

After a century of struggling to earn a respected place in the modern university and lessen the gap between the academy and professionals, journalism education has reached a credibility high. Its initial battles have been won. Meanwhile, the turbulence in the industry, incredible pace of technological change, and threats to freedom of expression present new challenges. When the next volume of this saga is written, journalism education's first century expeditionary force will be credited for providing an auspicious launching pad for its future. (p. 446).

In her epilogue, Robyn Goodman also strikes an optimistic note, arguing journalism education has never been as strong, and will have increasing relevance in the post-truth era. Brave words, and ones us educators will cling to as we face the down the challenges of falling student numbers, university administrations bent on leveraging not only ever-higher teaching outputs, but also research and 'engagement', and an industry that is struggling to reconfigure itself, let alone engage with educators.

This book's real strength was, for me, in its summary of where we've been, and of current trends, rather than its predictions. Nonetheless, I would recommend it to all journalism educators not just as a valuable overview of the field, but as a call to arms.

## NOTED:

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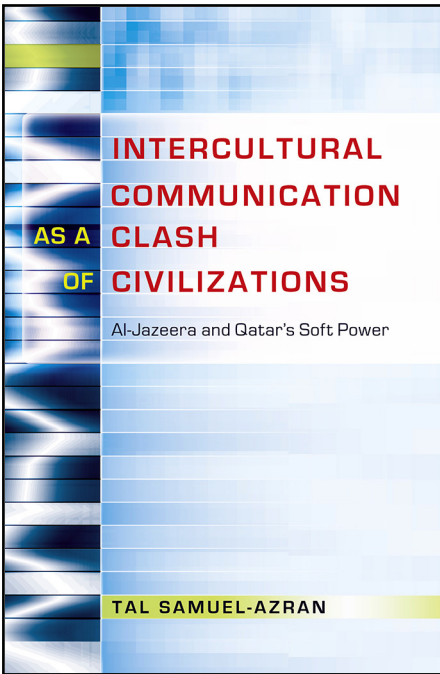
# Al Jazeera, a classic example of soft power

*Intercultural Communication as a Clash of Civilizations: Al-Jazeera and Qatar's Soft Power*, by Tel Samuel-Azran. New York: Peter Lang. 2016. 172 pages. ISBN 978-1-4331-2264-4

WITH the current stand-off between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and their allies, Samuel-Azran's book is extremely timely. Launched in 1996, Al-Jazeera now broadcasts on multiple channels and in four languages at a cost of \$650 million a year. It reaches 260 million homes in 130 countries.

Having grown from the ashes of the BBC's Arabic television service, Al Jazeera has long been regarded as a beacon of good journalism in the Middle East. However, it has also been carefully crafted to allow Qatar to project political and diplomatic muscle throughout the region and across the world, a classic example of a small country projecting soft power.

It is this aspect of Al Jazeera's operations that Samuel-Azran investigates and which leads him to be highly critical of the Qatari broadcaster, a stance not entirely common among Western academics. Samuel-Azran argues that



in its coverage of the Arab Spring, Al Jazeera has moved beyond being a tool of soft power and became part of Qatar's deployment of 'smart power'.

He also argues that Al Jazeera has not always been the champion of democracy and civil rights as it is usually portrayed, noting that it stopped reporting anything bad about Saudi Arabia as part of a deal to end a standoff between Riyadh and Doha.

The book is highly critical of Al Jazeera's coverage of the Arab Spring. Samuel-Azran cites Wadah Khanfar, the network's former director-general as saying:

That was Al-Jazeera's role: liberating the Arab mind. We created the idea in the Arab mind that when you have a right, you should fight for it.

But, Samuel-Azran argues:

As Qatar immersed itself in the last few years in hard power strategies such as sponsoring violent non-state actors, most notably the sponsorship of the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring, Al-Jazeera supported Qatar's interests throughout this period by serving as the voice of the Muslim Brotherhood and boosting its legitimacy.

At 172 pages, *Intercultural Communication as a Clash of Civilizations* is a modestly sized volume, but it draws on a wealth of empirical data and reaches into a number of important areas, including arguments about the public sphere and the effect of globalisation on local consumption of international news.

It should be extremely useful to academics, students and journalists alike.