

## Shaming to Emancipate: Metaphoric Bipolarisation in Jordanian Online Socio-Political Editorials

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**Abstract.** The emotion of shame in the Arab context is culturally specific and viewed in a shame-honour paradigm. The interdisciplinary study here unpacks the Jordanian sociopolitical issues which are embedded within the cultural concept of shaming using a critical metaphor method. The study on selected 97 online editorials written by Ahmad Hasan al-Zu'bi here reveals a metaphoric bipolarisation technique which conjures the notions of shame on Arab's sociopolitical submissiveness to global powers but argues that the global powers' domination is a myth. These claims communicated by the dual metaphors provoke the most intense shame emotion as they violate the Arab tradition and honour. They are intended at awakening the people from their own powerlessness due to internal squabbling and corrupt leadership as well as hegemony of external powers. From the perspective of political communication in the digital age, they echo both nationalistic and populist intentions through the dichotomous shame-pride cultural paradigm. Generally, this study demonstrates that the use of these journalistic rhetorical moves which are rooted in a shame herd culture is a distinctive tactical communication capable of foregrounding an emancipatory agenda in restoring the honour of any sociopolitically affected community.

**Keywords and phrases:** metaphoric bipolarisation, critical metaphor analysis, shame, culture, online journalism

### Introduction

The emotion of shame has been dynamically studied as an intrinsic individual Western moral guilt value versus a more Eastern-oriented collective cultural practice associated with familial or communal reputation (Berkson 2021; de Groot

et al. 2021). Studies of shame as culture and affect in media and communication research has been largely done. However, literature shows works on the shaming culture within journalism with a liberating agenda using a linguistic method is still limited. Specifically, the study of metaphor recruitment in news media which exerts emotions and creates attitudes that is critically oriented in the Jordanian sociopolitical online journalism context and the culture of shaming is scarce. Based on these gaps, this study focuses on investigating a journalistic linguistic technique of a metaphoric bipolarisation which is premised upon the tenets of critical metaphor analysis within the cultural study of shaming.

Metaphoric bipolarisation, also known as a double-sword metaphor, is a rhetorical method to frame and construct dualism (Butulussi 2019). In this study, the focus is on its dichotomous use to assert shame on Arabs, not only Jordanians and simultaneously construct the political myth of foreign dominance. This is also constructed based on the dichotomous shame-honour cultural paradigm serving two political perspectives of nationalism and populism on digital platforms.

Jordan is part of the Arab nation whereby religion, ethnicity, culture, language and Arabism form a common core. The Arab countries have been perceived as sociopolitically weak since the colonisation era in the 19th century. This reputation is further exacerbated by internal squabbling among members of the Arab countries (Albtoush 2020). These include, firstly, the Arab-Israeli conflict and wars, whereby the Palestinians have been engaged in continuous clashes with the Israelis, at a time when the Arab world falls short in taking actions. Secondly, the Gulf War and the consequent fall of Baghdad in 2003, which caused turmoil and led to the intrusion of the United States, Iran and the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS). Thirdly, the outbreak of Arab uprisings or the metaphorical “Arab Spring”, which was a revolt against corruption, oppression and dictatorship of some Arab regimes (Kort 2018; Zibin 2018). Despite the toppling of some Arab tyrannical regimes, Arab citizens’ revolts have left political unrest, particularly in Yemen and Libya, paving ways for intervention by global powers such as America, Russia and Iran (Atatfa and al-Mamoory 2017). Aggravated by media reporting, Arabs today continue to carry the stereotyped image of a nation susceptible to domination (Lakoff 1991).

The events have spawned debates in the Jordanian sociopolitical discourse in which this study is contextualised. The Jordanian news columns are immensely critical of this state of affairs, primarily the pathetic situation of Arab citizens who were killed or displaced from their homelands, subjecting Arab countries to external domination. Criticisms against this disparagement of the Arabs are manifested through shaming practices where in the Arab culture, shaming connotes violation of traditions, social and cultural value system (al Jallad 2010).

One of the most reputable Jordanian online columnists critiquing these issues is Ahmad Hasan al-Zu'bi who was a columnist of the *Emirates Today* in the United Arab Emirates. With more than 1,000 satirical editorials published on his online news site, his criticality has gained him four Jordanian journalism awards to date. Al-Zu'bi characteristically frames his evaluations through metaphors that form dual images of a negative representation of the Arabs (us), and a fearful and domineering image of the outsiders (them) which he perceives as a political myth. The Jordanian journalism authorities require writers to blur any personal engagement with the presented issues (El-Sharif 2014). Al-Zu'bi's distinctive discursive technique to fulfil this distancing requirement offers an engaging insight into the existing socio-political turmoil and so, they are worthy of further investigations.

Essentially, al-Zu'bi's metaphoric bipolarisation technique serves as a means to arouse the readers' emotion of shame more vividly than literal words do. Shaming the Arabs effects heightened public awareness of unequal powers at play since metaphors are never value-free. The use of metaphors in political discourses is intentional as metaphors fulfil multipurposes among which are rhetorical, ideological and mythic forces. Therefore, in this research, the incorporation of a critical discourse perspective within metaphor analysis namely the adoption of the Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004) is necessary. A critical standpoint can unpack metaphor reconceptualisation and recontextualisation to uncover the embedded ideological insights. In brief, this research poses the question of how the metaphoric bipolarisation technique in the online editorials under study evokes a dichotomous effect of shaming and myth creating, and thus the awakening and emancipating of Jordanians and Arabs from the sociopolitical construction as weak nations.

## **Related Literature**

### **Shaming and culture**

Shame is a negative feeling of being “disgraced by something that is unworthy” in one's own eyes (Isenberg 1973). It is a psychological mechanism resultant from violation of the social norms or being viewed by society as morally unacceptable. Although shame has biological roots, it has also been largely studied as a culture-specific emotion (Kollareth, Fernandez-Dols and Russell 2018).

Research related to shame using a critical linguistic approach has been conducted primarily in discourses of stigmatised identities such as the shaming of physiological and neurological impairments of disabled persons (Ang and Yeo 2018), gay and lesbian sexual orientation (Shadbolt 2009), body shaming (Cain,

Donaghue and Ditchburn 2017), unmarried young people who engaged in pre-marital sex (Ang and Fauziah 2023) and women who opted for caesarean birthing choice (Fenwick et al. 2010). Such groups of people were considered deviant from the larger norm; shaming in this case becomes an exclusionary practice. In media studies, research has also demonstrated that shaming happens in both mainstream and the Internet news media by exposing details of confirmed wrongdoings or even political scandals and crimes. For instance, the Sewol ferry disaster news stories in South Korea (Heo and Park 2019) and the framing of sexual and political scandals between Monika Lewinsky and President Clinton (Everbach 2017). With digitalisation of news, shaming creates sensationalism which invites more click baits, thus creating greater news values.

Journalism and communication research has however, shown that shaming can also be interpreted with positive outcomes in some contexts. For instance, the defiance of shame in Donald Trump's racist white rhetoric benefitted him as a racialised self-confidence (Schaefer 2020). In health communication, the insertion of the emotion of shame from peer evaluation was perceived as a social threat, and hence, had a persuasive impact in anti-alcohol advertisements (Becheur and Valette-Florence 2014). This positive use is differentiated from the more recent approach of constructive digital online journalism which propagates diffusion of positive emotion to evoke positive psychology in the readers, moving away from typical negative conflict-based news that has resulted in weary audiences (McIntyre 2015). Here in this study, we argue that shame can also be purposefully exerted in journalistic communication to liberate the people. Despite a negative emotion, it is intended to steer a positive result founded upon the cultural shame-honour polarisation and this is interestingly unique and central to the context of study here.

The nuances in the meaning of "shame" lie in the different intensity, causes or consequences of shame, all pointing back to cultural factors that trigger one's effect or emotion (Harkins 1996). Semantically, shame in the Arab culture is a loaded concept, encoded in various forms depending on the intensity level (Wierzbicka 1992). Among these forms is the Arabic word *ayb* which denotes faults or criticism of someone's behaviour as well as its association with genitals, hence realising a lower degree of shame. On the other hand, the word *ār* refers to dishonour or disgrace due to major wrongdoings such as treachery, infidelity and betrayal which signifies the most intense feeling of shame. *Ayb* and *ār* are socially differentiated from haram which carries a religious perspective. There is also "good shame" which refers to adherence to maintaining Arab's social values and customs such as a child respecting elderly or a woman refraining herself from speaking loudly in public. On the other hand, "negative shame" is associated with

the infringement of social standards. For instance, the stigmatisation of population subgroups such as Arabs living with HIV/AIDS (Badahdah and Foote 2010) and the same sex community (Georgis 2013). The anxieties of violating the norms are less attributable to it being *haram* (religiously forbidden in Islam) than it leading to *kalam al-nas* (what people will say). The worth of oneself is shaped by what the family and community think, rather what one feels within. The fear of shame due to public reckoning is more social-psychologically destructive than the wrongdoing itself.

The Arab culture is also governed by shame-honour paradigm and so, shame is pervasive in their daily discourse to defend pride and honour. In orientalism literature, the highest degree of shame is manifested through conflicts where the notion of courage versus cowardice prevails (Landes 2007). Although Said (1978) is very critical of the idea of Arab culture being referred to as a “shame culture”, he offers orientalists a lead in that he admires the Palestinians’ courage in defying corrupt and coward Arab rulers in standing up for honour. This is despite a Western view of shaming the Arab leaders’ supplication, compromise and running after negotiation. Said also argues this Western perception is a political myth designed around the intellectual and material needs of European empires. The key differences between Western and Arabic value systems are that the West highly rates freedom and individual rights but the Arabs value heritage and embrace a collectivist herd culture (Albtoush 2020). And so, while the West views shame as a personal experience, the Arabs group mindset perceives shame as an insult to their pride.

### **Metaphor functions in news discourse**

Metaphor was considered a linguistic matter carrying poetic effects prior to the emergence of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In the CMT, a conceptual metaphor is construed as a systematic restructuring of a cognitive target domain, usually abstract, via a more concrete source domain. This is done by projecting semantic features, aspects and/or entities of the source domain onto the target domain (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Within the CMT, Semino (2008) argued that the broad source and target conceptual domains proposed cannot always provide a full account of the meanings of metaphoric expressions and are limited to projecting elements drawn from a concrete donor domain into an abstract one in a general sense. Subsequently, Musolff (2006) proposed the notion of “scenarios” to explain the rhetorical and ideological motives behind metaphors by means of screening concrete storylines such as the setting, goals, actions, participants and entities onto the topics discussed. By the same token, the role metaphor plays in creating satire can be specifically detected

within “scenarios” which in turn help readers understand the aroused emotions or meanings. In recent years, CMT has been extended through the pragmatic approach of the Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) championed by Charteris-Black (2004) by asserting the importance of cultural, rhetorical and ideological dimensions, arguing metaphors as an evaluative discursive strategy to persuade attitudes in public discourse (Musolff 2006).

In news discourse, metaphors rhetorically fulfil functions of drawing attention and summarising to a more critically oriented role of exerting and expressing emotions as well as creating attitudes. Among the journalistic studies employing the CMA approach are firstly the Germans’ ethnic ideology against the Polish, which was rhetorically revealed through body-illness-cure metaphor scenario, prompting the Germans eventually to Germanise this minority or wipe them out (Jaworska 2011). In news pertaining to the Arab uprisings in *The Washington Post*, the uprising processes were viewed as a journey towards democracy represented through JOURNEY, GAME and NATURAL PHENOMENA metaphors. Whereas, comparatively in the Iranian newspaper, *Keyhan*, the uprisings were portrayed as A RELIGIOUS CONFLICT where Arab dictators were unbelievers and evil while the demonstrators were the believers (Fallah and Moini 2016). In the Jordanian media texts, political columnists ambiguously used the metaphor *marje ’yah ’ulyaa* (high-profile references) in addressing prominent state figures and the Monarch to avoid mentioning any symbol of the Jordanian state and hence, an anti-coercion function (El-Sharif 2014).

In terms of metaphor and emotion, literature on the emotions of fear and shame was found to be cultural-specific. Zibin and Hamdan (2019) revealed that fear is conceptualised in Jordanian Arabic through the figurative devices of conceptual metonymy, conceptual metaphor and conceptual metaphonymy. Their findings support the idea that emotions not only can be conceptualised universally based on human embodied experiences (Kövecses 2005) but also socio-culturally based on culture specific schemas. Specific to the emotion of shame in Jordanian journalism, one study was found. The criticisms against Arabs’ political relations exemplified via Arab governments being relative to their subordinates were conveyed through the metaphor scenario of a dysfunctional family based on a marriage of convenience and infidelity rather than love and intimacy (Albtoush and Ang 2021). Shame is argued as a cultural construction, again distinguishing it from Kövecses’s (2005) findings of metaphorical conceptualisation of shame through human bodily experiences and behaviours.

Charteris-Black (2018) has also proposed the mythic function of metaphors. An African study found that Ghana's independence leaders used WAR, RELIGION and JOURNEY metaphors to create the political myth to urge for the formation of a Union Government of Africa and delegitimise colonialism (Nartey 2019). In the migration discourse within the European Union (EU), Arcimaviciene and Baglama (2018) demonstrated that the social divide between the EU and the migrants was accounted for by creating two myth types: the "dehumanisation" of migrants as a threat and the "moral authority" myth to protect the stability of EU. In the Arab context, apart from a study refuting stereotypical myths on grounds of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism (Abdel-Raheem 2020), investigating the mythic effect of metaphors within the Arab media context seems to have received very little attention. Therefore, the existing myth of Arabs' emasculation and weakness in Western media in contrary to the myth of American exceptionalism, urgently requires a review. The concept of "domination myth" is of great concern in this research as it reveals corresponding deficiencies of the Arabs, exerting the culturally specific emotion of shame in the hearts of the readership, mobilising them eventually for a course of action. Having identified how the concept of shaming within the Arab culture is distinctive from the West and is underexplored, it becomes essential to investigate how the shaming mechanisms are metaphorically rooted and constructed within the Arab cultural perceptions.

## Method

The 97 selected editorials examined here were part of the 1,000 editorials collected for a larger study of different metaphor types. They were published during the period of the Arab Spring (2010 and 2015) on al-Zu'bi's website (refer [www.sawaleif.com](http://www.sawaleif.com)). Narrowing the study to the shaming metaphors in sociopolitical issues, 63 editorials were found to cover the local issues of corruption and malpractices while 34 were devoted to regional issues representing two target topics: the Arabs and global political powers.

Analytically, a close reading of the articles published in Arabic was first done. Then, the metaphors addressing target topics were identified based on the notion of "semantic tension" (Charteris-Black 2004) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by Pragglejaz Group (2007). It is acknowledged that there is a newer modified version of MIP developed at Vrije Universiteit known as MIP-VU by Steen et al. (2010). However, as this study examines indirect metaphorical expressions, MIP is deemed more appropriate as MIP-VU describes more direct or explicit ones such as similes. After identification, unnecessary paragraphs were

removed, maintaining only the paragraphs containing metaphors which commonly cluster in the last three lines of the articles. The data set was manually tagged as the analysis involved understanding the richness and complexities of the Arab culture and the works of shaming in which a software might not accurately comprehend. The metaphor identification and interpretation processing were done independently by the researcher and an American anthropologist who is an expert in Arab shame culture and has good knowledge of Arabic. Numerous discussions were held subsequently to discuss discrepancies with references to the abstraction and intensity level of shame as well as nuances found in specific contexts that trigger the shame-honour dichotomy. A similar discussion was also undertaken at the later stage when translating the metaphors into English language.

In terms of conceptual mapping, we followed Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who explained the mappings between two distant semantic fields of the conceptual metaphor pattern exemplified by LOVE IS A JOURNEY. The abstract domain, love is embodied in terms of the tangible counterpart of the JOURNEY where lovers are mapped as travellers and the vehicle is their love relationship. The travellers' desired destination is the lovers' common goal, the distance they cover as progress in the relationship while obstacles along the JOURNEY are difficulties encountered in the relationship. Based on the above example, each conceptual element of the source domains in the data under study are mapped onto their corresponding elements of the target domains in the form of scenarios by referencing to the settings, goals, actions, participants and topics communicated within the mini narratives (Musolff 2006).

The intensity of shaming is gauged based on the notion of Arab shame in orientalism literature (Landes 2007; Said 1978) and the concept of *ār* (dishonour or disgrace) (Wierzbicka 1992) that downplays the dignity of Arabs. Specifically, when Arabs are ordered at the bottom of "the great chain of being" (hierarchical order of the universe from gods to inanimate object) (Lovejoy 1936), it is one of the greatest insults and violation of Arab pride and honour.

For the purpose of data presentation here, we followed the conventions in cognitive linguistics in which the metaphor keywords are highlighted in bold (purple font is used for readability) and target domains are underlined. The translated extracts were presented under their respective source domains to which the metaphors belong and were introduced with their respective headings and date of publications. Subsequently, the metaphor key words and target domains were processed into conceptual metaphor patterns and presented in small uppercase. The proposed patterns were then analysed within scenarios by projecting the packet of information

from the source domains onto the target counterparts. Finally, we integrated the cognitive and pragmatic standards with the sociocultural and rhetorical forces, following the discourse model of metaphor and metaphor purposes.

Generally, the plausibility of CMA for carrying out this study stems from its three primary phases: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation. In the first phase, a metaphor is identified based on the notion of semantic tension wherein a linguistic expression or phrase shifts from the context in which it is expected to occur to another context (Charteris-Black 2004). The interpretation phase is devoted to establishing a relationship between the metaphors, and the cognitive and pragmatic factors influencing them. At this stage, the uncovering of the emotion of shaming and the mythic effect of metaphor choice in this study is understood through the underpinnings of the sociocultural forces shaping them. The explanation stage is shaped by identifying the social agency and role in terms of unveiling the rhetorical moves behind metaphor choice. Finally, embracing critical discourse approach, the dialectic relations between language and socio-cultural reality, in particular power inequality and domination of one group by another is weighed.

## **Results**

In this study, a total of 9 sources, 24 target domains, along with 27 conceptual patterns were identified. We will first provide an overview of the metaphors and patterns found as shown in Table 1. However, due to space limitation, only a scenario exemplifying the most intense emotion of negative shame, each from the four most popular domains found typified by ANIMALS, HUMANS, FOOD and MACHINES metaphors will be elaborated. It is necessary to prioritise descriptive explanations to showcase the working of culture-specific shaming practice over any statistical concern given the exclusivity of each metaphorical scenario and qualitative nature of the research.

**Table 1.** Overview of metaphors and patterns on regional socio-political matters found

Source domain	Target domain	Occurrence of identified metaphor type	Conceptual patterns
ANIMALS	GLOBAL POWERS	15	GLOBAL POWERS ARE FIERCE ANIMALS
	ISRAELIS	1	ISRAELIS ARE A PIG
	IRAN AND ISIS	1	IRAN AND ISIS ARE TURBANED CROWS
	ARABS	13	ARABS ARE SLAUGHTERED/ DEFENCELESS ANIMALS
	ARAB NATIONS	4	ARAB NATIONS ARE DEFENCELESS ANIMALS
	SYRIAN ELECTIONS	2	SYRIAN ELECTIONS ARE HUNTING DEFENCELESS BIRDS
	THE SYRIANS	2	THE SYRIANS ARE SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS
	THE LIBYANS	2	THE LIBYANS ARE SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS
	THE FRENCH	1	THE FRENCH ARE A PEACEFUL ANIMAL
	HUMANS AND HUMANS'-RELATED ATTRIBUTES (CONFINEMENT AND MARRIAGE)	BAGHDAD	3
ARABS		2	ARABS ARE ORPHANS; ARABS ARE INMATES
AN AGING ARAB POP STAR		1	AN AGING ARAB POP STAR IS THE SYMBOL OF ARAB REGIMES
ARAB REGIMES'-CITIZENS' RELATIONSHIP		16	ARAB REGIMES'-CITIZENS UNIFICATION IS MARRIAGE ARAB REGIMES'-CITIZENS SEPARATION IS DIVORCE
AMERICAN-IRANIAN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP		3	AMERICAN-IRANIAN POLITICAL UNIFICATION IS MARRIAGE

*(Continue on next page)*

**Table 1.** (Continued)

Source domain	Target domain	Occurrence of identified metaphor type	Conceptual patterns
SPORTS	ARAB POLITICIANS	11	ARAB POLITICIANS ARE CHAMPIONS OF MALPRACTICE ARAB POLITICS IS SPORTS
MACHINE	ARAB NATION	5	THE ARAB NATION IS A TV MACHINE
	THE SYRIAN NATION	2	THE SYRIAN NATION IS A MACHINE
	IRAQI CIVILISATION	1	IRAQI CIVILISATION IS A MACHINE
FOOD	ARABS	6	ARABS ARE FOOD
PLANTS	GAZA	3	GAZA IS A FARMER; DEATH AND LIFE ARE A PLANT
	ARAB SPRING	2	THE ARAB SPRING IS A PLANT
NATURAL PHENOMENA	FREEDOM; DICTATORSHIP	3	FREEDOM IS LIGHT; DICTATORSHIP IS DARKNESS FREEDOM IS A FAVOURABLE WEATHER CONDITION
COMMODITY	ARABS	2	ARABS ARE A VALUELESS COMMODITY
DIRT	ARAB SHAME	2	ARAB SHAME IS A DIRTY CLOTH

Table 1 demonstrates the 9 sources, 24 target domains, along with 27 conceptual patterns identified along with the frequency of occurrence of each. These frequencies only act as indicators of popular use, not representative of the perceived effects in terms of assertion of shaming and a few of them highlight the emotion of pride.

The listed metaphors and patterns in Table 1 are predominantly governed by the phenomenon of global political power versus Arabs' powerlessness which are embedded with the shaming of Arabs. For instance, instead of being a physical action showing competitiveness, sports metaphors shame the Arabs for their running after negotiations with the powerful as inferred by the pattern: ARABS' COMPROMISED PRINCIPLES ARE SHAME. Similarly, another intense emotion of shame which is typified by the notion of betrayal is figured through football sport metaphors triggering the pattern: BETRAYING ONE'S COUNTRY IS ONE'S WISHING DEFEAT IN A FOOTBALL MATCH.

The notion of exercising power over powerless Arab subordinates by their rulers is also framed within COMMODITY metaphors. Here, the Arab regimes are shamed for displacing and downgrading Arab asylum seekers into worthless commodities, relative to non-Arabs who secured and hosted them. These two-fold positions are conceptualised through the dichotomised metaphor patterns: ARAB RULERS' RUTHLESSNESS TOWARDS THEIR SUBORDINATES IS A SHAME, whereas ANGELINA JOLIE'S HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES TOWARDS ARAB REFUGEES IS A PRIDEFUL HUMAN REACTION. A small occurrence of the PLANTS and NATURAL PHENOMENA metaphors were utilised as "Arab Spring" metaphors to uncover slight prideful actions of the citizens who did not submit to Arab rulers' suppressing practices. More interestingly, each metaphor in the selected editorials is contextualised within a unique satirical context. However, as mentioned earlier, due to space limit and descriptive nature of the analysis, only selected representations of the most intense shaming metaphors evoked through the ANIMAL, HUMAN, MACHINE and FOOD metaphors will be detailed next.

### ANIMAL Metaphors

ANIMAL metaphors are highly conventionalised in the Arab culture and this is also reflected in Table 1 by the highest frequency of occurrence. Generally, in the data examined, the notion of Arabs' powerlessness is predominantly triggered by conceptualising them in terms of obedient, meek and defenceless animals such as "lambs", "chickens", "birds", "deer" and an "old horse" whereas global powers are conceptualised in terms of unrivalled and aggressive animals like an "elephant", "bear", "tiger", "fox wolf", "hyena", etc. As such, the Arabs are shamed for their being weak relative to the global powers, as inferred by the patterns: GLOBAL POWERS ARE FIERCE ANIMALS, but ARABS ARE HELPLESS/DEFENCELESS ANIMALS. Both depict the predator and prey as well as butchery satirical scenario types. Extract 1 is an exemplification of this animal scenario.

#### Extract 1: The Lords of the Forest and its Lambs

[A]ll these animals' voices and the clamour of claws on the wood of the dividing table continue day and night while the Arab lamb is silent and cannot see beyond its nose ... we are in a jungle precisely ... **the fox** is French ... **the bear** is Russian, ... **the wolf** is British ... **the tiger** is European ... **the elephant** is American ..., **the hyena** is German ... and **the lamb** is Arab; however, **the pig** is Israeli in that it always awaits the executing stage to lap up the flowing blood, dancing with its hooves and welcoming the death of Arabs.

*Source:* <http://www.sawaleif.com> (accessed 21st September 2015)

Projecting an ANIMAL scenario onto NATIONS implies a fight of many global political powers over dividing Syria amongst them. The diverse use of animal metaphors in depicting humans in Extract 1 is oriented to global powers' interests in Syria, made possible partly by the Syrian President seeking help from these powers, as well as some European countries taking in Syrian asylum seekers. As such, the broad metaphorical pattern inferred within this context reads as: HUMANS ARE ANIMALS. Again, the metaphors in Extract 1 highlight the notion of POWER versus powerless by exhibiting two types of animals: predator/aggressive animals exemplified by the “fox”, “bear”, “wolf”, “tiger”, “elephant”, “hyena” and “pig” on one hand, and weak/prey animal represented by the “lamb” on the other.

Accordingly, a scary scenario is evoked through formulating further metaphorical patterns: THE WORLD IS A JUNGLE and NATIONS ARE ANIMALS. These patterns suggest that humans have been demoted into animals in light of the great chain of being which is a hierarchical system of ordering the universe within a top-bottom fashion; from Gods, humans, animals, plants to inanimate objects respectively (Lovejoy 1936). The choice of this metaphor scenario is also attributed to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* where the strong animals exploit the weak ones as exemplified by the metaphor pattern: LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. The conceptual metaphor, nations are animals further suggests that nations hold unequal degrees of power just like animals. As a result, global international powers are assigned a status above the Arabs within the animal level, thereby inferring the orientational image schema: GLOBAL POWERS ARE UP, but ARABS ARE DOWN.

The assigning of a particular animal type to each nation is motivated by political, geographical and cultural criteria. For example, the “bear” is geographically an iconic Russian emblem (Har-Zvi 2016), the “fox”, “wolf”, “tiger” and “hyena” metaphors are invariably associated with the French, British and European nations to symbolise cunningness, aggressiveness and ferocity. However, the “elephant” metaphor represents the Republican Party in America, a huge animal which frightens all beasts (Cameron and Low 1999). In contrast, the “lamb” metaphor symbolises Arab's submissiveness (al-Uzaizi 2012). Finally, the use of “pig” metaphor to represent Israel is motivated by verse 65 in Surah al-Baqara in that the Jews were deformed into monkeys and filthy pigs. Depicting degrees of animals' unequal potentials above evokes a scenario of power scale in which the less powerful submit to the more powerful.

Stylistically, the clustering of animal metaphors contributes to the internal coherence of the text which emphasises the discursive strategy of the POWER ideology rather than MIND among nations. According to Cameron and Low

(1999), internal coherence of linguistic metaphors across texts is a distinctive characteristic feature of discourse systematicity. Therefore, the use of various ANIMAL metaphoric expressions as well as across the discourse in its entirety sheds light on the discursive metaphoric strategy of POWERFULNESS versus POWERLESSNESS within a scary predator and prey scene. This concrete jungle scenario embeds the key conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. Here, this higher latent key metaphor attends to creating a political myth of domination which is based on evoking the emotion of fear in the hearts of Arabs who fell short in confronting the global political powers. As such, the notions of cowardice, powerlessness and submissiveness that are oriented in Arabs' unconscious emotion of fear do trigger the most intense emotion of SHAMING Arabs.

### HUMAN metaphors

HUMAN metaphors which come the second highest in frequency of occurrence also trigger the notion of Arab powerlessness. Largely, Arabs are portrayed as orphans or prisoned inmates being unable to defend themselves whereas global powers are depicted nannies and jailers as realised by the patterns: ARAB PEOPLE ARE ORPHANS and AMERICA AND RUSSIA ARE NANNIES. Shaming Arabs is equally underscored by personification embedding the notion of betrayal inferred by the patterns: BAGHDAD IS THE PROPHET JOSEPH; ARAB COUNTRIES ARE JOSEPH'S BROTHERS; ARAB COUNTRIES' BETRAYAL FOR BAGHDAD IS A SHAME. Marriage metaphors are also present. These are human attributes through which the different states of affairs of Arab regimes are conceptualised in terms of different encounters of marriage and divorce scenarios. They assert the shameful "boundary transgression" notion in a satirical manner as inferred by the patterns: ARAB REGIMES-CITIZENS' UNIFICATION IS MARRIAGE and ARAB REGIMES-CITIZENS' SEPARATION IS DIVORCE. Extract 2 demonstrates this discursive choice of HUMAN metaphor.

#### Extract 2: Decorating String

We are an **orphan nation** ... who sleep upon the order of **the western nanny** (*America*) and wake up on the voice of **the eastern nanny** (*Russia*). They divide us up like a duty and distribute us by lot ... We are just **inmates** on this land, no ownership for it ... We have to make a "political" bed and fold the national "sheets" as **the shift supervisor** likes, not as we like...

*Source:* <http://www.sawaleif.com> (accessed 10th April 2015)

The metaphor key words in Extract 2 collectively refer to the entire Arab as shown through the inclusive pronoun “we”. They can be referred to as “confinement metaphors” as they portray the afflicted Arab people in terms of little children being cut off from human mercifulness and care, as well as innocent inmates banned from gaining their own rights and freedom. By and large, the metaphors do agree on a common ground emphasising a disgraceful metaphoric image of PASSIVITY/INFERIORITY of all Arabs, yet implicitly confirming the ACTIVITY/SUPERIORITY of global powers through the use of orientational metaphors: INFERIORITY IS DOWN, but superiority is up. As such, a set of corresponding dyadically conceptual metaphors can be inferred: ARAB PEOPLE ARE ORPHANS and AMERICA AND RUSSIA ARE NANNIES. The metaphors explicitly create a sorrowful indignation tone against Arabs’ current situation which is a complete shame where some Arab regimes have been removed, leaving chaos and wars behind.

In the source domain, “orphans” refers to children and minors who are cut off from the care customarily given to them by their parents. But due to the latter’s absence or death, care is usually assigned to their next of kin, often their stepmothers and aunts (al-Uzaizi 2012). Al-Uzaizi asserted that the care given to orphans by these two caregivers is a suppressing and unjust one in the Jordanian community where extreme vulnerability and oppression of orphans is reflected in an archetypical proverb in Jordan heritage – “The hospitality of Hasan’s aunt”. The proverb implies that Hasan, the orphan, has escaped from his stepmother’s injustice and ill treatment to feel secure at his aunt’s house. However, the treatment he receives is worse than his stepmother as the aunt enslaves him, forces him to look after goats with no payment and even advises him to eat from pastures. As a result, the value of a caregiver can never match that of a parent, as elucidated by Arab’s religious and social resources that emphasise the need to be merciful and supportive to orphans.

Projecting orphan metaphor scenarios onto Arabs’ current situation suggests an extreme humiliation and hegemony practiced by the two global powers of America and Russia. The columnist implicitly highlights the fact that the Arab world is run by these two global powers and that the wealth of the Arab people, particularly Syrians and Iraqis is taken by these guardian powers. Therefore, these creative metaphors invoke a pathetic tone of Arab’s humiliation which in turn exerts the ideology of SHAME as a higher-level metaphor represented by: GLOBAL POWERS’ HUMILIATING AND ENSLAVING OF ARAB PEOPLE IS A SHAME. In the same vein, by shaming Arabs, the metaphors bear a rhetorical agenda of arousing them to confront global powers’ intervention in their interior affairs. Metaphors also contribute to the creation of a political myth of both global

powers. The powerless Arabs' fear of these superpowers is likened to the orphans' fear of nannies, and inmates' fear of their jailers.

The second part of Extract 2 affirms the discursive continuity of framing the Arabs in terms of homeless inmates committing crimes. Structuring the ARABS as such embeds three interconnected conceptual metaphors: AMERICA AND RUSSIA ARE JAILERS; ARAB PEOPLE ARE INMATES; ARAB LAND IS A JAIL. Again, these metaphor patterns propose another UP-DOWN orientational metaphor pattern: SUPERIOR IS UP/GOOD, but INFERIOR IS DOWN/BAD. The reiterative use of the subject inclusive pronoun "we" here puts the entire Arab in an inferior position relative to the superior outsiders (America and Russia). This can be critically accounted for by the key metaphor: LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL through which the entire discourse portrays global powers as dominating agents crushing the passive Arab agents, taking over and stripping them of the ownership of their lands and identity. Rhetorically, this may point at global powers' ethnic ideology of exploiting the POWERLESS Arabs by enslaving them. For example, the Russian intervention in Syria has resulted in a catastrophic situation – Syrians were killed and injured daily, and refugees were displaced from their homeland. The discourse highlights shame emotion to the readers through attributing it to Arabs' squabbling among themselves, such as the wars between Sunni and Shiite sects in Iraq and Yemen. By the same token, the creative use of "jailers" metaphor in shaping global powers contributes to the creation of "a political domination myth" of these powers, whose ideologies of POWER and HEGEMONY prevail by subjugating the Arab region under their control, pocketing the Arabs' wealth and wiping out their identity.

According to Goffman (2017), prisons and orphanages are examples of what he refers to as "total institutions" wherein inmates and orphans are completely cut off from the wider community. As a result, they have no control over their lives and they even lose their individuality. This, in turn, justifies the use of "orphans" and "inmates" in structuring Arabs' inferiority, inferring thereby the key metaphors: ARAB SUBMISSIVENESS TO GLOBAL POWERS IS SHAME and THE LOSS OF ARABS' IDENTITY IS SHAME. Rhetorically speaking, the shaming metaphors serve as a means to send a covert message to all Arabs, urging them to restore their dignity and solidarity and be unified against global powers.

### **MACHINE Metaphors**

MACHINE metaphors along with FOOD metaphors could be regarded as novel due to their infrequent occurrence in the editorials. Novel or new metaphors have the potential to provide us with an insightful way of thinking about the shaping

of our experiences (Lakoff and Turner 1989). As it is the case with the earlier metaphor types, all MACHINE metaphors found probe into the powerlessness of Arab subordinates relative to the power of their suppressing rulers. Arab countries are featured as machines holding Arab asylum seekers who are conceived as frozen meat. Similarly, the notion of power versus powerlessness is also conspicuously triggered through the embodiment of the Arabs in terms of controlled devices powered on and off by global powers whereby in either case, Arab rulers are shamed for showing power over their passive subordinates as well as kneeling before the powerful outsider. See Extract 3 for an exemplification.

### Extract 3: Three-D Nation

A friend of mine asked me if I had a three-dimensional television screen in order to follow up dramas in Ramadan. I replied: We, my friend, are the country which extends from Mauritania to the Hormuz Strait .... We are **the 3-D TV country ... the remote control is in Washington, the receiver is in Tel Aviv, and the show is limited to the beloved Arab world ...** where we see pain in its **three dimensions**: blood, tears and destruction.

*Source:* <http://www.sawaleif.com> (accessed 28th June 2015)

The metaphors in Extract 3 are concerned with the turbulent Arab situation across the Arab region. These metaphors are configured within the underlying conceptual patterns: ARAB NATION IS A TELEVISION MACHINE and AMERICA AND ISRAEL ARE TV-CONTROL DEVICES. Television (TV) screens are usually connected with receivers and remote-control parts. However, a three-dimensional (3D) TV is a more advanced device which allows viewers to perceive images in terms of their height, width and similarity to real-world objects (Javidi and Okano 2002). By describing the ARAB NATION domain as concrete machine devices, it implies a set of conceptual metonymical elements with Washington corresponding to a remote control, Tel Aviv to a receiver and Arab countries (where wars and chaos take place) to a 3D TV screen where tragic movies are played.

Principally, a 3D TV is usually used by people to watch movies more vividly and have a pleasurable time. Nevertheless, the creative choice of this metaphor here is coloured with pathetic tones referring to chaos and wars which overwhelm the Arab world. In the usual scenario, TV viewers usually use a receiver and remote control to shift from one channel to another. Comparing Arab countries to this real-life scene suggests the PASSIVITY/POWERLESSNESS of Arabs while the ACTIVITY/ POWERFULNESS of America and Israel are framed as power-on and power-off devices. The storyline highlights the fact that these two global powers have a long arm in causing the catastrophic situation in the Arab region. For example, ruining houses over citizens in Iraq and Syria as well as the chaotic

situation in Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Palestine are understood in terms of horror action films shown on TV screens.

Towards the end of the scenario, the columnist's metaphors aesthetically blend metaphor with pun and alliteration. For instance, the 3D TV screen is equivalent to the initial three Arabic characters of the torturing results of wars exemplified by: *dem* (blood), *dumū* (tears) and *damār* (destruction). Simply put, this metaphor scenario rhetorically uncovers the inability of the Arab regimes to justly manage their subordinates and hence, controlled by global powers. The rhetorical motives of using machine metaphors here are realised through the higher-level metaphors: ARAB WEAKNESS/SUBMISSIVENESS TO AMERICA AND ISRAEL IS SHAME and ARAB FIGHTING WITH THEMSELVES IS SHAME. This calls for Arabs to rethink the remote domination of their countries.

### FOOD Metaphors

Generally, in FOOD metaphors found, Arabs are discursively downplayed as inanimate beings represented as food served to the external powers. The Arabs are reduced into objects that are unable to act, while the controlling global powers preserve their status as active agents. As such, these dyadic power positioning can be structured through the pattern GLOBAL POWERS ARE PARASITES/EATERS versus ARABS ARE FOOD. This shaming practice realised through this metaphorical pattern is exemplified in Extract 4.

#### Extract 4: Arab Pit Roast

We are now living in the stage of **Arab *zarb*** (a kind of chopped marinated lamb cooked in a barrel in a hole in the ground for three hours) in the full sense of the term, meaning we serve ourselves on **a dish of a country** to the hungry nations calling upon us ... **Arab *zarb*** in the original way ... **Fresh, homemade/national dispute 100% ... 300 million pieces of steaks ... With a million barrels of family-sized diet oil.**

Source: <http://www.sawaleif.com> (accessed 30th June 2014)

The FOOD metaphors in Extract 4 are inspired by the disastrous situation in Iraq since 1991 and the current situation in Syria. Although they are conventionalised in the Jordanian community's speech, the metaphors for the dish type in the news column's discourse is brand new. The use of FOOD metaphors is meant to critique the entire Arab nation within a mocking scenario yet reflecting the overall embedded argument of unmasking SHAME emotion. Based on the highlighted linguistic metaphors, FOOD is identified as the source domain, whereas the ARABS as the target domain.

The real-life scenario of *zarb*, a Jordanian dish, is related to the act of chopping lamb or goat's meat into pieces which are marinated with spices and put into a barrel in a hole in the ground for about three hours. The process of making this dish type is the same across the Arab region but they come in various names. Following the partial mapping process, Arab casualties are framed in terms of slaughtered lambs; chopped body parts of the victims correspond to chopped lamb or goat body parts. The ruined houses/buildings of citizens are compared to the hole a lamb is cooked in. Here, serving Arab countries to global powers correspond to serving the dish to eaters. Likewise, the killing of 300 million Arab population is understood as serving "300 million steaks" to global powers. The joy of cooking is downplayed here and instead, the harsh processes of making this dish are emphasised when they are used to symbolise the Arabs.

The conceptual metaphorical elements evoke a lamenting tone mixed with humorous and pun effects whereby the hunger of outsiders and food supplies in the Arab countries are involved. These metaphors unmask the hidden agenda of global political powers meddling in Iraq and Syria's affairs with the intention to demolish the Arab nation, subject Arabs to poverty and ultimately take over their oil wealth. In the real life *zarb* scenario, people usually drink beverages after eating this meal to help them digest the chopped meat. Here, it carries a mocking tone through the use of metaphor as in "steaks" to represent each individual in the Arab world, in addition to the use of "family-sized diet oil", which suggests that the Arabs' oil will be taken over by global powers. Based on the metaphorical pattern, ARABS ARE FOOD, it implicitly infers that GLOBAL POWERS ARE PARASITES/EATERS is an integrally related pattern.

From a critical discourse outlook, again Arabs are dehumanised and placed as inanimate objects at the bottom of the great chain of being, whereas global powers preserve their original status as human beings. Within the principles of CMA, food metaphors achieve a predictable function in that Arabs are negatively evaluated, and the crucial "survival element" associated with food is obscured. Dividing the Arabs into conflicting sects is projected through chopped pieces of a cooked lamb indicating the POWERLESS Arabs who shamefully fall short in defending themselves from the POWERFUL nations parasitising upon them. Here, the higher-level metaphor of ARABS' DISUNITY/WEAKNESS IS A SHAME is again a call for national unity and wariness of the perceived myth or agenda of the outsiders.

## Discussion

This study has delineated how the technique of metaphoric bipolarisation or a dichotomous metaphor function in the Jordanian socio-political journalistic discourse contributes to fulfilling two concurrent purposes, namely, arousing the

emotion of shaming the Arabs and their leaders as well as constructing the myth of global power's domination. Despite a limitation of not detailing the satirical effects in the current study, we have showcased that through humorous or savage indignation tone, shaming here can evoke powerlessness and negative evaluations of the Arabs rather than the typical rhetorical intention of poking fun in the readers' visceral reactions. The emotion of shame indeed can prevail through mixing pathos and lamentation of a downplayed status.

From the perspective of metaphor studies, the emotion of shame has not been attested in the existing empirical discourses where shame traditionally has so far only been based on universal physiological or bodily embodied experiences and behaviours. However, here, we have expounded how it can indeed also be social and cultural-centric. The main rhetorical strategy of constructing the Arabs' powerlessness, cowardice and humiliation through cultural-specific metaphorical scenarios triggered the most intense of negative shaming. It also relentlessly challenges the pride and honour in Arabs to defend their positions given that shame and honour function concurrently as one paradigm in the Arab psyche.

On the socio-political ground, the analyses have also elucidated the understanding of the ways and criticisms on the Arab people of being disunited, weak and submissive which have paved ways for foreign intervention in the handling of politics and economy of the region, all these through the ingenious use of cultural-specific metaphorical scenarios. The animal metaphors describe the Arabs as defenceless powerless prey and when no action is initiated to confront the powerful predatory global powers, the myth of domination is created and hence, weakening the Arabs. In human metaphors, Arabs are projected as being enslaved and humiliated like orphans who fear their nannies or inmates who fear their jailers, signifying Arabs' inferior status. And if political control is lost to the nanny or jailer global powers, Arabs risk losing control over their lives and identities. In machine metaphors, Arabs are associated with televisions being remotely controlled. They are shamed for control of power over their own passive subordinates, at the same time, being controlled and passivised through the activation of external forces of America and Israel. In food metaphors, Arabs are the powerless slaughtered and chopped up food served to the parasitic global power eaters symbolising Arab's richness in oil being given and possibly overtaken by the powerful if the Arabs do not act. It warns that if these powers remain unrivalled by the Arabs, Arabs' shame could be further intensified. This domination myth corresponds with the deficiencies of the Arabs, and hence, powerfully exerting shame and fear in the hearts of the Arab readership to mobilise them for a course of action.

On the perceived intention of the columnist studied, the rhetoric adopted can be interpreted as a political propagation that are both nationalistic and populist in nature. There have been strong contestations and claims about the distinctions and overlapping of the notions of nationalism and populism in political communication (de Cleen 2017). However, this is not a concern here. Rather, here, we argue both orientations are present given the dual effects of metaphor functions presented above. This is achieved despite without explicit or specific mention of countries, leadership nor global powers to obscure personalisation, directness and offence as per the Jordanian journalism guidelines. The Arab states and culture are ethnically and culturally defined signifiers of the Arab nation. When these signifiers are constructed as an in-group versus perceived threats from the out-group of foreign powers, nationalistic feeling is instilled in the hearts of the readers and this becomes a basis to mobilise the people's actions.

On the other hand, populism is a discourse that centres around the nodal points of "the people" and "the elite" whereby through an "up/down antagonism" between "the people" as a "large powerless group" versus "the elite" as a small but a power holder that is to be politically replaced (de Cleen 2017, 5; Stavrakakis 2004). The columnist's political rhetoric and demands construct the will and voices of "the people" against the corrupt local leaders. The columnist's populist rhetoric functions as the underdog speaking up for the majority ordinary Arabs who are dissatisfied with the reigning elites. One of the ways to stir the people's dissatisfaction and awakening is through the reduced reputation and position of the Arabs as this is the most intense shaming and a violation of their socio-cultural norms, value system and traditions.

Indeed, the manipulation of both nationalistic and populist journalistic approach is a very calculated and distinctive technique of public communication necessary to send a covert rhetorical wake-up call to all Arab members. The metaphorical scenarios carrying the shame emotion have been skilfully employed to create the required distancing yet powerfully humiliate, warn and urge the Arabs to unite and liberate themselves from the socio-political turmoil and hegemony by the outsiders.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this critical study of Arab metaphorical scenarios employed in the online socio-political editorials has demonstrated the pivotal roles of metaphors in addressing culture-specific experiences and perceptions, moving away from just embodied human experience. These metaphors have significant functions in communicating, exerting and performing the cultural practice of shaming without ignoring sensitivities required in Jordanian journalistic reporting. The Arabs need to

be woken up not only against foreign powers but also more critically in the context of their own ailing local leadership as a result of Arab Spring revolt and corruption issues. Here, shaming has been deliberately intended but constructively performed for a positive outcome. This study has essentially highlighted that the journalistic rhetorical move which encapsulates the shaming culture is a distinctive, strategic, powerful tactical discursive action capable of foregrounding an emancipatory agenda to restore honour and return socio-political stability to any affected society and even more so in one that embraces a similar shame herd culture.

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