02	Our figureheads
02:52:35	The wise leadership
02:53:18	The wise leadership
02:53:34	The leadership

02:54:20	Our wise government
02:54:21	Our wise leadership
02:54:50	Our wise leadership
02:54:55	The leadership of Bahrain
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>22 times</b>

Figure 69: *Special Event*: Key phrases of the characterization frame of the Al-Khalifa family. (/)= no key phrase of frame was used.

#### 5.7.11 *Special Event*: Use of the unpatriotic frame for the protesters and the supporters

While the Al-Khalifa's supporters were labelled positively 6 times (100%) in *Special Event*, their opponents were labelled 38 times; once (2.6%) positively, 10 times (26.3%) neutrally, and 27 times (71%) negatively (Figure 70). Neutral key phrase such as "protesters", "some players", and "athletes" were used to frame the protesters. However, these key phrases were followed or preceded with negative notions. "Brother" was the only positive key phrase used in the two programmes to portray the protesters. This key phrase was used sarcastically by the host to point to the participants in The Athletes' March who were interviewed in the previous programme. On the other hand, negative key phrases of the unpatriotic frame of the protesters included "ungrateful people", "dupes", "abusers", "offenders", "criminals" and "traitors". In a phone call with Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, an Honorary Member of Al-Riffa Club framed the participants of the Athletes' March as "criminals and worthless". Sheikh Khalid also called on the local clubs to punish the athletes as he called them "sons of Bahrain who fought Bahrain and brought shame to themselves". Although the programme paid more attention to the protesters, the Al-Khalifa family supporters were praised once again for their attitude during the uprising. The supporters were framed as "sons", "brothers" and "lovers".

00:00:00 to 00:05:00		
The Al-Khalifa family's supporters		The protesters
00:01:57	/	The protesters
00:02:19	/	Ungrateful people
00:02:46	/	Offenders
00:03:30	/	Participants in the security

		events
00:03:39	/	Athletes
00:04:26	/	Dupes
<b>00:30:00 to 00:35:00</b>		
/	/	/
<b>01:00:00 to 01:05:00</b>		
01:00:15	/	Athletes
01:00:22	/	Abusers
01:00:30	/	The Athletes
01:00:38	/	Managers and referees
01:01:44	/	Athletes
01:04:33	/	Brothers
<b>01:30:00 to 01:35:00</b>		
01:30:06	/	Criminals
01:30:14	/	They do not deserve greeting
01:30:25	/	They must be suspended for life
01:31:10	/	He is worthless
01:31:12		We made him
01:31:15	/	We made him a name
01:31:40	/	Sons of Bahrain fight Bahrain
01:31:44	/	They must be suspended for life
01:31:49	/	Clubs must be forced to suspend them for life
01:31:53	/	They must be suspended for life
01:32:04	/	Some players
01:32:27	/	They must be expelled
01:32:27	/	Shame on them
01:32:28	/	They do not deserve greeting
<b>02:00:00 to 02:05:00</b>		
02:02:17	/	The traitors athletes
<b>02:30:00 to 02:35:00</b>		
02:30:10	/	Opposition

02:31:12	/	What so-called opposition
02:31:17	/	The opposition
02:31:52	White	Black
02:31:57	White	Black
02:32:36	/	The opposition
02:33:25	Our brothers	/
02:33:26	Our lovers	/
02:33:27	Our sons	/
02:34:38	/	What so-called the roundabout group
<b>02:50:15 to 02:55:15</b>		
02:51:01	/	The abusers
02:52:00	/	Vandals
02:52:01	/	Abusers
02:53:06	/	Players
02:54:54	May God protects them	/
Frequency	6 times : (100% P)	38 times: (1time: 2.6% P); (10 times: 26.3% Neu); (27 times: 71% N)

Figure 70: *Special Event*: Key phrases of the unpatriotic frame. (/)= not key phrase of frame was used. (P)= positive, (N)= negative, (Neu)= Neutral.

#### 5.7.12 *Special Event*: The opening sequence report

The host started *Special Event* by presenting his guests before showing a report about *With the Event* that pointed to the feedback from *With the Event* that was broadcast the previous week (Figure 71). The voiceover commented that the justifications of the participants in The Athletes' March who were interviewed in the previous programme were not convincing as they had no legitimate reason to protest and therefore they deserved to be convicted by public opinion in Bahrain. The voiceover of the report suggested that the majority of the people of Bahrain were against the uprising. It also suggested that the protesters committed a sin by rallying "against the regime". The voiceover said that *With the Event* revealed the "real face" of the protesters who participated in "the spiteful people's march" that offended the

country and its leadership. The report vowed that Bahrain Television would not hesitate to reveal all facts and stand up against the demonstrators in the uprising.



Figure 71: *Special Event*: Screenshot of minute 00:01:05 the opening sequence report (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

Several edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed during the opening sequences of *Special Event*. Figure 72 shows an edited digital image of The Athletes' March that was taken during the speech following the end of The Athletes' March. The speech was delivered by A'ala Hubail on a stage that was set in the Pearl Roundabout. This stage was also used by other protesters and political activist in their speeches during the activities that were held in the Pearl Roundabout. appearing in the lift of the image is the football player A'ala Hubail during his speech. The Arabic written stated "علاء حبيب يلقي الكلمة ويطالب بإسقاط النظام" which can be translated as "A'ala Hubail during a speech that called to overthrow the regime". A'ala's face was circled in blue beside Sayed Mohammed Adnan who appeared in the middle of the image with Arabic writing that stated "لاعب المنتخب الوطني" which can be translated as: "a national team player". The third circled player was "صادق علي لاعب" which can be translated as "Sadiq Ali, Handball Player". Other athletes appeared wrapping their bodies with the flag of Bahrain while holding a banner which stated "مسيرة الر" which can be translated as "The march of". The second banner (on right side) stated in Arabic that "نفهم شعبنا للوطن كان" which can be translated as "Understands our people (out of frame) for the country". It should be noted that the text in both banners in this image was out of frame.



Figure 72: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:01:36 of the opening report (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

The next edited digital image of The Athletes' March (Figure 73) shows nine athletes' faces were circled in blue but only seven of them were identified. Appearing from left to right are Mahmood Mirza Al-Ajami, Hamad Abdulla Al-Hamad, Sayed Ali Ashoor, Ibrahim Ahmed Abbas, Yaseen Almail (assistant manager), Mirza Ali (volleyball player), Ali Abdulamir.



Figure 73: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 00:02:30 (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

### 5.7.13 *Special Event*: Use of the background

Unlike *With the Event*, images of the Al-Khalifa family members were not displayed in the background set for *Special Event*. The programme dedicated the background to the three dimensional digital waving flag of Bahrain. As shown in Figure 74, the panellists appeared while the giant flag of Bahrain was waving in the

background of the screen. This background set reinforces the 'patriotic' message and credentials of the panellists and the programme.



Figure 74: *Special Event*: Screenshot from minute 02:00:27 shows the waving flag of Bahrain in the background (Bahrain Sports Channel, April 11, 2011)

#### **5.7.14 *Special Event*: Use of the crawler**

There were 49 messages that were placed 59 times during the selected minutes from *Special Event* (Figure 75). The crawler was displayed from minute 00:02:50 before and was stopped in minute 01:13:30 when the phone line was opened to the audience. The crawler was 100% positive toward the Al-Khalifa family and their supporters, while it was 100% negative toward the protesters. The messages prayed to God to protect the King, the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince and all the Al-Khalifa family from "all evil" and also praised the sagacity of the leadership and prayed God to keep Bahrain Khalifya forever. The pro-regime supporters who sent the messages displayed in the crawler framed themselves as soldiers who were ready to redeem themselves for the Al-Khalifa family and Bahrain. For instance, message 5 stated "May God protects His Highness the King. We are your soldiers and at your own sweet will" (00:30:00 to 00:35:00). On the other hand, the protesters were framed as "evil", "plotters" and "malicious". For instance, message 2 stated "What happened is a lesson that identified the friend from the enemy. We thank God for everything. May God protects Bahrain, our government and the loyal people amen amen" (01:00:00 to 01:05:00).

The protesters	The Al-Khalifa family and their supporters
100% negative	100% positive
Evil, enemies, must be persecuted, must be punished, lack of awareness, punishment, they do not deserve clemency, violators	The wise leadership, your soldiers, long life, blessing, at your own sweet will, sacrifice ourselves for you, Crown of the head, blooming, champion, greetings, The wise father, the noble Prime Minister, Bahrain is Khalifya, Bahrain will remain Khalifya, patriotic, longevity, loyal people
<b>Total no. and frequency of messages</b>	<b>49 messages; 59 times</b>

Figure 75: *Special Event*: The use of the crawler

#### 5.7.15 *Special Event*: Use of the news ticker

There was only one news headline displayed during *Special Event* and it was placed 51 times (Figure 76). The news announced an extension of an event that was called "سيوف الولاء" or "Swords of Allegiance" that relocated to Bahrain Stadium because of a large turnout. The event was a symbolic declaration of solidarity with "the wise leadership". The use of swords implied refers war. The regime called on its supporters to join the campaign against the protesters by declaring their loyalty to the ruling family. The Swords of Allegiance event was considered sports news because it was held in a sports field under the auspices of Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and involved pro-regime athletes. This event was not discussed by the panellists of the programme.

No.	Time	News	Frequency
1	00:00:00 to 00:05:00	Under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the signing Swords of Allegiance to the wise leadership has been extended to Saturday. The event is being held in Bahrain Stadium because the large turnout	7
2	00:30:00 to 00:35:00		17
3	01:00:00 to 01:05:00		17
Total frequency: 51 times			

Figure 76: *Special Event*: The use of the news ticker

To sum up, the findings show that the television coverage of the uprising divided the people of Bahrain into two parties: the legitimate party represented by the Al-Khalifa family and their supporters and the illegitimate party represented by the protesters. The analysis shows that the coverage used the characterization frame of the uprising to portray the uprising as an "illegitimate movement". Unlike the

newspaper coverage, the television coverage did not explicitly use the consequences frame. However, the overall aim of the television coverage was to deprecate the uprising as a political movement and its consequences on the society. Additionally, the characterization frame was used to portray the Al-Khalifa family as the "legitimate authority" interlinked with the traditions and the history of the country. The King and the Al-Khalifa family were at the centre of the television coverage. While *With the Event* focused on the personal qualities of the King who was shown as a courageous and wise leader, the *Special Event* focused on "the wise leadership" and paid attention to the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince. The language used to vilify the protesters by using the unpatriotic frames in the television coverage was more direct than the language in the newspaper coverage. For instance, while the protesters were framed as unpatriotic citizens in the newspaper coverage, the television crawler and several of the Al-Khalifa family members framed the protesters as "evil", "vandals" and "worthless". The television coverage praised the Al-Khalifa family's supporters who were labelled as "Bahrain lovers" and "loyal" citizens for their behaviour during the protests.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the newspaper data from two pro-regime newspapers during the Bahraini uprising in 2011. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of two television programmes broadcast during a key period of the protests. The analyses in both chapters demonstrate that sports media and politics are inextricably linked in Bahrain. This present chapter explains in detail how the characterization frame, the consequences frame, and the unpatriotic frame were used to vilify the political movement.

The characterization frame and the consequences frame were exploited by the sports coverage to calumniate the uprising, while the characterization frame was exploited to glorify the ruling family, and the unpatriotic frame was used to undermine the protesters while praising the supporters of the ruling family. These three frames were accompanied by other propaganda techniques which involved a reliance on official sources and the selective use of photographs in the newspaper coverage. For the television coverage the techniques involved the strategic arrangement of the studio's background set, the use of the crawler and the news ticker across the screen during the broadcast, the manipulation of photographs taken of individuals participating in The Athletes' March, and the use of background music during key sections of the programme.

While newspapers and the main state-controlled television channel started covering the uprising days after it began, the sports newspapers and the sports channel were silent on the uprising until the broadcast of the special programme *With the Event* on April 4, 2011. On April 6, 2011 local sports newspapers began to explicitly report on the demonstrations including The Athletes' March that was organized on February 21, 2011. The campaign against the anti-regime sports figures was officially launched during this first television programme in a phone interview with the king's son Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa who is the President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee and also the Commander of Bahrain's Royal Guard.

## **6.1 Strategy of vilifying the demonstrations**

The strategy of undermining and declaring the demonstrations illegal involved the use of two frames: the characterization frame and the consequences frame.

### *The characterization frame*

The characterization frame is used to define a political movement and its objectives in order to impede it (Brasted 2005, p. 383). It is also exploited to undermine the legitimacy of an uprising and question its motive (Kaufman et al. 2013). The purpose of using this frame is to either legitimize or disorganize the movement to raise questions such as why the uprising occurred and to question its goals. The campaign intended to vilify the demonstrations by framing them as "unlicensed marches", "illegal gatherings", and "disgraceful acts". The Al-Khalifa regime used the characterization frame in both its newspaper and its television sports media propaganda campaign to encourage the public to condemn the protest and to prevent the public from joining the movement. The demonstrations were presented as an erroneous choice by radical individuals and suggested that the protesters did not represent the interests of the good citizens of Bahrain. The protesters' demands for political reforms including reducing the powers of the ruling family were not covered or pointed to.

### *The consequences frame*

People tend to form their view about an issue based on how it is framed in the media (Iyengar 1990) as framing influences how the audience think about an event (Kim and Willis 2007, p. 359) and who is responsible for it (p. 360). The public's evaluation of the cause of the event is also influenced by how it is presented in the media (An and Gower 2009, p. 107). The newspaper coverage of the protests focused on the consequent upheaval and threat to national security and on the social threats posed by the demonstrations in public spaces. At the same time, the newspaper coverage ignored any specific information about the cause of the uprising and the demands for political reform, a move towards democracy, and transparency about the corruption of the regime. Overall, the newspaper coverage induced the public to stand against the uprising that was argued would harm the country and divide the people of Bahrain. Linking the uprising with instability and fear was intended to encourage the public to maintain the status quo. The two television programmes,

*With the Event* and *Special Event*, were a response to the uprising that called for political reforms. While, the consequences frame was not addressed explicitly in the television coverage, the two programmes incited public opinion to disagree with the uprising that was led by protesters who were not loyal to their country or their leaders. Overall, vilifying the uprising would result in vilifying its consequences.

## **6.2 Strategy of glorifying the Al-Khalifa family**

The strategy of aggrandizing the Al-Khalifa family involved the use of the characterization frame that was employed to favour the ruling family.

### *The characterization frame*

The uprising questioned the legitimacy of the Al-Khalifa family. In response, the sports media coverage employed the characterization frame to enhance and preserve the sacredness of the ruling family led by the king. The Al-Khalifa family was framed in the sports coverage of the uprising as the figurehead for the nation and the guarantors of stability of the country. The rule of the Al-Khalifa family over Bahrain is a tradition and historic right (El-Khury 1983, p. 322) and the tribal regime believes that its powers must not be challenged, nor shared with others (Al-Naqeeb 1989, p. 148) as the family represents the legitimate alternative to lawful democratic institutions (p. 151). The ruling families of the Gulf States were placed at the heart of the emergent state-building project after independence (Partrick 2009, p. 4). The identity and loyalty of the state are conflated with the identity and loyalty of these families (p. 9). To justify their rule, a "civic myth" was created by the ruling families to propagandize themselves as the heritage and an extension of the country's cultural history and tradition (Kamrava 2013, p. 123).

The sports coverage of the uprising drew a mythical portrayal of the ruling family in Bahrain and, particularly, of the king. Erin Bream (2004) points to two features of a leader's personality cult that can be seen during demonstrations. These are the spread of the cult figure's image and the portrayal of the leader as a hero who can solve all problems. This leads the public to believe in the superiority of the leader and consequently to protection from questioning of his policies (p. 134). After the king's power was challenged during the uprising, the King of Bahrain wanted to regain his position and his prestige and gain legitimacy; thus the television coverage focused on his charisma.

Non-democratic regimes propagandize their leaders as the protector of the nation and its people (Byman and Linda 2010, p. 52). To retrieve their legitimacy during an uprising, autocratic regimes employ several methods to repress the protesters (Schedler 2012, p. 16). When a protest occurs, regimes assess the threat posed by the protest by questioning who the protesters are and what their target is and who they threaten and why (Davenport et al. 2011, p. 153). In the Bahraini context, the regime is the ruling family and the king is the leader of the regime. There was a major focus in the two television programmes on the power and prestige of the king and the royal family. The opening sequence of the *With the Event* report showed the king riding a horse, wearing military dress and dancing the Ardha. The purpose of these scenes was not just to present the charismatic personality of the king, but also to protect his status from being questioned in the future. In other words, the coverage was intended to make the public believe that the king's personality is sacred, his decisions are always correct and he must not be challenged. He leads the nation and his supporters love him and believe that he is the "saviour" who would do whatever it takes to protect his country and his people.

### **6.3 Strategy of undermining the protesters and praising the supporters**

The unpatriotic frame was used by the sports media to target the anti-regime protesters on the one hand and to praise the supporters of the regime on the other.

#### *The unpatriotic frame*

The unpatriotic frame is used to distort protesters' images and to isolate protesters from their society (Di Cicco 2010). The Bahraini protesters were framed as a group that did not represent the majority of the people who believed in the legitimacy of the regime and did not oppose the rule of the royal family. This frame aimed to create boundaries between the protesters and the rest of Bahraini society. These boundaries ease the targeting of the protesters by society, and hence protect the community from the intruders. For instance, key phrases of the unpatriotic frame in the newspaper coverage portrayed the protesters as "disloyal" and "offenders" who insulted the nation, and its figureheads, and who aimed to harm Bahraini society and the country. The government vowed that these "offenders" would be held accountable for their activities during the uprising. In the television coverage, key phrases of the unpatriotic frame such as "vandals", "traitors", "hypocrites", and "evil"

were used to depict the protesters. The coverage incited emotions against the protesters by framing them as "against us" in *With the Event* (00:33:06) and as "against the regime" (00:34:01). Additionally, in minute 02:04:50 of *Special Event*, a journalist interviewed on the phone, praised the local newspapers for the dismissal of journalists who participated in the uprising and called these journalists non-Bahrainis. The protesters were considered outlaws who should be fought. On the other hand, the regime supporters were framed as "patriotic", as "noble" and as members of the king's army. The sports media coverage of the uprising praised the regime's supporters for their acts during the uprising as they refused to participate in the protests, attacked the protesters, condemned the political movement, and declared their loyalty to the Al-Khalifa family. In this context, the regime exploited the sports media to delude the supporters into being the first line of defence in the face of the protesters. The regime encouraged its supporters in every possible way to confront the protesters. The supporters of the regime were motivated to become involved physically by protesting against the uprising physically and in an online campaign to 'expose' those who participated in the demonstrations. These actions were promoted by both the newspaper and television coverage as national missions.

#### **6.4 Techniques to implement the strategies**

Television was more influential medium than newspapers because of the added visual and audio content in the coverage of the uprising. The common denominators in the coverage were the reliance on official sources and the use of photographs. In addition, the television coverage was characterized by the use of the studio's background set for the two programmes, the use of crawlers and news tickers across the screen, and the employment of background music.

##### **6.4.1 Reliance on official sources**

The findings in Chapters 4 show that all of the newspaper coverage was based on official and pro-regime sources including sports federations, sports clubs, or Al-Khalifa family members. The news supplied by official sources was subject to bias in favour of the regime as official sources neutralised the perspectives of the power challengers (McLeod 2007, p. 187). The official sources worked to support the agenda of the regime (Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2008, p. 207) and protect the

status quo (Dardis 2006, p. 118). In the beginning, the newspaper sports coverage ignored the uprising and The Athletes' March. For weeks when the protests were taking place, the sports supplements of the local newspapers avoided publishing any explicit news about the protests. It was only after the broadcast of *With the Event* that the newspapers began to cover the protests and it was from the regime's view of the events. The newspaper coverage avoided interviewing the sports figures who participated in the protests. It was not known whether this was due to an official directive, or because of self-censorship.

However, the television coverage, included a live phone interview of three sports figures during *With the Event* to 'justify' why they participated in the uprising, while more than 60 sports figures identified in *Special Event* were not given the opportunity to speak about why they participated in The Athletes' March. During the phone interviews, the panellists did not tolerate the views of the participants of The Athletes' March. The host and his studio guests interrupted the interviewees several times. They treated the interviewees as defendants who had to justify their participation and had to answer questions such as why they visited the Pearl Roundabout and why they participated in The Athletes' march. The interviewees seemed confused and they often asked to be given time to speak. The panellists reproved and confused the interviewees to an extent that implied to the audience that the protesters had no cogent argument. In one case, the national football player Mohammed Sayed Adnan apologized for visiting the Pearl Roundabout and declared his loyalty to the Al-Khalifa family. On the other hand, pro-regime athletes were confident and intrepid. They were given time not only to express their views, but also to attack the protesters while the panellists praised them. The studio and the guests of the two programmes were amicable to the pro-regime sports figures who said the athletes whose images were shown on television and in social media should be punished.

Official sources also distracted attention from the protesters' demands in regard to other marginal issues. The sports coverage distorted the 2011 uprising and ignored the demand of the protesters who were called "vandals" and "criminals". During the 2011 uprising, the regime strictly controlled coverage of the events. A number of journalists reported that they were arrested, tortured, and detained for not adopting the official interpretation of the uprising (Bahrain Independent Commission

of Inquiry 2011, p. 307). Social media was also used by pro-regime activists to identify and reveal the personal information of the journalists who were considered to be anti-regime (p. 391). By doing that, the regime instilled fear in journalists to prevent them from using their own observations or sources to cover the political activities. It was important for the regime to control the flow of information by controlling the local mainstream media and the Internet in order to prevent the protesters from communicating with the people of Bahrain through the media.

#### **6.4.2 Background of the two television programmes**

The use of studio background sets distinguished the television coverage from the newspaper coverage. The background of *With the Event* and *Special Event* programmes displayed official digital images of the ruling family; particularly of the King, the Prime Minister, and the Crown Prince. These official images are usually found in the Bahrain News Agency website and they are often accompanied by official news articles published in the local newspapers. The background also displayed a three dimensional digital waving flag. The use of the flag and the images was not arbitrary as images communicate a message (Lacey 1998, p. 5) that targets the audience. Both the images of the ruling family and the flag symbolize the identity and sovereignty of the country. Flag-waving symbolizes strong patriotism that shows support for the nation and its agenda (The Chambers Dictionary 1998, p. 609; Dreier and Flacks 2003, p. 397). It is also used to express citizenship and civic virtue (Marmo 2010, p. 52).

The flag aimed to characterize the party of the Al-Khalifa family and their supporters. Patriotism, according to the ideology of the regime, is associated with the Al-Khalifa family. Because the uprising was portrayed as a movement that targeted the ruling family, the panellists framed themselves as the lovers of the country and its leadership and framed their acts (vilifying the demonstrations and calling to punish the protesters) as patriotic. The ruling family also encouraged such behaviours. Sheikh Nasser stated in his phone interview that the performance of the *With the Event* panellists was evidence of "loyalty and love to the Kingdom of Bahrain, its leadership and its people".

Interestingly, the protesters also carried the flag of Bahrain in their protests to express their loyalty to Bahrain. The flag displayed in the background symbolized a

form of conflict between the opposing sides where each side believed that the flag belonged to them. The two programmes showed the protesters carrying the flag of Bahrain or wrapping it around them during the demonstrations. It was important then for the regime to retrieve the national symbol by displaying the giant flag in the background set.

The background was also used to strengthen the bond between the party members; particularly the Al-Khalifa family's party. The size of the flag covered the screen and shaded the individuals who appeared in the programmes. The message sent through the background suggested that the ruling family was the legitimate authority and called for the supporters from the audience to interact with the event. The background epitomized the country as the flag represented the borders, the images of the ruling family represented the legitimate rulers, and the loyal people of Bahrain were represented by the panellists.

#### **6.4.3 Crawlers and news tickers**

The technique used by the two programmes to manipulate the audience included the crawlers that displayed 'live' messages from the audience at the bottom of the screen during the two television programmes and news tickers that displayed scrolling text from news headlines in another bar below the crawler bar. For the crawlers, the content of the messages from the audience was controlled by the producers. All messages were allowed to appear in the two programmes. The crawler was available to the audience to express their views about the uprising during *With the Event* and it was stopped in the second half of *Special Event* when the phone line was available to the audience. While in normal practice the protesting about political events was condemned and considered an unpatriotic act, the television programme actually solicited the audience's reaction and commentary. It is probable that because it was demonstrating against the uprising and its demands, protesting in this case was considered politically neutral. The comments that appeared in the crawler did one of two things: either the comments praised the Al-Khalifa family or they condemned the protesters. The ruling family appeared in the majority of the 162 messages that were placed 223 times during the selected minutes of the two programmes. The messages declared the loyalty to the Al-Khalifa family and prayed to prolong their lives and keep Bahrain evermore under their rule.

The messages called for the suppression of the protests and punishment for the protesters who were described as "evil", "enemies", "plotters", and "violators". While the messages were accompanied by names, it could not be confirmed whether these names were of 'real' people or just propaganda by the regime. Only 22 messages (19.4%) were not accompanied by a name, and of these, several called for the protesters to be punished. The messages included "All those players who were involved in the events must be prosecuted", "All ungrateful athletes particularly Hubail and Sayed Adnan must be held accountable", and "The people demand to punish the players. The people demand to punish the players. They do not deserve clemency". These three messages explicitly incited the audience and the regime to take action against the protesters.

The news tickers of the two programmes placed two news headlines that were related to the uprising. The two headlines covered two events that were held at the time to respond to the involvement of the athletes in the uprising. The first event was titled "It is only for Hamad" and indicated how the Al-Khalifa family interprets their rule of Bahrain. Bahrain is a private property that is owned and must only be ruled by the ruling family members. The event was about signing a kit of the National Football Team. The kit symbolized the athletes while the signature was evidence of the loyalty of the athletes to the regime. Through this event the ruling family suggested that sports figures love and support the regime. The second event was titled "Swords of Allegiance" and it was about signing a petition to declare loyalty to the ruling family. Swords symbolized force and war and they were used in this context as an explicit threat to the protesters. This threat of force was used to create a sense of fear among the anti-regime audience and a sense of security among the pro-regime audience. These two events showed how the Al-Khalifa family took notice and made sure they showed that athletes and sports figures were still supporting the regime and its agenda.

The overall pro-regime tenor of the messages and the two news headlines implied that pro-regime sentiment represented the majority while the protesters were the deviant minority. The crawlers and the news tickers suggested that the call for the suppression of the uprising and subsequent punishment of the protesters was from the public, rather than from an oppressive government. The impact of the crawlers and the news tickers reinforced an anti-protest sentiment and, by seemingly

representing the 'public' opinion, gave authority for the punitive action taken against the protesters in the following days and weeks.

#### **6.4.4 Exploitation of the images of the protests**

The fourth technique was the manipulation of the images of the protests. The newspaper coverage avoided publishing photos of the protests except for four news articles published in *Al-Bilad*. Three of these articles published four photos of The Athletes' March while another news article published a photo which showed players carrying a banner where they vowed to be soldiers of the king and remain loyal to him. The three photos of the march were presented to the readers while the text of the news articles vilified the uprising and the protesters. The other photo represented the atmosphere within the regime and its proponents to depict the uprising as a battlefield that required soldiers who were willing to sacrifice themselves for the king and the country. The news articles of *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* did not publish any photographs related to the uprising during its coverage of the events.

The two television programmes, however, displayed 38 edited digital images of The Athletes' March. Most athletes' names and sport were identified, their faces were circled in blue and a black arrow was used to point to them. Nick Lacey (1998, p. 20) argues that everything is put in a picture intentionally to communicate a message. Using a circle aimed to direct the audience's vision to the sports figures' faces. Drawing a circle on a face is used in experimental studies to focus the attention on the target (Allen and Gabbert 2013, p. 1984). Colours are also a method used to draw the audience's attention to the content of the image (Lacey 1998, p. 38). Studies show that colours influence people's perceptions of an object (Singh 2006; Roberts et al. 2010). Blue is a positive colour (Sorokowski and Wrembel 2014, p. 11) that is used to focus the audience's attention inward and to suggest quietness and agreement (Elliot and Maier 2007, p. 250). Faces were selected from among several athletes in each image and the blue circle was used not only to disclose The Athletes' March participants, but also to identify them. As revealed later, the regime used the same technique of circling faces to capture the protesters when the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (2011) reported that pro-opposition university students were shown pictures with circled faces and asked to identify individuals in the images during investigations.

The other graphic symbol was the black arrow. There are several referential functions for the arrow symbol including fighting crimes (Monk 2013, p. 76). It is used by the sign maker to send instructions that are expected to be followed by the sign receiver (p.79) because the sign maker anticipates that the receiver will interpret the message the way in which it was framed. The use of a black arrow gives a negative perception about the athletes. Black often has a negative connotation. For example, it has a negative connotation in religion (Singh 2007, p. 784), a connection with anarchism (Sorokowski and Wrembel 2014, p. 13) and evil and death (Elliot and Maier 2007, p. 250), law enforcement (Nickels 2007), and aggressiveness in sport (Frank and Gilovich 1998).

The use of a blue circle and black arrow was intentional and the symbolism of the two marks cannot be ignored. The television producers employed two different colours, one for the circle and one for the arrow instead of employing the same colour for both signs. The edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed in *With the Event* for the first time beginning from minute 01:10:44 after framing the protesters as "spiteful people", "unpatriotic people", and "hypocrites". The edited digital image of the football player Mohammed Sayed Adnan was displayed before he was interviewed on the phone and the edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed during the phone conversation with the other football player A'ala Hubail in minute 02:00:00. A day after *With the Event* was broadcast, A'ala Hubail and about 100 athletes were arrested or suspended from playing for their teams (Lulu 2011).

The images of The Athletes' March were taken out of context and set in another context; what can be described as framing within framing. The first frame was created by the programmes and the panellists to portray the uprising. The second frame was created by the symbols. The protests were framed as a threat that must be confronted while the black arrow and the blue circle framed the protesters as outlaws who do not belong to Bahrain. These two signs were an intimation to the protesters that their images and personal details would be identified and revealed and they would be physically penalized. Displaying the images was the first phase of the punishment applied to the protesters. It was a warning for those who had already been involved as well as to those who had not yet been involved at the time in the demonstrations.

It can be argued that sports media was used as a means of surveillance and punishment. The pro-regime audience of the two programmes and the sports newspaper readers were encouraged to send any evidence they may have collected about the protests to the commission of inquiry, including photographs, video footage, and any personal information about individual protesters. While it is not possible to determine if there was any follow-up by audience with solicitation of information by the authorities, social media campaign established by pro-regime supporters showed that incitement against the protesters and the invasion of their privacy became relatively common place and was presented as national imperative. This brings us back to Jones' (2012) observations about the role of pro-regime online activists who are involved in trolling, naming, and shaming. It is clear, the campaign was not limited to social media as sports media played a significant role in trolling, naming and shaming the protesters. Overall, the images of the protests symbolized the war of ideas as alluded to by Khalaf (2013) in the literature review in Chapter 2. The Al-Khalifa family proposed that by manipulating the protests' images it was fighting the malefactors who deserved to be penalized, while the same images symbolized the determination and the ambition of the protesters to change the political situation.

#### **6.4.5 Use of music**

Music was the fifth technique used by the two television programmes. A soundtrack of *National Treasure* was used while the edited digital images of The Athletes' March were displayed. According to Kelly Lawler (2014) and Samantha Wilson (2013), *National Treasure* is considered a patriotic movie. Although the soundtrack was chosen because it was composed for a patriotic movie, music communicates particular messages. It is an important source of emotion in movies (Cohen 2001, p. 249). In addition, it has the ability to focus attention (p. 258), to affect attitudes and the mood (Allan 2007), to elicit a specific emotional response (Parke et al. 2007, p. 1), and to win the consumer's loyalty (Ballouli and Hutchinson 2013). According to the Hollywood director George Lucas (2015) music and sound are 50% of the entertainment in a movie.

Playing the soundtrack of *National Treasure* while displaying the edited digital images alluded to something interesting happening. It created an atmosphere

of excitement and a dramatic scene that integrated with other symbols. The soundtrack was used during the two programmes as a means of communication. It exploited the sensationalizing effect to engage the audience with the content and, particularly, the edited digital images of The Athletes' March. The soundtrack was also employed to induce the audience to interact with the message the way it was framed. The music may not have framed the individuals who appeared in the images as 'outlaws', but it played an important role in drawing the audience's attention to the images and the symbols that portrayed the protesters as criminals.

Overall, there were three messages construed in the two television programmes to convince the audience to believe in the regime's propaganda: the uprising was an illegal and harmful movement, the Al-Khalifa family was the legitimate authority, and the protesters were unpatriotic citizens whereas the supporters of the family were true patriotic citizens. These messages were identified after examining the visible text represented in the scenes of the television reports, The Athletes' March edited digital images, the background, the readable text (the crawlers and the news tickers), and the audio text (the dialogue of the panellists and the soundtrack).

## **6.5 Implications of the propaganda campaign**

The intention of the regimes propaganda was to divide the people of Bahrain into two parties with no neutral zone between them: the party of the Al-Khalifa family and their supporters on the one hand, and the party of the opposition and their supporters on the other. The television coverage, for instance, insisted that it was a black/ and white issue where Bahrainis were either with or against the regime. It was a case of 'us' or 'them'. The 'us' represented the regime and its proponents; the 'them' represented the opposition and its supporters. The regime's policy aimed to identify the boundary between those who protected the country and those who endangered it (Kluknavská 2014, p. 1). This policy was based on inherited collective identities that define the enemies and the confederates (Tarrow 2011, p. 31).

The use of 'us and them' identities endeavoured to encourage the people of Bahrain to endorse the regime's agenda and not be considered an enemy of the state. According to Kimberly A. Powell (2011), the U.S. media adopted the us and them policy during the coverage of the September 11 events. The coverage of the terrorist

attack fostered the political climate of support for the invasion of Iraq by dividing the world into two parties: the us, the good people represented by the United States and its allies, and them, the terrorists represented by enemies of the United States. Framing the conflict as a war between good and evil is a dehumanization process where the opponents are framed as enemies and therefore the enemies who do not deserve moral consideration (Maiese 2003). In other words, dehumanization is a way to justify crimes or abuses against the opposing party (Steuter and Wills 2009). Protesters who target the legitimate authority are more likely to be persecuted through arrest, dismissal from jobs or school, torture or death (Chang and Vitale 2013, p. 36).

Thus, the sports media coverage of the 2011 uprising in Bahrain attacked the uprising and the protesters so as to justify the regime's action against them. It was vowed that the sports figures and other society members involved in the protests would be held accountable. Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad said in his phone interview "They will be held accountable". This threat was repeated six times by Sheikh Nasser and the panellists and was followed by another threat by Sheikh Nasser who said "May a wall collapse on" those who demanded the toppling of the regime. This local expression means that Sheikh Nasser wished bad on the protesters. This tone of language had never been used by the Al-Khalifa family members in the media as they are trained to communicate with diplomacy and tact. Sheikh Nasser's phone conversation indicated that the predicament, which the regime was facing, meant that the regime would be willing to do whatever it would take to defend their rule. The king's son threatened the protesters explicitly in saying that "Bahrain is an island and there is nowhere to escape". The military position held by Sheikh Nasser as the Commander of Bahrain's Royal Guard could not be ignored. The *With the Event* was used by a strong figure in the royal family as a platform for the threat of force. For Sheikh Nasser, there were two types of people: the outlaws who would be held accountable and the good citizens who would be rewarded.

According to Paul Y. Chang and Alex S. Vitale (2013) extreme demands by protesters play a role in determining the level of repression (p. 23). Repressive actions are increased when protest-activities exceed the boundaries drawn by the regime (p. 36). Therefore, the uprising was framed by the coverage and by the Al-Khalifa family members as an intention to topple the regime. A'ala Hubail who delivered The Athletes' March speech on the Pearl Roundabout, denied in the *With*

*the Event* phone interview that he had demanded the downfall of the regime. However, the panellists of *With the Event* and *Special Event* insisted that he had. Hubail's edited digital image was displayed in the two programmes with a comment "A'ala Hubail delivers a speech and demands to topple the regime". The host Faiz Al-Sada spoke "on behalf of the people of Bahrain" when he commented on Sheikh Nasser's phone interview "Maybe this is what the people of Bahrain were waiting to hear that everyone spoke about toppling the regime will be held accountable. This is what we thank you for. This reassured us and soothed our hearts."

The Al-Khalifa family used all possible weapons including sport and sports media to confront the social movement. Sport is often employed by authoritarian regimes as a powerful force to control people. It is also used to propagate the regime's values and ideology by taking advantage of the engagement of sport in people's daily lives (Pujadas 2014, p. 10). In addition, controlling sports institutions allow authoritarian regimes to prevent pro-opposition activities and provide support to the regime's agenda (Byman and Linda 2010, p. 48). Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (1999) define propaganda as "the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (cited in Black 2001, p. 127).

The political use of sports media was a form of the Al-Khalifa family's hegemony over Bahrain. During the uprising, sports media was exploited to propagandize the regime's ideology and impose the regime's agenda on the people of Bahrain. It is noted that the coverage of the two newspapers were very similar. Although newspapers in Bahrain are privately owned, they adopt the regime's propaganda. The propaganda of the sports media coverage of the 2011 uprising was intended to create an atmosphere of fear of the social movement and the political change that may occur as a result. The Propaganda Model (PM) discussed earlier was developed to explain the modus operandi of the U.S. media, but it can be applied in to the state-controlled media in Bahrain. Several elements of the PM can be identified from the performance of the sports media during the 2011 uprising.

The first element is the concentration of the ownership of media and its consequences on the modus operandi of the Bahraini media. Television in Bahrain is owned and controlled by the regime and although newspapers are privately owned, the regime keeps its dominant control over the media. The second element is the

reliance on official and pro-regime sources to cover the uprising which led to the reinforcement of the regime's agenda. The third element is the notion of the media sports coverage elucidates the ideology of the regime and its attitude to democracy. The fourth element is "flak" which is negative responses to journalists' reports. State-controlled media institutions were employed in the context of the 2011 uprising to censure journalists. The Al-Khalifa family members and pro-regime figures rebuked and threatened sports figures and journalists who were involved in the uprising. The pro-regime figures, in this case, were the culprits. The fifth element of the PM points to the ability of dominant powers to unite the nation against 'enemies' who threaten the status quo. The sports media coverage framed and targeted enemies who demanded political reform. Although the PM was developed in the 1980s, the model can be used to examine media under the authority of autocratic regimes.

To sum up, the 2011 uprising in Bahrain which challenged the sacredness of the king and his family had questioned the legitimacy of the rule of the Al-Khalifa family. The Al-Khalifa family responded by wielding their power and control over the sports media to quell the protests. They countered their opponents by targeting the protests and by vilifying the protesters as "vandals" who destabilized the country. The coverage of the protests correlated the stability of the country with the Al-Khalifa family. In other words, adhering to the rule of the Al-Khalifa family meant the salvation from the 'crisis'. The institutional structure of the media in Bahrain resembles theoretical components of the propaganda Model developed by Herman and Chomsky. The discussion illustrates the significant role played by the sports media in Bahrain to propagandize the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime during the protests. It also elucidates the use of sports media as a means of communications, manipulation, and for the maintenance of order.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the role of Bahraini sports media in the uprising at the Pearl Roundabout that began on February 14, 2011 when the autocratic rule of the Al-Khalifa family was threatened as never before. While previous demonstrations in Bahrain, including the protests between 1994 and 1999, were limited to the involvement of opposition elites, political activists, labourers and students, the 2011 uprising involved Bahraini celebrity athletes and sports figures who previously had not been particularly politically engaged. The unprecedented involvement in politics by sports figures motivated the regime to engage in a propaganda campaign that used the sports media to manipulate public opinion for its own ends.

To understand the role of the sports media during the protests, this thesis has examined how sports media framed the 2011 demonstrations in Bahrain and discussed the general strategies and specific techniques used to manipulate the coverage of the events. The analysis was first informed by Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model and then drew on content analysis of the news frames to show that the Bahraini sports media coverage had portrayed the uprising as an illegal movement that caused a conflict between legality and illegality, and between good and evil. Seeking to justify the repression of the political protests, sports media was exploited by the Al-Khalifa regime to vilify those who were involved in the protests. The content analysis of newspaper and television sports coverage during a key period of the political uprising (from March 31 to May 31, 2011) reveals how the propaganda campaign relied on the cult of personality to frame the king and the Al-Khalifa family as the figureheads for the nation, while framing the uprising as a threat to the national identity of Bahrain. The sports media coverage suggested that the leader himself was the state and that he was "the central means by which the will of the masses is translated into the power of the state" (Kamrava 2011, p. 306). This thesis has shown how sports media played a particularly strong role in Bahrain to grant the Al-Khalifa family the legitimacy to carry out repressive actions on behalf of the nation.

The sports media of Bahrain was employed to propagate the regime's interpretation of nationalism which is strongly associated with loyalty to the ruling family and which suggested that protests had threatened the stability of the country.

By exploiting and manipulating media outlets, the Gulf State regimes regularly try to convince public opinion about the disadvantages of democracy (Davidson 2013, p. 45). This was particularly effective in Bahrain, where sport plays a significant role in the communities, and where public opinion is influenced by sports figures' achievements and public activities. Given the dominance of sports in the culture in Bahrain, using sports media was central to the regime's public communication strategies.

This thesis has examined two major pro-regime sports newspapers in Bahrain *Akhbar Al-Khaleej* and *Al-Bilad*. The findings show that both newspapers relied heavily on official sources to report on the uprising. It also investigated two main television programmes *With the Event* and *Special Event*, which were specially broadcast on Bahrain Sports Channel to undermine the political movement.

The main role of sports media prior to the 2011 uprising was not only to entertain but also to influence public opinion. However, after the 2011 uprising, the role of sports media changed when it became involved in the suppression of the uprising. Sports media played several tactical roles during the uprising including humiliation, monitoring, threatening, punishing, and prosecuting the protesters. Although most of the protesters who appeared in *With the Event* were arrested on the second day, *Special Event*, which was broadcast a week later, continued incitement against the protesters. Edited digital images of the protesters were displayed again during the second programme, while the newspaper coverage continued reporting the 'abuses' committed by the sports figures and athletes. Humiliation is a social means used to oppress other groups (Klein 1991, p. 93) and to pass orders that have to be followed (Klein 2005). Sports media was used by the regime as a tool of humiliation. Sports media was requiring those who participated in the uprising to declare their loyalty to the Al-Khalifa family, apologize for participation in the protests, and confess their unpatriotic actions in public.

In order to imply that the regime was still strong and in control of the situation, sports media played a monitoring role by publishing images and the personal information of the protesters. This was obvious when the two television programmes published the full names, places of work and images of the participants in The Athletes' March. This also signified that the regime was both watching and recording the activities organized by the protesters. Using sports media to troll,

shame and name the protesters communicated a message to the anti-regime protesters as well as the pro-regime supporters. The regime's propaganda campaign implied to the demonstrators that protesting was a crime against the state would not be tolerated. In this context, sports media was a substitute for the criminal code because participation in political activities resulted in the arrest and the punishment of those who were involved. Additionally, sports media played the roles of public prosecution and jurisdiction. Anti-regime protesters including sports figures and athletes, were interrogated before they were physically arrested. Sports figures and athletes were accused of committing a crime and sentenced to prison and their penalties were published in the local newspapers or announced on television. Overall, the regime's propaganda transformed the sports media from being an entertainment medium to an explicit political tool. The content analysis shows sport media was used as a propaganda tool by the regime to victimise and suppress the protesters. While some of the protesters were shot in the streets by military force, others were targeted by the sports media in television and newspaper reports.

The effectiveness of the sports coverage in changing public opinion has to be taken into account because the 2011 uprising has failed to attain its goals. The analysis of the behaviour of sports media during the 2011 uprising in Bahrain was informed by the "protest paradigm" in political media as theorised by previous studies of protest coverage (McLeod and Hertog 1992; De Vreese 2004; Boykoff 2006; Brasted 2006; Jha 2007; Di Cicco 2010). While these studies examined the undermining of protests by political media in order to maintain the status quo, the present thesis shows how sports media can also be used by authoritarian regimes as a propaganda tool to maintain the status quo and suppress political dissidents. For instance, sports media was used during the first weeks of the 2011 Egyptian uprising to back up the former regime of Hosni Mubarak (Zamalek's channel 2012). Sports media at time had called on protesters to give up their political activities that detribalized the country and harmed the economy. The Egyptian pro-regime sports figures also sustained the former president's policies and reproved the protesters who were framed as "infiltrators" for demanding the downfall of the regime. Nonetheless, sports media in Egypt and those who stood against the uprising changed their position after the fall of the former regime. Conversely, the regime in Bahrain has overcome

the dilemma of the uprising while sports media continued to serve the regime's agenda.

Sports media in Bahrain reflects the essence of the regime where the Al-Khalifa family dominates and controls all aspect of the state. The sports coverage of the 2011 uprising elucidates the regime's views of democracy. The structure of the regime accepts only those who believe in the ideology that certifies that the Al-Khalifa family is the legitimate alternative to lawful democratic institutions and that the ruling family must not be challenged by any means. In other words, the coverage of the uprising is an echo of the political environment that only allows the voice of the ruling family and its supporters to be heard. The regime motivates the public opinion not to think about the political and economic situations and to never question the ruling family's policies. The regime identifies good citizens as only those who follow the regime's instructions and interacts positively with them.

The Al-Khalifa family has a close relationship with sport and sports media. The ruling family members preside over the strongest federations and sports clubs. They involve themselves in sport and their activities receive considerable attention as their sports news is published in the local sports newspapers on a daily basis. News of the ruling family are written and sent to sports media by their official offices not just for informational purposes, but most importantly to communicate political messages. The ruling family realized early the importance of sports media and they have been directing and occupying high positions in sport in Bahrain including the Bahrain Olympic Committee and Bahrain Football Association. The regime also make it mandatory that sports news is edited to frame the Al-Khalifa members to the public as athletes, champions and supporters of sport and sports figures. There is an unwritten understanding between sports journalists about how to deal with official sports news articles. These articles, sent by email or fax, must be published. As discussed in Chapter 1, official sports articles that cover the Al-Khalifa family's activities occupy whole pages and are accompanied by several photographs.

As a research student in exile, the coverage of the sports media during the uprising aroused my attention. I have worked in journalism for more than ten years including five years with sports journalism. Political media rarely published official statements about protests occurring across the country whereas sports media had always refrained from covering political issues. Pointing to political issues in sports

newspapers had always been subjected to restrictions even when these activities were unrelated to local issues. I recall an event in 2010 when I worked as a sports journalist with *Al-Bilad*. The Bahrain National Football Team had intended to visit the West Bank to play a friendly match with the Palestinian National Football Team. The Bahraini team had planned to travel to Jordan and then to the West Bank where the match was to be held. That visit was controversial as citizens of Bahrain, which did not have diplomatic relations with Israel, had to obtain approval from the Israeli authorities who control the West Bank crossings with Jordan. For several days prior to the visit, *Al-Bilad* sports newspaper had criticised the travel to the West Bank and then it was prevented from writing about the issue. I remember asking the *Al-Bilad* sports editor-in-chief about the reason and he answered that he was told not to mix sport with politics. However, news articles that praised the visit and its positive political impacts were allowed to be published in other local newspapers.

Therefore, I was surprised when Bahrain Sports Channel broadcast live the programme *With the Event* and discussed the political events particularly The Athletes' March. The performance of sports media during the 2011 uprising opened a new era in the history of sports media in Bahrain as the propaganda employed to serve the ruling family had finally been used without equivocation after being in the background of sports coverage for decades. This explicit involvement of sports media in politics encouraged me to examine closely the regime's propaganda.

The ruling family could not afford to lose the political game as the success of the uprising would have meant the end of the rule of the Al-Khalifa family or reduction of their powers. Television coverage of the protests took the lead as the regime's propaganda campaign was launched officially by Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad. Bahrain Sports Channel coverage was more effective than the newspaper coverage because of the explicit imageries framed in the programmes to support the Al-Khalifa regime and victimise the protesters. Although the studio set of the two programmes looked unprofessional, the producers succeeded in delivering the pro-regime messages to deliver via the edited digital images accompanied by background music to stir the audience's sense of loyalty to the Al-Khalifa family.

There is a considerable scholarly effort that has examined social media during The Arab Spring; however, the role of mainstream media during this period has been overlooked. This thesis shows that mainstream media should not be neglected as it is

still an important tool in the hands of autocratic regimes. It shows that mainstream media play a significant role in communicating with a mass audience. This thesis also shows that national television in the era of social media remains as an effective means for influencing public opinion and imposing a regime's propaganda. Mainstream sports media can also be as repressive as political media. This thesis shows that authoritarian regimes believe in the importance of justifying their actions to the public regardless of how these regimes view the will of their people. Sports media is considered a significant element of force for autocratic regimes and a way to reflect their ideologies. The role that sports media play is complicated. It is not only exploited to legitimize political regimes and impose their ideologies, but it is also exploited to disorganize opponents of autocratic regimes and to preserve the state's power.

Further research can examine the extent that the sports media have influenced the political process during The Arab Spring revolution where autocratic regimes were compelled to step down and new regimes established such as in Tunisia and Egypt where sport and sports figures are popular as they are in Bahrain.

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### APPENDIX 1: Newspaper data translation samples

No.	Arabic	My translation to English
1	المسيرات غير القانونية	The unlicensed marches
2	الإساءة إلى قادة الوطن ومملكتنا الغالية	Offending the nation's figureheads and our dear kingdom
3	المسيرات غير القانونية وغير المرخصة	The unlicensed and illegal marches
4	المسيرات المخلة بالأمن	Marches that breach security
5	أعمال التخريب	Acts of sabotage
6	الإساءة إلى الوطن والقيادة الرشيدة	Offending the nation and the leadership
7	الأحداث المؤسفة	The unfortunate events
8	هدفت إلى الإساءة إلى رموزنا وقيادتنا الرشيدة	Aimed to offend our figureheads and our wise leadership
9	زعزعة الأمن والاستقرار في مملكتنا الغالية	Destabilizing the security and stability in our dear kingdom
10	المخطئون والمسيئون للقيادة الرشيدة و الوطن العزيز	The wrongdoers and the offenders of the dear nation
11	التوترات الأمنية	Security disturbances
12	الأحداث السياسية	Political events
13	الأزمة السياسية	Political crisis
14	استهداف السلم الأهلي	Targeting civil peace
15	ما يسمى بمسيرة الرياضيين	What is called The Athletes' March
16	خرق القانون والنظام	Breaching the law
17	إثارة التوترات الطائفية	Inciting sectarian strife
18	توقف النشاط الرياضي	Suspending of the sports activity
19	إساءة يتعرض لها الوطن أو القيادة الرشيدة	Abuse the nation or the wise leadership
20	الاعتصام في دوار مجلس التعاون	The sit- in the GCC roundabout
21	المسيرة السياسية	The political march
22	عدم ولائهم لوطنهم وقيادته الرشيدة	Disloyal to their nation and its wise leadership
23	المسيرة الرياضية المطالبة بإسقاط النظام	The Athletes' March that was called to overthrow the regime
24	الأزمة	Crisis

## APPENDIX 2: Television data translation samples

No.	Arabic	My translation to English
1	العظيم بوسلمان	The great Bo Salman (The King's agnomen)
2	الظروف الأمنية	Security events
3	الخيانة	Treachery
4	غيوم الخوف	Clouds of fear
5	أطماع الحاقدين	Malice and greed
6	الانفلات	Chaos
7	درس قاس	Harsh lesson
8	ناس وطنيين	Patriotic people
9	من مع النظام ومن ضد النظام	who is with the regime and who is against
10	ناكرو الجميل	Ungrateful people
11	النظام ورموز البلد	The regime and the nation's figureheads
12	المسيئون	The abusers
13	الحاقدون	Spiteful people
14	أقنعة كثيرة سقطت	Many masks fell
15	لا ينتمون لهذه الديرة	Unpatriotic
16	الظروف الأمنية	The security circumstances

### APPENDIX 3: Television data translation samples (Crawler)

No.	Arabic	My translation to English
1	اللهم احفظ مليكنا حمد، وولي العهد ورئيس الوزراء والبحرين وشعبها الوفي آمين	May God protects our King, our Crown Prince, the Prime Minister, Bahrain and its loyal people
2	البحرين تاج على رؤوسنا وبوسلمان غالي على قلوبنا	Bahrain is the crown of our heads and Bo Salman is our sweetheart
3	اللهم أدم علينا نعمة الأمن والأمان واحفظ بحریننا الغالية من كل شر ومكروه، واحفظ يا رب مليكنا ورئيس الوزراء وولي العهد واجعلهم ذخراً لنا للأبد	May God protects and keep our dear Bahrain secure from all evil and may the lord protect our King, the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince and keep them for us forever
4	أحبك بابا خليفة	I love you baba Khalifa
5	حنا جنودك يا بوسلمان	We are all your soldiers Bo Salman
6	وتبقى البحرين خليفية	Bahrain will remain Khalifya
7	رب اجعل هذا البلد آمناً مطمئناً سخاء رخاء ورد عنه كيد الكائدين يا رب احفظ ملك القلوب احفظ حبيب قلب كل بحريني خليفة بن سلمان يا رب طول في أعمارهم وارزقهم الصحة والعافية	May God secures and bless this country and protect it from the plotters' maliciousness O my Lord and protect the king of hearts and each Bahraini's sweetheart Khalifa bin Salman. O God prolong their lives and keep them well
8	ما حدث في البحرين نعمة من الله لنفرق فيه بين الصديق والعدو فنحمد الله ونشكره على كل شيء والله يحفظ لنا البحرين وحكومتنا وشعبنا الوفي آمين آمين	What happened is a lesson to identify the friend from the enemy. We thank God for everything. May God protects Bahrain, our government and the loyal people Amen Amen
9	الله يحفظ البحرين ومليكننا ورئيس الوزراء وولي عهده من كل مكروه	May God protects Bahrain, our King, our Prime Minister and the Crown Prince from all evil
10	نرفع أسمى آيات الحب والولاء والإخلاص للقيادة الرشيدة لصاحب الجلالة الملك المفدى ورئيس الوزراء الموقر وولي العهد الأمين سائلين الله تعالى أن يحفظهم من كل سوء ويرجع البحرين الحبيبة كما كانت وأفضل	We declare our love, loyalty and trust in the wise leadership: His Highness the king, the distinguished Prime Minister, and the Crown Prince. May God protects them from all evil and renovate Bahrain to the best