

## Magdalena Karolac



### Abstract:

#### To go or not to go: The assessment of the framing of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in the English language press in the UAE

The aim of this paper is to study the framing of one of the most important world sporting events to take place in Qatar at the end of this year. The framing of the World Cup 2022 in the press of the UAE is especially interesting since the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have witnessed the biggest challenge so far in the history of the council with a spat that divided the council members with regards to, among others, the foreign policies of Qatar, with some actively opposing them (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE), and some choosing to remain neutral (Oman, Kuwait). These differences led to the freezing of any relations with Qatar by the three GCC countries mentioned above that were also joined by Egypt. While the mutual relations were reinstated in January 2021, the three years of coldness have no doubt impacted the perceptions of mutual relations.

This paper aims at analysing the coverage of the preparations of the World Cup 2022 in the English press in the UAE, with a focus on the frequency (the importance of the event), sentiment analysis (positive, neutral, negative), along with framing. This multiple analysis will reveal the overall portrayal and encouragement or lack of thereof to attend the event in person. Sport tourism comprises a significant percentage of leisure travel, it is thus an important factor for the economy of Qatar, and also a publicity exercise positioning the country on the more broadly known tourist map. The organization of such an event may also help spur regional tourism with foreign tourists choosing to visit not only Qatar but also neighbouring countries as a stopover. In addition, Saudi Arabia has already qualified to take part in the games, while the UAE is yet to know the outcome of the qualifications. Since football generates high emotions, the analysis of its coverage in the Emirati press may reveal interesting insights of mutual relations.

In order to examine the topic, the researcher chose a sample of the most important Emirati English language dailies newspapers, namely, English language dailies: Gulf News (Dubai), Khaleej Times (Dubai), The National (Abu Dhabi). Through a search in the online database, articles that deal with the topic of the World Cup 2022 will be collected and analysed to extract frames. The term 'frame' was first coined by Gregory Bateson (1972) who considered human communication to be a map of interaction and meaning that guides our interaction by constructing the cognitive structures that we use to make sense of the world around us. Goffman (1974) later used the term 'frame' to describe the organization of social experiences in order to make sense of them. Goffman defined frames as 'schemata of interpretation that enable participants to locate, perceive and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large' (Goffman 1974: 21). Frames being cognitive constructs, are organizational devices that enable audiences to process information so that they fit into a prior established system, fill in the missing information from previously established frames, and process and comprehend information presented to them through the media. Information

remains neutral and meaningless until some frame has been applied to it. Entman (1993: 52) explains further that ‘to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.’ He further states that framing essentially involves selection and salience. Exclusion becomes an important element in framing because the way in which an issue is ignored or disguised somehow reinforces attributes of insignificance or unworthiness, which are never neutral. Frames will be extracted from the studied material though content and discourse analysis. In addition, a software will be used to conduct the sentiment analysis.

### **Bio:**

Dr. Magdalena Karolak is Associate Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University, UAE. She received her Ph.D. in Linguistics, M.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Latin American Studies; and B.A. in French Language. Prior to working at ZU, Dr. Karolak held Assistant Professor positions in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. In 2014-15, she was an American Political Science Association MENA Fellow. Her research interests include transformations of societies in the MENA region and comparative linguistics. Dr. Karolak has published more than 50 journal articles and book chapters on the shifting gender relations, social media, culture and identity, and political system transformations in the MENA countries. She is the author of three scholarly monographs.