

The Media, the War on Terror, and the Public Sphere

By

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A senior thesis  
Submitted to the Department of Sociology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Pitzer College  
Class of 2017

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## Acknowledgements

To Professor Steinman, without whom this thesis would not have been possible. His meticulous guidance is what pushed me to continuously assess, expand, and improve this study. To Professor Junisbai, who encouraged and provided aid when statistical data proved overwhelmingly mystical to me.

To Professor Alwishah, whose courses on philosophy and politics taught me to empty the basket of apples, about the self-affirmation of existence, to question all and to continuously strive for knowledge. For all the support and encouragement to follow my interests and passions in the past two years. For all the existentialist and enlightening conversations, and for helping me learn Arabic. To Professor Zuckerman, whose course on heroic deviance solidified my declaring my major in Sociology four years ago, and whose many other courses I delighted in taking furthered my curiosity and understanding of societal injustices and inequality.

To my friends, who have supported me in the past four years – to Adam Wesley Buttrill, for reading drafts, for the unwavering support, and just for being you. To Brian Fong, for all the tough love and helping push me to my limits. To Francis Ryu, for being there in moments of disheartenment. To Chessa Burke, for helping me see what it means to be patient and kind. To Chantal Estevez, for being a beacon of light.

To my brother, for taking care of me, pushing me to apply to Kings for graduate school, and who always had faith in me. For showing me what it means to be selfless, resilient, and hardworking. To my aunt, who is one of the main reasons I continued through school despite suffering hardships, and who encourages me in all my endeavors and dreams.

Lastly, to my father, who always supported me, and gave me the confidence to be who I am today and to be where I am today. Your courage and curiosity for knowledge and the impact you left in this world have and will push me further in my own passion, towards life, others, and knowledge.

## Abstract

The media conflates and distorts in its coverage on the war on terror- simultaneously misrepresenting and constructing the political and historically complex conflict between the Middle East and the West. Due to the current social-political climate of increasing xenophobia and the normalisation of Islamophobia, this study attempts to expand previous studies conducted on the media in relation to the war on terror. This is a comparative quantitative analysis of media framing between a Western news source and an Arab news source, examining their coverage of the November 2015 Paris attack and the March 20<sup>th</sup> Sana'a, Yemen attack. The findings revealed a deep complexity and intertwining of the media and its representation on the war on terror: the U.S. news source engaged more so in forms of biased framing of when covering the Paris attack and held a Western gaze of superiority when covering the Yemen attack, while the Arab news source proved to be overall less biased but was found to be susceptible to Westernisation.

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### Introduction

Terrorism is one of the biggest global security issues today, as the rise of xenophobia is affecting and contributing to social issues and relations in Europe, the Middle East, and in the U.S. The normalisation of Anti-Muslim rhetoric is fueled by a lack of knowledge regarding the social phenomena of terrorism itself and the complexities surrounding it, as well as misconceptions pertaining to the Islamic faith- an agenda the media continues to sustain and extend (Schmidt & Jongman, 1988, 22). From the Palestine/Israeli conflict to the current war on terror, U.S. interests are often reflected through the media, as the media takes on the role of a faithful servant when covering U.S. involvement in the Middle East (Ross, 2003, 4).

Due to the current social-political climate, the media and its portrayal of the war on terror must be further examined within academia and the public sphere. After 9/11, hate-crimes against Muslims skyrocketed simultaneous to the increase of xenophobia. This is reflected in the political rhetoric of Donald Trump's presidential election in 2017, the Syrian refugee crisis and the current tense situation in France (see "Literature Review" section).

Drawing upon previous literature on media narratives and terrorism framing, this study compares a well-known newspaper from the Western world, the *New York Times*, to a well-known newspaper in the Arab world, *Al Jazeera* (English). By analysing two attacks claimed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham that share similar demographics (death toll and time frame), with the Paris, France November 2015 attack seeing 137 deaths and the Sana'a, Yemen March attack seeing 142 deaths, an assessment was conducted on how the news sources may differ or resemble in their coverage of the same stories. This is done by looking at how the public sphere plays a part in perpetuating the deeply ingrained ideas of the "Other" and how the media then acts as a mirror to this.

Previous studies examine the ways in which a Western news sources such as CNN engages in methods of framing when covering the war on terror. However, there is a lack of

comparative studies on news sources from the West and the Arab world. One of the few comparative studies is done by Jasperson and El-Kikhia in 2003, publishing a comparison between Al Jazeera (English) and CNN on the Afghanistan war. Their study concluded that CNN was found to be employing frames of patriotic rhetoric while Al Jazeera (English) encompassed more neutrality in their coverage. This study hopes to expand the comparative news source studies conducted on the war on terror.

Using the Lexis Nexus database, 40 articles were randomly selected from the *New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* (English) and compared through quantitative content analysis to assess when the news sources engaged in thematic versus episodic framing. Thematic framing here refers to the use of unbiased reporting, focusing on larger events and how institutions play a role in social phenomena. Episodic framing here refers to the use of biased reporting, focusing on smaller events and perpetuating previous narratives and agendas, appealing more so to emotions. Based on the prior large body of literature which discusses the media's framing methods in relation to the war on terror primarily through these two central interpretive categories, this study then focuses on two types of episodic framing: communicative and responsibility framing. After analyzing the frequency of the codes generated by the data analysis, patterns were then discerned from the resulting data (see "Methods" section).

In setting up a dichotomy of "us versus them", "civil versus savage" and "good versus evil" and by constantly attributing Muslims as extremists or Islam as a dangerous religion, media coverage is further examined as reproducing and furthering colonial powers to assert and maintain their dominance in the wake of "radicalism". The rise of Islamophobia and xenophobia must be examined from its perpetrators, one of which is the media and its influence in the public sphere.

### Literature Review

Since 9/11, there has been a change. The fear of terrorism has changed society, and in response, there is an increasing concentration of ownership of information in an era of information feudalism. In today's "war on terror", the framing of terrorism is a top issue "on the agenda of every nation directly or indirectly impacted by terrorism – including Arab and Middle Eastern nations" (Elareshi & Abdullah, 2015, 9). When information and knowledge is power, it is important to examine the media and its influences as an entity in the public sphere, shaping public opinion on Muslims and Islam through certain methods of framing.

As Lippmann (1921) wrote, "public opinion deals with indirect, unseen and puzzling facts" while "the social analyst is most concerned in studying how the larger political environment is conceived" thereby examining X, of which he termed the "pseudo-environment" (2). In other words, examining that upon which we rely to experience and understand events. In the "network society" we are in now, in which key social structures and activities are organised around electronically processed information networks, the media serves as an "pseudo-environment", critical in shaping public opinion (Castelles, 2005, 218). By employing various methods of framing, the media plays a role in shaping stereotypes of the Muslim community and of the Islamic faith, which then impacts society through a rise in certain ideologies, such as xenophobia, or more specifically, Islamophobia.

The general lack of understanding towards Islam can be seen through two main lenses. The first Shahab Ahmed (2016) gives the term "Islam-proper" to, describing the phenomena of conceptualising Islam with Islamic Law as the center of Islamic society, and culture, philosophy, literature, theology, art, etc., as derived and secondary to this core- therefore excluding and marginalizing other aspects of Islam (117). The consequences of this reductionist definition of one pattern to represent the whole of society is a constraining line of thought, with Muslims as subjects, and a distorted perspective which leads to a failure in

recognizing and understanding Islamic society as a historical and human phenomenon by endorsing one authority claim among many. The second refers to the general approach regarding Islam, seeing multiple “islams” rather than a “single, unified tradition with a mainstream or orthodox core” and thereby falling prey to classifying something as “vast and complicated as an entire religion as merely violent” (Marglin, 2015). The stereotypes and misconceptions this then creates has a direct impact on societies, nation states, and communities of people, and must be examined from the root.

### **Defining Terrorism**

The issue of defining terrorism itself and the complexities surrounding this reflects the impact of media framing on public opinion. Vladimir Lenin famously remarked, “the purpose of terrorism is to produce terror” (Reynolds & Barnett, 2009, 14). The original word “terror” originates from its Latin root word *terrere*, literally meaning to “fill with fear, frighten” (Etymonline, 2017). The two types of terrorism, typically called “top-down” and “bottom-up” (or state versus citizen and citizen versus state, respectively), allows contemporary terrorism to fall predominantly under bottom-up, typically in a form of insurgency. Despite these differences and varieties, terrorism is a complex and variable phenomenon that manifests differently and in different parts of the world. Yet the term terrorism and other forms of violent conflict, including guerilla and conventional war, causes the term to be used loosely and often incorrectly. This then leads to misinformation to be spread in the public sphere through media coverage of terrorism- a “lack of definitional precision, and a politicizing of the term” (Reynolds & Barnett, 2009, 15).

Many academics, historians, public policy makers, politicians and journalists have attempted to define terrorism. This includes terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman, who emphasized the effect the media has on this lack of understanding towards terrorism, as

“most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is but lack a more precise, concrete and truly explanatory definition of the word” and further observed the media as:

“...relevant to any contemporary discussion of terrorism and how it is defined, so much so that some scholars have crafted new definitions of terrorism that account for the impact of the media on public understanding and awareness” (Reynolds & Barnett, 2009, 16).

An example of this is crafted by political scientist Brigitte Nacos, who coined the phrase “mass mediated terrorism”, which she defined as: “political violence against noncombatants or symbolic targets which is designed to communicate a message to a broader audience” (Reynolds & Barnett, 2009, 16).

Schmidt and Jongman (1988) cited over 109 different definitions of terrorism in their book *Political Terrorism*, further showing the lack of consensus and exploring the complexity surrounding not only the phenomena but also concerning interpretations of terrorism. In this context, the media causes certain ideas and definitions to dominate the discourse surrounding terrorism which initially lacked a consensus on even defining the subject matter. The definition I will use here was proposed by Ganor (2002) and states that “terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims” (294). This is based on three premises: the first being the use or threat to use violence, the second being the aim of the activity as always political (which include ideological or religious agendas behind these political aims), and the third being the target as civilians, thus separating terrorism from other forms of political violence such as guerrilla warfare, civil insurrection, etc. (Ganor, 2002, 295).

The occurrence of the lack of consensus as well as understanding towards the term “terrorism” similarly occurs towards the religion of Islam and the Muslim community. For example, there is massive diversity within different religions, such as different streams within Islam (Sunnites; Shi’ites-Isla’ilites, Ithna ‘Asharites, ‘Alawites; Kharijites- ‘Ibadites, Zaydites; Ahmadiyya-Muslims, etc.). There are also different ethnicities of Muslims-

Indonesian Muslims, Moluccan Muslims, Surinam Muslims, Tunisian Muslims, and so on. Different forms of Islam, different denominations, different streams and ethnicities; these differentiations all show that Islam “is not a uniform, monolithic whole”, able to be reduced to a single trait such as “violent”, and must not be treated as such by socially dominant cultures (Beck, 2015). While definitions differ, in the midst of this uncertainty and lack of understanding, certain stereotypes and definitions begin to dominate the discourse.

### **Framing Theories**

By examining the framing methods the media employs, this requires an examination of the different ways in which the media shapes public opinion and implicates its influence. In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, Reese et al. defines framing as: “*organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world (Reese et al., 2001, 11). The two distinct news frames relevant to news coverage on the war on terror are episodic and thematic framing. Iyengar (1991) identified the difference between the two as “episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues, while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence” (14). Most news cases can usually be identified as either episodic or thematic, but few are exclusively one or the other. Episodic framing includes responsibility framing, which may be defined as a “way of attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual group” (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000, 96). The “mythic tales frame” of communicative framing is another type of episodic framing that does not prioritize covering new information but instead “communicat[es], often through heavy symbolism and emotion, preexistent values and narratives” (Kavoori & Fraley, 2006, 32). Episodic framing includes methods of rhetoric, appealing to emotions more so than thematic framing. As thematic frames attribute a large

part of the narrative to the broader context, episodic frames are seen as more compelling and emotionally engaging (Gross, 2008, 3).

An examination of the characterization of Muslims and Arabs can be done through the analysis of minority groups such as Muslims and how they are routinely framed and depicted by the U.S. news media versus the news media of a less developed country. (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003, 133). One such characterization is the demonization of Muslims and Arabs, done through the effects of the “TV-Arab” image, which, in turn, leads to a discrimination against Arab and Muslim-Americans, operating through the vacuum of popular culture as well as news reporting. Cultural critic Edward Said examined American media to understand the lens the West has on the Arab and Muslim world, arguing:

“Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, apprehended either as suppliers of oil or as potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Muslim life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Islamic world.” (Said, 1981, 26).

Methods of framing include but are not limited to magnifying feelings of threats, vividly depicting events on American television screens, and the amount to which the events were circulated on American TV networks. Sociologist George Morgan claims in his book *Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral Panic in the West*, the “continuation of the process of ‘othering’ [...] post-9/11, has intensified into the realms of Islamophobia”, with “local anti-multiculturalism” becoming “global orientalism” (10). He goes on to write this being the causal effect of the shrinking borders between the East and West due to globalization and the connections made between Islam and violence in what he calls a “post 9-11 context”.

### **History of the Media’s Coverage on the War On Terror**

Norris et al. in *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government and the Public* examines previous studies and found that their meta-analysis supported the hypothesis of the increase in U.S. news source, such as the *New York Times*, covering stories on terrorism during the 1970s, which led to record levels following 9/11 events: 1,345 stories in the twelve

months afterwards of just the stories themselves, which naturally resulted in skyrocketing public concern mirroring the network news coverage (Norris et al., 2003, 290). In the Gallup Report, 46% of the population reported “terrorism” as “the most important problem facing the country”, and this statistic remained persistent for twelve months after September 11, despite increasing issues of health care and social security (Norris et al., 2003, 291).

Before September 11, 2001, the *New York Times* editorial page primarily was found to be more likely to frame the Palestinian/Israeli conflict with U.S. interests in the region, including a dehumanization of Palestinians (Ross, 2003, 2). Ross argued the *New York Times* editorials took the role of the “faithful Servant” when covering the issue of the U.S. and its involvement in the region, portraying Israel, the “heavily militarized state”, as the underdog, and vilifying Arabs- therefore reflecting the newspaper’s interest in supporting U.S. engagement in the region and active support for the state of Israel (4). The *New York Times*’ motto, created by the owner Adolph S. Ochs in 1897, is “All the News That’s Fit to Print”, with the implication that the newspaper will print all news impartially, and yet, alongside other media sources, has been critiqued for not printing all the news “fit to print” (Britannica, 2002).

After 9/11, a common theme and new attitude emerged, despite prior involvement with terrorist attacks:

“...that America had been attacked, the world had changed, and the U.S. must respond when threatened. Narratives portrayed the United States and its allies as besieged [...] President George W. Bush went on television, echoing the rhetoric of World War II to rally and comfort the nation (‘We are beginning another front in our war against terrorism, so freedom can prevail over fear’)” (Norris et al., 2003, 294).

This not only served U.S. interest and its regional interest of expansion and appropriations as a global power in the Middle East but also in furthering the agendas of multiple actors, including government officials, political interest groups, journalists and a few voices offering alternative perspectives (Shihade, 2009, 886). News coverage adopting certain frames leads

to exaggerated levels of terrorist activity, as occurred in the U.S., but also of a failure “to explain the complex range of economic and national issues that confront the world today” (Norris et al., 2003, 298).

While it is undeniable that 9/11 had an irreversible impact on American perceptions on the Muslim community, on the Middle East, and on the Islamic faith, the “war on terrorism” frame perpetuated by the Western media through a one-sided news frame blocked certain independent evidence (Norris et al., 2003, 283). Previous research on media narratives on the war on terror largely includes comparative analysis on media news sources from countries within the West or that are “one-sided”. Zelizer and Allan did a study that showed television news proved to be the most trusted and most used news source for people in the U.S. and Britain during the Iraq war, with increased audience ratings in U.S. news networks leading to Fox News surpassing CNN as a top-rated news channel (Zelizer & Allan 2004, 6). Parroting the White House’s daily talking points, Fox news no longer seemed to maintain its logo – “fair and balanced” – as news sources rushed to break the story with the unfolding of the Iraq war, sacrificing the accuracy of events, such as the claims of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the Iraqi Republican Guard planning to use these on forces in defense of Baghdad, the “uprising” in Basra, etc. – much of which later were found to be untrue, with Al Jazeera having a crucial role in challenging these claims (Zelizer & Allan, 2004, 8).

Papacharissi and Oliveira (2008) conducted a study on the difference between U.S. and U.K. news coverage on terrorism, with the findings of the U.S. engaging in more episodic coverage and the U.K. news sources in more thematic coverage. This further supports the existing narrative of the U.S. media as being more susceptible to acting as a political tool. Elareshi and Abdullah conducted a study comparing two Arab networks in

2015 using content analysis, revealing both networks held similar framing methods, and an emphasis on the coverage of the majority of terrorist victims being Muslim (10).

Based on previous literature exploring framing of terrorism, there is, by stark contrast, relatively little done on news sources between the West and Arab world. One of the relative few is Jasperson and El-Kikhia's 2003 study examining framing on the Afghanistan war comparing CNN and *Al Jazeera*. Their results show CNN as employing frames of patriotic rhetoric, while *Al Jazeera* held a more neutral coverage, focusing on the statistics of the death tolls and on alternative policies. Jasperson and El-Kikhia's study showed that "Al Jazeera provided a new perspective not present in American media during the 1991 Persian Gulf War", which helped to "shape the discourse on strategy covered by CNN" (Jasperson & El-Kikhia, 2003, 121). The political control the Pentagon held over the information distributed through Western media, such as CNN, led to certain methods of framing, while *Al Jazeera's* pictures and ground-zero reports from within Afghanistan allowed for a new analysis and questioning of previously distributed information (Jasperson & El-Kikhia, 2003, 130). Furthermore, this led to a different way of seeing the Arab consensus in a new global light. Norris et al. (2003) referred to *Al Jazeera's* coverage of the Afghanistan war as a crucial development in media freedom. Jasperson and El-Kikhia's comparative analysis between the Western and Arab news source allowed for further insight into the multidimensional phenomena of media coverage on the war on terror.

### **Political Impact and Consequences**

"Framing has been particularly useful in understanding the media's role in political life" (Reese, Grant & Gandy, 2001, 7). Not only does the media shape public opinion in the public sphere but also public policy, affecting political relations. One example of this is the funeral of Chris Engledrum, a U.S. soldier who was killed in Iraq, with the news covering the story as such:

ANCHOR: ...a man who, as a firefighter, answered the call on 9/11 only to die as a soldier fighting for his country [...] and the first New York firefighter to die in a war he believed began two Septembers ago” (Kavoori & Fraley, 2006, 33).

This characterization of the American lives lost as heroic, unfair, and unnecessary while the Muslim is depicted as irrational, and therefore bigoted, takes upon a modern, secular, and national rhetoric, just as the fear of weapons of mass destruction was at the heart of U.S. security agenda – another myth that was portrayed in the media in a “highly moralistic tone” (Kavoori & Fraley, 2006, 6).

A theory that has been commonly associated with examining the media and its political influence is the “CNN effect”. The “CNN effect” is defined by Feist (2001) as such: “a theory that compelling television images, such as images of humanitarian crisis, cause U.S. policymakers to intervene in a situation when such an intervention might otherwise not be in the U.S. national interest” (713). It has been widely studied due to the general mainstream consensus that the media affects policymaking through “heart-wrenching pictures of suffering civilians, will so stir public opinion that government officials will be forced to adjust policy to conform to that opinion” (Franks, 2013, 5). According to the “CNN effect”, the inevitable link between media coverage, public opinion and policy, is seen as a cause and effect relationship between television coverage and policymakers.

However, Gilboa (2005) argued multiple crisis showed that television coverage did not always affect policy, such as the Kurdish crisis, the Shiite uprising in Southern Iraq, and the 1994 civil war in Rwanda, thereby arguing the “CNN effect” as being “highly exaggerated” (37). This is based on Robin’s policy-media interaction model, which claims the media is likely to impact policy only under two circumstances: “when policy is uncertain and media coverage is critically framed” (Gilboa, 2005, 34). Here Gilboa is making the claim that media coverage has an effect on policymakers only under certain circumstances, and only when these requirements are met will it impact geopolitical interests. The terms

“mediademocracy”, “medialism”, “mediocracy”, “teledemocracy” and “mediapolitik” are a few terms that have erupted out of this mainstream discourse examining the relationship between the media and politics, but is limiting in its discourse (Gilboa, 2005, 38). The “CNN effect” is not consistent, and requires more research and examination in understanding the relationship between the media and the political system, and how this then further perpetuates and normalizes ideologies and stereotypes such as war itself.

The events of 9/11 acted as a catalyst in thrusting the Islamic faith under the harsh gaze of criticism and much discrimination. In 2000 the percentage of biased motivation attacks in America that were Anti-Islamic was .3% of all biased motivation attacks (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2000, 7). With the event of 9/11 that occurred in 2001, the hate crimes against Muslims skyrocketed in America. Public opinion of the widespread biased belief of “the terrorist is Muslim” and “Islam as a dangerous religion” is reflected in the sharp increase of 10.8% of all religious bias hate crimes in America being Islamic bias in 2002 (Uniform Crime Reporting, 2002, 5). Increase in Islamophobic tendencies is one of the impacts of media framing and is reflected in how Muslims are represented and treated in Western countries such as the USA and Britain- particularly since 9/11 in the USA and the July 2005 bombings in London, sometimes referred to as “7/7”.

Fear leading to prejudice was fixed upon in right-leaning media outlets which “increasingly emphasized aspects of Islam thought to pose a cultural threat”, which was furthered by the event of the offensive caricature depicting the Prophet Muhammed as a terrorist with a bomb in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, published on September 30, 2005 (Smith, 2013, 8). The visual depiction of the Prophet Muhammad, the principle figure in Islam, is considered blasphemous in the Islamic faith and offended many Muslims. French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* republished the cartoons, leading to attacks against the company and offices, and resulting in it being the target of two terrorist attacks in 2011 and

2015 claimed by ISIS, which involved the shooting of 22, killing at least 12 people. In the midst of the tension with Islam and secular France, there manifested the current controversial issue in France of the beach burqa. The French Law had been criticised by the Human Rights Watch in 2004 as “violate[ing] the right to freedom of religion and expression” by “banning Islamic headscarves and other visible religious symbols in state schools” (Raja, 2014, 1). In this way, the French “security law” is an act of oppression and is an example of Islamophobia manifested in public policy.

As ISIS claimed these attacks and the media rushed to cover the stories, Islam increasingly posed a threat to the core root in many foundations of the West (particularly Western Northern Europe): its system of democracy. Western countries were facing an increasing flux of cultural minorities due to globalization, expecting migrants to conform to their beliefs and traditions if they were to enter their countries, resulting in the Western media responding to this phenomenon by presenting ethnic groups often times as “wild”, “mad”, and “volatile” (Sorrells, 2013, 117). The 2004 French “secularity law”, which was followed by the ban on the wearing of face-coverings in public places in 2010, more commonly known as the controversial “Burqa Ban”, shows the increasing irreconcilability of multiculturalism and xenophobia in an era of globalization and in an age of terror.

The attack on freedom of expression for Muslim women seen through the “us versus them” rhetoric, as societies such as secular France feel threatened by cultural and religious heritages, results in increasing public anti-Islamic rhetoric. The term “post-Charlie Hebdo France” began to appear in discussion regarding the spike in hate crimes against Muslims. Campaigns with Swastikas and “Death to Arabs” plastered over street walls with pigs’ blood appeared in the unfurling of Islamophobia, alongside the 24% increase of the first six months of 2015 compared with the first six months of 2014 and the 500% increase of physical assaults committed against Muslims during the first half of 2015 (Ramdani, 2015, 1).

### **Sociological Frameworks**

Using Marx's conflict theory as a macro perspective to analyse the media's coverage on the war on terror, this theory holds that society is in a perpetual state of conflict due to competition for limited resources (Investopedia, 2016). According to the conflict theory, those more powerful in society will use their resources (material and non-material) to exploit groups with less power and to assert their status and power (Haralambos, 1995, 37). Both real and perceived imbalances of power lead to conflict over limited resources. As criticized by Iyengar, the impact of media framing has "received little attention from political scientists", yet if "language variations are capable of influencing opinions responses so powerfully" it seems worthy to devote dedication and research to the matter at hand (Iyengar, 1991, 13). The media is an institution that is used as a resource by the rich industrialised nations to exploit immigrants, refugees and those less powerful in society – such as the developing Middle East – as it enables elite governments to adapt increasingly oppressive methods against certain groups.

*In Islamophobia: Examining External Casual Links Between the Media and 'Race Hate' from 'Below'*, Frost argues for the need of an examination regarding "hegemonic whiteness" in the "politics of difference", where institutions, such as the media, perpetuate certain forms of hegemony and therefore further "encourage fragmentation within the dominated" (565). Hegemony such as whiteness, heterosexuality, Christianity, masculinity, able-bodiedness – in this case, a focus on whiteness – serves in such a way to "reinforce divisions based on white privileges" by defining the "Other" and occurring when white dominance is threatened, thereby maintaining oppression (Perry, 2009, 57).

Examining the relationship between the media and the war on terror from a micro perspective, the labeling theory of deviance argues for the notion of certain negative qualities being ascribed to specific people, thus deeming them deviants conducting deviant behavior due to the reaction of the environment and used by groups of those more powerful to exploit those

less powerful in society (Knutsson, 1978, 10). As the U.S. rose to a global power after World War II, the colonial structure of the U.S. continues to “frame its domestic and foreign policies against those who are deemed non-White/civilized”, and this “colonial mentality” allowed oppressors to carry out forms of oppression while presenting themselves as “besieged victims”- still present in today’s so-called “war of terror” (Shihade, 2009, 885). Magid Shihade goes further into this as he wrote,

“The dynamics of U.S. politics are systemic/structural and no one person, on its own, can make a radical or meaningful shift [...] as U.S. interests are derived from and are dictated by greed and racism [...] thus, targeting the Middle East particularly and Arab and Islamic countries in general is not only connected to economic interests (greed) but also to the racial thinking” (Shihade, 2009, 886).

By constantly attributing Muslims as extremists, or Islam as a dangerous religion, colonial powers will engage in this method to advance their political agendas, creating a clear dichotomy of “us versus them”, “good versus evil” and “civil versus barbarian” (Sorrells, 2013, 118). These dichotomies then become entrenched and “out-groups” are formed as individuals who are seen as the “them” are depicted as potentially threatening, perpetuated through institutions such as the media, while “in-groups” are seen as individuals within the realm of familiarity and comfort, of cooperation, in this case, the non-Muslims, the non-Arabs, the non-Islamic believers. As the U.S. occupied Iraq, killing, raping, and torturing the Iraqi people, they then turned the question around, framing the Arab world as a culture of violence, asking, “Why are Iraqis so violent?” (Shihade, 2009, 885).

A discussion of the media as an institution regarding its coverage on the war on terror is essential in understanding and thereby combating the detrimental effects it has on the public sphere, where a domination of constructed ideologies that serve various actor’s interests and assert status further hinders social progression. This is taken from Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the public sphere, which he defines in *The Structural Transformation in the Public Sphere* as “the domain of social life where public opinion can be formed and where citizens deal with

matters of general interest without being subject to coercion” (Habermas, 1962, 231). It began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in coffee houses and voluntary associations, amongst the mundane normative daily interactions between mankind. As political theorist Hannah Arendt said in *The Human Condition*, it is based on the mode of acting and speaking in the presence of others; the wheels to human progression. For the U.S., demonizing Islam and the Muslim community through participants in the U.S. media justifies policies of aggression, expansion and intervention, as the U.S. has a new enemy to pursue global hegemony (Shihade, 2009, 888). This ultimately calls for an examination and exposure of such agendas. The understanding and discussion of stereotypes and political incentives by various actors, allows, therefore, for the concept of plurality- based on the presence of others, of speaking to, listening, and communicating with others, and thereby accepting the variety that is mankind, and the variety of thought within individuals, building upon this a political life that is able to continue forward and a reality, dynamic in its nature and that which is not held stagnant by singular beliefs.

### **My Study**

In the hopes of expanding the previous body of research not only to examine the ways in which the media shapes public opinion and uses framing to further narratives and therefore stereotypes and ideologies, I will also examine the ways in which media from different societies may differ in their framing. Much of the previous research done on framing wartime news has been “one-sided”. This refers to the phenomenon of only examining one news source, typically an American or Western news source, largely reflecting the lack of research done on a comparative study of news sources from the West and the Arab world. The concern for bias of Western media and the impact it has within the public sphere and therefore on social progression is a main priority of this study.

Jaspersen and El-Kikhia’s 2003 study which examines framing on the Afghanistan war by looking at CNN and *Al Jazeera*, is one of the select few previous studies done comparatively

on the topic of the war on terror between Western and Arab news sources, and I hope to both broaden and update this area of research by evaluating the *New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* (English) coverage of the 2015 Paris and Yemen attacks, using content analysis to compare the framing methods used by each source. This will further research on the media as a multi-dimensional institution and the role it plays in shaping public opinion and its role in perpetuating ideologies that are currently rampant in the West through methods of media framing. As one of the biggest global security issues today, a comprehensive understanding of how media from differing societies effectively shapes public opinion and affects public policy is important to understanding the war on terror and combating constructed ideologies that serve various actors interests and agendas - affecting international relations across the globe.

### **Methods**

The present analysis includes the use of quantitative content analysis. Using the Lexis Nexis database, I analysed and compared two well-known newspaper sources, one from the Western world, the *New York Times*, and one from the Arab world, *Al Jazeera* (English) in order to fulfil my goal of a conducting a comparative study of news sources from differing societies. These two newspapers were selected due to the similarity in their high readership, with the *New York Times* as the second highest circulating newspaper in the United States and *Al Jazeera* (English) reaching over 270m households for print circulation, and therefore compatible in their use for a comparative study.

It is important to note *Al Jazeera* (English), hereinafter referred to as “AJE”, is not equivalent to its counterpart, *Al Jazeera* (Arabic), hereinafter referred to as “AJA”. AJE is headquartered in Doha, Qatar as part of the Al Jazeera Media Network and claims to have staff from over 50 nationalities- broadcasting to “households in more than 100 countries” (Al Jazeera, 2012). AJE has both been condemned for not being “Arab” enough and also praised for being the “New United Nations”. This study took from the pool of print circulation

articles, yet when conducting background research on the TV channel, much controversy is found on the broadcast media from the channel. Journalists from AJE have commented on it as a “notable addition to the growing global efforts aimed at counterbalancing American-European domination over world media” (Al-Najjar & Abeer, 2009, 2).

AJE’s exclusive access to events and strong presence in Afghanistan led to its notable coverage of the Afghan civil war. AJE, having adopted the slogan “Giving a Voice to the Voiceless”, is commonly credited for its essential role in the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. AJE manages to combat the “CNN effect” with the “Al Jazeera effect”- exploring the media as an entity enabling its ability in “...mak[ing] traditional borders irrelevant and unify[ing] peoples scattered across the globe” (Seib, 2009). Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish and note AJE and AJA as two channels with separate identities, missions, and target audiences.

The study will focus on coverage of two particular incidents with similar demographics. The incidents chosen for the purposes of this study were twofold: one from the developed, Western world and one from the developing, Arab world. These elements are equally important in this study as they both help differentiate and showcase the dichotomy of societies and thus media. While definitions differ for what requirements allows a country to be termed “developed” or “developing”, using the definition based on GNI (gross national income) per capita, France is here defined as a developing country and Yemen one of the least developing countries (see Appendix A). Both attacks had similar death tolls, occurred in the same year, and were both claimed by the same perpetrators, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Ensuring similarities in the demographic of the attack allows more accuracy in assessing the reaction to them.

Using the Lexis Nexus database, the first set of samples were found using the Headline “Paris, attacks” with a one-month time frame given from the day of the attack

(November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015). The second set used the headline “Yemen, attacks” and was also given a one-month timeframe from the day of the attack (March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015). These settings were used for the two attacks and the two newspaper channels, creating four main cases. There was a total of 82 news stories for the *New York Times* articles on the Paris attack, 50 from AJE on the Paris attack, 13 articles from the *New York Times* on the Yemen attack and 32 from AJE on the Yemen attack, lending to a total of 177 articles. A smaller, more reasonable sample size was then attained from this sample by use of an online random sample generator number to retrieve 10 articles from each news source on each incident. Editorial, blog and opinion pieces were taken out of the sample, due to the purposes of this study requiring a reflection of the news sources’ framing methods and not the opinion of individual citizens. From the 177 a total of 40 articles were chosen, with 10 units (articles) of analysis for each of the four cases.

### Coding Scheme

Table 1: Code Book

Code	Criteria1	Criteria2	Criteria3	Criteria4	Criteria5
<b>Auto Coded</b>					
Labelist theory	"Islamist"	"extremist"	"terrorist"		
Demeaning description	"barbaric"	"murderer"	"fanatic"		
Blood	"bloodshed"	"slaughter"	"blood"	"hunt"	"kill"
Religious reference	"Muslim"	"Christian"	"Daesh"	"Jihadists"	"Jihad"
<b>Manually Coded</b>	<b>Coded for</b>				
Specific story	Story on a victim or victims				
General mourning	Show of solidarity/support for country attacked				
Political reporting	Reporting of events without foreseeable bias				
World responses	Coverage on UN/Obama/Hollande/other Leaders				
Critiquing corruption	Critiquing government/structural oppression				

The code book was designed to capture the underlying attitudes towards the news stories. The following codes were auto coded:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Each auto-coded term included in the final graphs has been manually checked to see if there was a negative connotation associated with code.

- “Labelist theory”: coding for the literal meaning for “Islamist”, “extremist”, “terrorist”
- “Demeaning description”: coding for the terms “fanatics”, “barbarians”, “murderers”
- “Religious reference”: coding for negative connotations surrounding religious groups such as Muslims, Christians, Daesh, Jihadists
- “Blood”: coding for violent associations with the terms “hunt”, “kill”, “bloodshed”

The following codes required manually coding:

- “Specific story”: coding for covering particular victims or members of victims’ families
- “World responses”: coding for coverage on either Hollande’s or other leaders, as well as reactions from other entities such as Obama or the United Nations

The coding scheme was altered during the process of assigning codes, such as the *New York Times* articles on the Paris attacks cases leading to the code “general mourning” being added to the code book.

- “General mourning”: coding for references to mourning for the country attacked

“Critiquing corruption” was added to the code book during the coding for the *New York Times* on the Yemen incident.

- “Critiquing corruption”: coding coverage of corruption of the larger structures of structural oppression.<sup>2</sup>
- “Political reporting”: coding for when the piece reported general evidence, focusing on larger institutions

The articles were coded in groups of ten: articles each from AJE on Yemen, the *New York Times* articles on Yemen, AJE articles on Paris, and the *New York Times* articles on Paris— with the combined data into four sub-categories as such. After linking the codes to the text, the data was then exported into two graphs, permitting a comparison between the two incidents, as well as into a graph with the total data from AJE compared to the total data from the *New York Times*. This allowed me to compare per incident as well as per news source.

### **Metalanguage**

This research has reflected how the everyday words used by the media, in academia, and in the public sphere has internalised the treatment and attitudes the West has held and that have

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<sup>2</sup> Includes both when the piece itself was critiquing corruption or when covering a critique of corruption.

dominated public perspectives towards differing societies and people from differing cultures. This study employed the words “Paris” and “Yemen” throughout, despite the disproportionate attributes of the two terms on the basis of one referring to a city and the other a country, in order to use the same terms commonly associated in discussions revolving the media and the war on terror. The articles analysed for this study similarly used those terms, whereas the accurate equivalent for the two would be either “Paris” and “Sana’a” or “Yemen” and “France”. The phrase “Parisian” lives also appeared in articles, the equivalent of which does not exist for Sana’a.

### Results

Once I had linked codes to the texts, I then categorised the codes into the two main frameworks discussed in the literature review: episodic framing and thematic framing. The following chart gives a visual representation of this:

*Table 2: Episodic versus Thematic Framing*

Framework	Codes
A. <u>Episodic Framing</u>	
1) Communicative framing (episodic)	specific story, general mourning, world responses, blood
2) Responsibility framing (episodic)	labelist theory, demeaning description, religious reference, critiquing corruption
vs.	
B. <u>Thematic framing</u>	political reporting

The purpose for dividing my codes into these two larger frameworks in Table 1 was in order to be able to more easily compare AJE with the *New York Times* and their ability to report without bias and rather just cover news stories, looking at stories of similar demographics

occurring in societies of drastically differing socio-economic status. Episodic framing refers to occasions whereby the news sources engaged in biased news coverage, appealing to emotion, while thematic framing refers to more unbiased reporting, covering the broader context of things. Communicative and responsibility are the two main methods used to observe when newspapers engaged in biased news coverage (episodic framing).

Episodic framing “depicts concrete events that illustrate issues” and is therefore likely to hold bias (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000, 96). This includes a framing method communicative framing, or the “mythic tales frame”, whereby the news source does not prioritize covering new information but instead “communicat[es], often through heavy symbolism and emotion, preexistent values and narratives” (Kavoori & Fraley, 2006, 32). The codes “specific story”, “general mourning”, “blood”, and “world responses” are used to observe engagement in communicative framing, specifically the “mythic tales frame”.

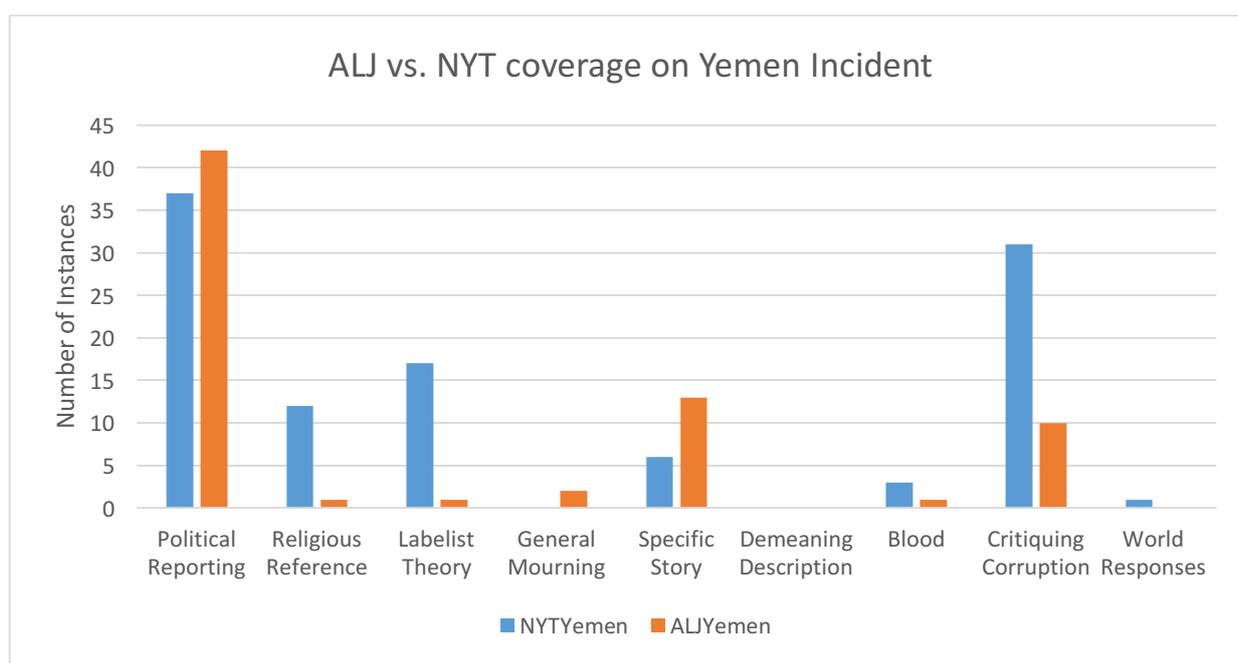
Responsibility framing also falls under episodic framing, as another way to analyse a newspaper’s susceptibility to biases and underlying agendas. Responsibility framing refers to the use of “attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual group” (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000, 96). The codes “labelist theory”, “demeaning description”, “religious reference” and “critiquing corruption” helped assess the news sources’ use of this framing method.

Thematic framing, in contrast to episodic framing, refers to presenting collective or general evidence and therefore is more likely to be unbiased. The code used to assess this framing method included “political reporting”. Thematic framing includes occurrences of reporting with a focus on larger institutions, allowing the reader to view the issue as related to collective action, while episodic framing leads the reader to hold other citizens or specific groups accountable.

The lack of multiple codes used to determine unbiased reporting or thematic framing is due to the simplicity in the criteria, allowing the code “political reporting” to encompass, independently of other codes, moments of unbiased reporting. Despite one code used to find moments engaging in unbiased framing versus the multiple codes used to assess the news sources susceptibility to biased framing, this did not skew the final data, as, in an attempt to observe moments of biased reporting, methods of this were subcategorised into multiple codes in order to more aptly show how the news sources were engaging in episodic framing or biased reporting methods rather than merely an over branching “biased reporting” code. This allowed room for the occurrences of biased reporting to be assessed more meticulously.

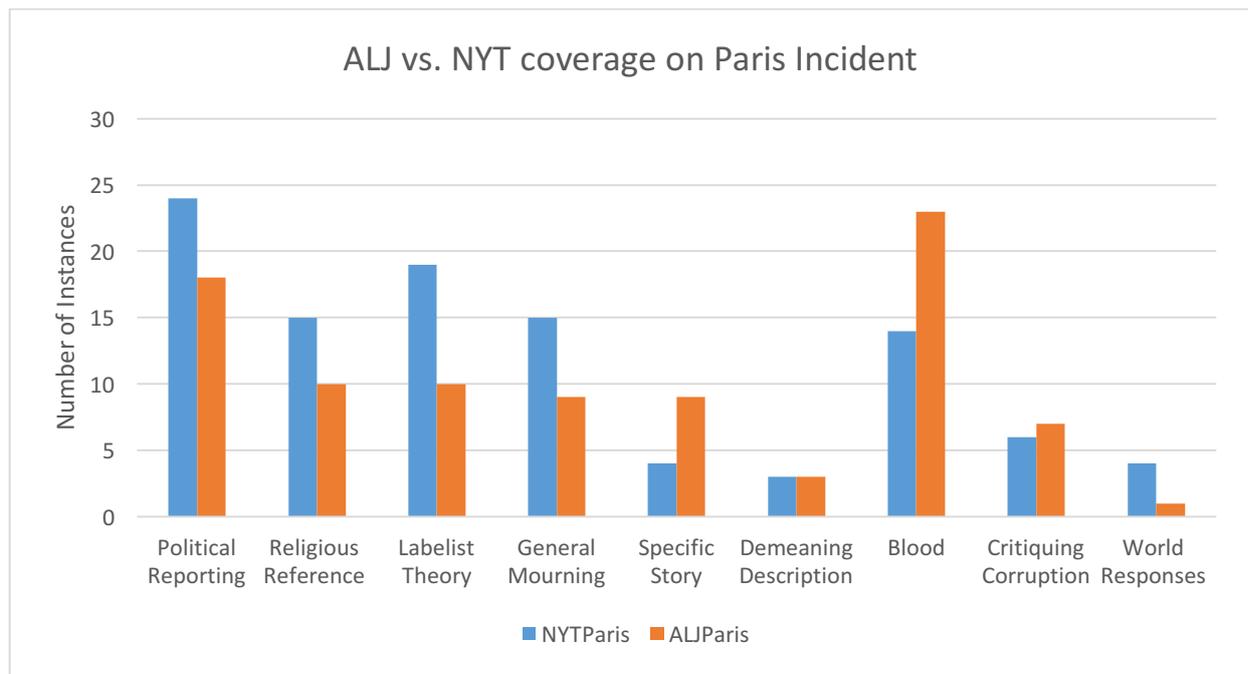
## Graphs

*Graph 1<sup>3</sup>*

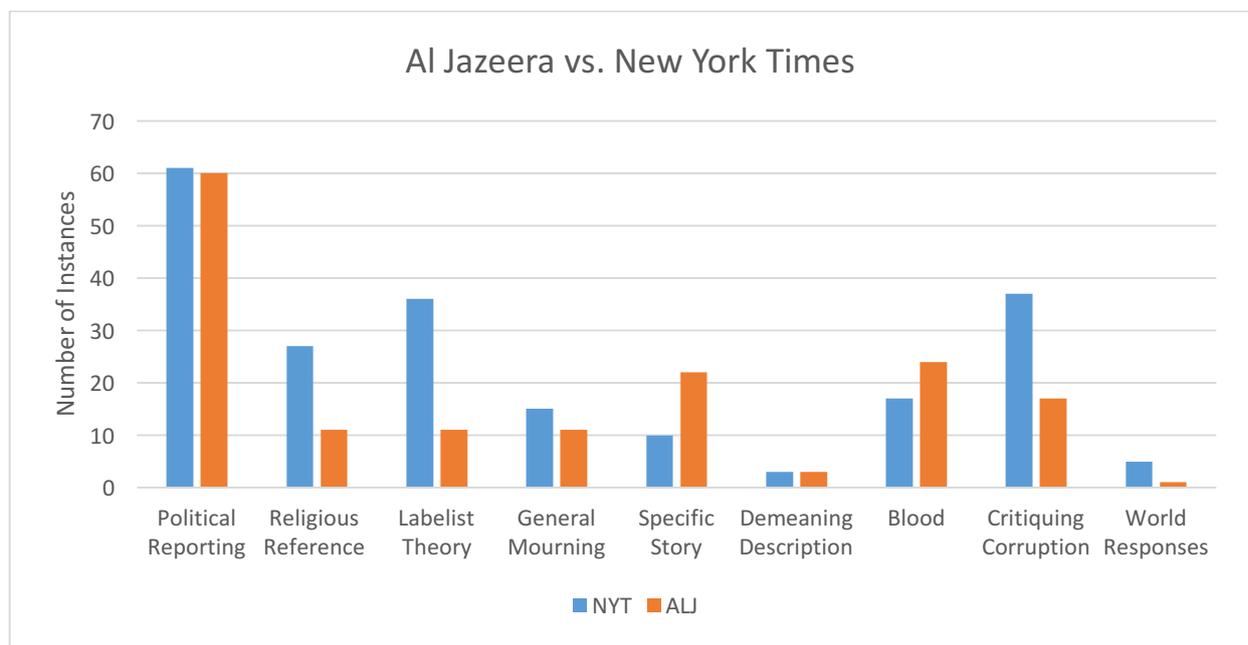


<sup>3</sup> ALJ: Al Jazeera English

Graph 2



Graph 3



Comparing the data per incident, I will now examine how the two news sources differently or similarly covered and portrayed the two attacks. I will do this by analyzing the codes attributed to the frameworks as mentioned above, keeping a parallel comparison of the two

news sources throughout. These comparisons primarily focused on graphs 1 and 2, which allows a clear comparison of the frequency of codes appearing per incident.

## **Comparing by Incident and Source**

### **A. Episodic Framing**

First I will analyse and compare the news sources' coverage on the two incidents and their use of episodic framing by looking at the data for these codes under episodic framing. The codes "world responses", "general mourning", "blood" and "specific story" were coded for the news sources' use of communicative framing, a type of episodic framing.

#### **1. Communicative Framing**

**"World Responses" coding.** Regarding "world responses" the *New York Times*, hereinafter referred to as the "NYT", both attacks had more instances of the code than did AJE (1 vs 0 for Yemen, 4 vs 1 for Paris, respectively). Due to the low results for the "world responses" code, as graph 1 and 2 show, there is a lack of analysis that can be made on this code, perhaps only retracting from it the fact of more leaders around the world having responded in general to the Paris incident. This once more reflecting more concern politically to an incident of similar demographic occurring in the developed world than the developing world.

**"General Mourning" coding.** The NYT had significantly higher frequency for the code "general mourning" for the Paris attack (15 vs 9) than did AJE (as seen in graph 2). Coded text under "general mourning" for the Paris incident included responses from New York City (as they pledged their standing in solidarity), entertainment shows such as Saturday Night Live, Late Night, the Nightly Show; comedians, and Shanghai's Oriental Pearl Tower's lights glowing "white and red in solidarity", as, indeed, "China joined the rest of the world over the weekend in outrage and sympathy over the armed attacks [...] in Paris" (taken from one of the NYT articles).

The difference between the two news sources' frequency appearing under the code "general mourning" for the articles covering the Yemen attack only differed by two occurrences – AJE appearing twice for this code and the NYT zero times (as seen in graph 1). While the Yemen articles did not experience much reference to "general mourning", the 3 that appeared from AJE on the Yemen articles were typically in reference to world-wide peace organisations responding to the incident or the Yemeni government flag, instead of responses from other countries and cities- as was the "general mourning" references that appeared under the Paris articles. Examples of "general mourning" codes for the Yemen articles include:

"The Yemeni government's flag would eventually be hoisted in the Houthis' stronghold of Saada province."

"Children are in desperate need of protection, and all parties to the conflict should do all in their power to keep children safe," UNICEF's representative for Yemen, Julien Harneis, told Al Jazeera."

In terms of the "general mourning" code, it is interesting to note both news sources engaged in this type of episodic framing by a significant amount when covering the Paris attack than the Yemen attack, and when the code did appear for the Yemen attack by AJE, it differed in focus from the Paris articles, not covering a world standing in solidarity, as did the Paris incident. The underlying implications of this must be addressed- a deeper examination of a world that cares more for a Western life than lives doomed for higher mortality rates, poverty; a society where daily suffering is the norm.

**"Blood" coding.** The coding for "blood" found both news sources used drastically less words with violent associations when covering the Yemen incident than the Paris incident. Both AJE and the NYT used less than 5 of these terms on the Yemen incident, while 14 were coded from the NYT and 23 from AJE when covering the Paris incident. Graph 1 and 2 show both news sources as guilty of engaging in more use of episodic framing as seen

through increase in frequency of use of this code for the Paris incident than the Yemen incident.

**“Specific Story” coding.** The study found the frequency for AJE’s “specific story” coding as occurring almost twofold in comparison to the NYT on the coverage of both the Paris (9 vs 4) and Yemen attacks (13 vs 6). The ways in which the anecdotes were depicted also differed immensely between the coverage of the two attacks. When covering the Paris incident, the text coded was found to have a similar pattern: lengthier and more anecdotal, while the NYT’s codes mostly consisted of victim’s names, age, and occupation. Instances of text under the “specific story” code from the Paris articles by AJE include:

“At least one person is seen writhing on the ground as scores more stream past, some of them bloodied or limping.”

"Hebdo really left a mark on me, it really touched me," said Albertine Jeannet, a 15-year-old from the district. "It was the first time that I was faced with an attack. I was really afraid of going out."

Examples of “specific story” instances coded from the Paris articles by the NYT include:

“Manuel Colao Dias, 63, a retired chauffeur and avid soccer player...”

“Matthieu Giroud, a professor of geography...”

“Hoda Saadi, 35, a bubbly yoga-loving French restaurant manager with Tunisian roots...”

The NYT, when depicting specific individual’s stories’ on the articles covering the Yemen incident, was found to be much less sentimental, shorter in description, and depicting Western individuals who were offering their aid or opinions, while AJE’s anecdotes of specific victims on the Yemen incident held more appeal to pathos and was more poignant.

Examples from the NYT on the Yemen incident:

“The local militias are loosely organized, dominated by young men focused on securing their own neighborhoods, said Jamal Khuluqi, a 25-year-old Yemeni-American from Buffalo who said he was helping with relief efforts in the city.”

“Ms. Pierre, a midwife, arrived in Aden in January [...] Now, she and the doctors are sequestered, listening to gun battles, sometimes distant, sometimes just outside the hospital walls.”

Examples from AJE on the Yemen incident:

“She says, ‘come hug me, don’t leave me alone’, Sami told Al Jazeera”

“Eight-year-old Islam Sanabani says that when he is scared, he looks for his grandfather. ‘He gives me a hug and then I feel better’”

The frequency and the difference in the way in which “specific stories” of victims was depicted shows the AJE engaging in more methods of episodic framing. However, the NYT’s portrayal of specific victim’s on the Yemen incident as covering largely outside opinion is further explored as a Western gaze.

In summary, the results from the “general mourning” code reflects more concern from the world towards the Paris attack than the Yemen attack. The “world responses” code proved futile for this comparative analysis. Both news sources used more episodic framing in covering the Paris attacks as seen through the “blood” code. Here it is worthy to note AJE’s engagement with episodic framing more so when covering the Paris attacks than the Yemen attacks, highlighting its susceptibility to Westernisation. While AJE engaged more so in episodic framing as seen in its use of the “specific stories” code, when delving into a deeper look into how the news sources covered “specific stories”, it became evident that the NYT employed an underlying Western gaze when covering the Yemen stories.

## **2. Responsibility Framing**

The codes “labelist theory”, “demeaning description”, “religious reference” and “critiquing corruption” helped assess the news sources’ use of responsibility framing. I will now analyse and compare the two news sources by examining their use of these codes.

**“Labelist Theory” coding.** The “Labelist theory” code was found in this study to occur more from the NYT articles for coverage on both the Paris attack (19 vs 10) and Yemen attack (17 vs 1). The NYT’s negative use of the terms “Islamist” and “terrorist” (as coded for by the “Labelist theory” code) as appearing more for both incidents shows it

employs more methods of responsibility framing than AJE in this case, attributing responsibility to governments, individuals, or groups- in this case, a focus on group. Through the frequency for the “labelist theory” code, AJE showed significantly less susceptibility to this.

**“Demeaning Description” and “Religious Reference” coding.** The codes “demeaning description” and “religious reference” also serve to expose methods of stereotyping and attributing responsibility. The “demeaning description” code found 0 instances from both news sources from the Yemen articles, and 3 instances from both articles on the Paris incident. The frequency for “demeaning description” was relatively low, perhaps too low to pull any conclusive data, with the exception of taking note of both newspaper sources employing more of these “demeaning descriptions” for the Paris incident. Here the news sources engaged in more use of pathos by appealing to the reader’s emotions for an incident of similar demographic occurring in a developed Western country than in a developing Arab country.

**“Critiquing Corruption” coding.** Concerning the code “critiquing corruption”, the NYT had threefold as many frequencies appear for the articles covering the Yemen incident than AJE (31 vs 10) but an almost equal amount to AJE for the Paris incident (6 vs 7). The high number of occurrences of the code appearing for “critiquing corruption” for the Yemen incident from the NYT once again supports the evidence of the NYT employing more methods of responsibility framing than AJE.

Although the NYT employed more methods of responsibility framing when covering the Yemen incident due to the frequency of the code appearing in the Yemen articles, the way in which the two news sources typically critiqued corruption examined in further detail provided more insight. The code appearing for the Paris articles focused largely on placing blame on the government and lack of security. Examples from AJE include:

“they said authorities had not learned security lessons after the Charlie Hebdo attacks back in January.”

“Assad also criticised the president for ignoring the fact that some of France’s allies support “terrorists” in Syria – a phrase he uses for all armed factions in Syria.”

An example from the NYT:

“Mr. Comey said the databases that the government relied on to screen people might not include enough reliable data from Syria.”

In contrast, much of the articles on the Yemen incident spent a large part critiquing regional militias, the collapse of the state, the Saudi government, and the effect of this on America.

Examples of the code appearing for the Yemen article from AJE include:

“The Houthis and Saleh’s GPC political marriage is certainly one of convenience and not love, as Saleh has fought several battles against the Houthis, one resulting in the death of the movement’s founder.”

“So far we can say with confidence that both sides have not exercised sufficient restraint. There were some unselective targeting and we are very concerned about that...”

From the NYT a common trend that appeared through much of these codes was examining the Yemen incident through a Western gaze:

“I don’t think they have thought through how to solve the problems of Yemen, or even how to manage it,” said Bernard Haykel, a professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton University.

“if you ask why we’re backing this, beyond the fact that the Saudis are allies and have been allies for a long time, the answer you’re going to get from most people – if they were being honest – is that we weren’t going to be able to stop it,” said an American defence official.

While the socio-economic fabric of France and Yemen differ drastically, the codes appearing under “critiquing corruption” herein subtly suggest main causes and responsible agents, thereby making moral judgements, and, inevitably, suggesting policy response to the events. Both news sources frame the incidents differently, focusing on placing blame on the government when covering the Paris incident in comparison to placing blame on the region itself when covering the Yemen incident. Despite this, the NYT was seen to have a Western

gaze of superiority- seen through the way in which they criticised corruption in the Yemen articles.

Overall, these results from the study show the NYT to engage more so in responsibility framing than AJE, regardless of incident, as seen from the data derived from the “labelist theory” and “religious reference” codes. The data extracted from the “demeaning description” code proved unsubstantial due to its low frequency of occurrence. The “critiquing corruption” code showed the NYT as more biased than AJE when covering the Yemen incident and a similar amount when covering the Paris incident. The two news sources differed when critiquing corruption more so when compared between incident than between news sources, as the critique’s surrounding the Paris incident were focused more so on the issues of security while the Yemen articles discussed larger socio-political agendas and searching for cause-and-effect relationships.

### **B. Thematic Framing**

The code used to assess the use of thematic framing method refers to “political reporting”. I will now analyse the news sources’ use of thematic framing by examining the comparative data of this code per news source, and then by incident.

**“Political Reporting” coding.** Regarding the Yemen incident, the NYT exhibited slightly less instances of it than AJE (37 vs 42), whereas for the Paris incident the NYT exhibited more instances of it than AJE (24 vs 18). A comparison between the frequency coding for “political reporting” from the Paris incident of both news sources and the Yemen articles shows the frequency as having occurred a significant amount more for the Yemen articles from both news sources than for the Paris articles.

The news sources, regardless of whether it was from the Western world or the Arab world, both attributed around twice the amount of methods of thematic framing when covering the Yemen incident (as seen when comparing graph 1 to graph 2). Therefore, both

news sources included much less methods of thematic framing when covering a story from the Western world. This supports previous findings of both news sources having engaged more so in episodic for the Paris incident, such as responsibility and communicative framing.

### **Comparing the Two News Sources**

While graph 1 and 2 shows a comparison based on incident, Graph 3 allows the total data of the two news sources to be compared, to show the overall use of thematic and episodic framing of AJE and the NYT. First looking at the four codes under episodic framing (“specific story”, “general mourning”, “world responses”, and “blood”), it is interesting to note the NYT as having less instances of the codes “specific story” and “blood”, but more instances of the “world responses” and “general mourning” codes. However, this may not lead to any conclusive patterns, as both news sources employed similar amounts of overall episodic framing. Regarding the codes under responsibility framing (“labelist theory”, “demeaning description”, “religious reference” and “critiquing corruption”), the NYT had staggeringly larger amounts of instances for the codes “labelist theory”, “religious reference” and “critiquing corruption”, but the same amount as AJE for “demeaning description”. In this case, the NYT overall employed more methods of responsibility framing.

When comparing the overall use of “political reporting” from both news sources, they differed by 1 frequency- an unsubstantial amount inconsequential to drawing valid conclusions. This is perhaps the most interesting finding, as it shows that both news sources, according to the content analysis conducted, employed overall the same amount of thematic framing - in other words, presenting collective or general evidence and unbiased reporting.

A closer look showed differences between how the code for “political reporting” differed per incident. AJE and the NYT both largely focused on covering the political steps taken in reaction to the attacks for the Paris incident, mostly surrounding the following topics:

“Political reporting” topics on the Paris incident:

- The Syrian refugee crisis and the EU’s refugee policy
- The perpetrator’s of the attacks and how they were caught
- Expanding surveillance
- Privacy protections and ethical issues surrounding this
- Foreign and international security
- Negotiations from Hollande’s government

In contrast, in their coverage of the Yemen attack, both AJE and the NYT tended to focus more so on the larger state of affairs surrounding the region before the incident or how other countries and entities would be affected and react, rather than security and political measures taken in reaction solely to the Yemen incident. The codes appearing under “political reporting” for the Yemen incident focused on the following topics:

“Political reporting” topics on the Yemen incident:

- The Houthis and their relationship to Ali Abdullah Saleh
- Saleh stepping down following the Arab-Spring inspired protests
- The United Nations security council
- The economic state of Yemen
- The Houthis strengthening their reliance
- International relief agencies (World Health Organisation, World Food Program, Doctors Without Borders)
- Arab Spring revolts and the consequences of it
- Yemen as a “political crisis”
- The Obama administration’s reaction to the “failing security situation”

While AJE and the NYT had almost identical amounts of “political reporting” coded (60 vs. 61), it is important to examine the way in which they reported on the facts regarding each incident. More difference was found within how the news sources covered the two incidents with dissimilar focuses rather than between the two news sources, similarly to the results found from the code “critiquing corruption”. The codes for the articles on the Paris attack found not much reaction to the original political socio-economic root of the situation, namely, of ISIS and its manifestation from within a region of political disintegration, but mostly on how to increase security. The codes appearing under the articles covering the Yemen attack

found, from both news sources, a certain reinforcement of whiteness and privilege from international relief agencies, the US and their role in the region.

### **Discussion**

#### **Parametrical Differences**

Despite the frequency of the codes themselves and the context with which they were in, the number of articles that were printed from each news source regarding the incidents is reflective of how the media increases public concern on certain matters. Given the search parameters, the NYT had 82 articles and 50 from AJE on the Paris incident, compared to the 13 articles from the NYT and 32 from AJE on the Yemen incident. While AJE's difference in number of articles published for the two incidents is smaller than the difference from the NYT's on the two incidents (which was over 6 times the amount for the Paris incident), both news sources published more on the Paris attack. This affirms and aligns with previous studies, such as Norris et al.'s (2003), which argued the increase in the stories covered from the NYTs on terrorism following the 9/11 events led to increasing public concern in terrorism.

#### **The Middle East as a Lost Hope?**

The amount of sympathy created and pity in the NYT articles covering the Paris attacks were numerous, and the analysis on what sort of anecdotes were included shows an abundance of references to specific victims and responses from Obama, David Cameron, General Chancellor Merkel, etc., each announcing their solidarity with Paris, as political commentator and comedian John Oliver said:

“...“France is going to endure,” because, he said, the nation of Jean-Paul Sartre, Édith Piaf, Albert Camus and Gauloises cigarettes would never lose a war over culture and lifestyle.”

In contrast, this was lacking in the coverage of the Yemen incident. This “empathy gap” should be further addressed and examined, as the lack of global attention given to attacks occurring on a more frequent basis in a developing country stands in stark contrast to the

world's mourning for the "city of love." This is seen through the way in which anecdotes for specific victims were written ("specific story") and the type and amount of global reactions ("general mourning") each attack received. The media, as an institution that shapes public opinion and public policy, similarly also reflects reactions in the public sphere, which reacted differently to an attack occurring in the West than an attack occurring in the less developed world, as seen in this content analysis study. Whether or not this is due to the higher frequency of bombings occurring in the Middle East or not, this leads to larger and deeper implications, as stories such as the Sana'a mosque bombings become the norm in the Middle East to the point of discerning significantly less reaction from the world than an attack occurring in Western Europe.

### **The Western Gaze**

The code "blood" is found to have occurred by a significantly larger amount when covering the Paris incident than the Yemen incident from both news sources. The media, in this case, as a whole (without the differentiation of media from the West or the Arab world), reflected the larger span of reaction there was to the loss of Parisian lives in the "city of love". Here both news sources were found to engage in methods of biased framing (as seen through the codes under "communicative framing") more so when covering an incident occurring in the developed world. However, it is worthy to take note in particular of AJE's susceptibility in employing more methods of communicative framing when covering stories of the Paris incident than the Yemen incident. Jasperson and El-Kikhia's 2003 study on CNN and AJE showing the U.S. as employing more patriotic rhetoric and AJE employing more neutral coverage is supported by this study *only when* covering the Yemen incident and not the Paris incident. AJE, as an Arab news source located in the Middle East, gives an alternative view and agendas, but is seen here, also as a Westernised news source.

AJE having almost twice as many occurrences for “specific story” codes for either attack leads to the conclusion of AJE employing more episodic framing or biased framing. Through a deeper analysis of the types of “specific story” of individual victims and the language it was written in, a pattern appears, of the NYT holding a Western gaze when covering the Yemen incident, as most of the victims were from international relief agencies or outsiders. The “Western Gaze” is often used in cinematography, and refers to a metaphorical lens, glasses, or tunnel through which the West peers through when covering or examining Eastern or Middle Eastern cultures: “centered around Western concern, and reduced to Western cultural, economic, and military power” (Marvin, 2014, 2). This is also supported from the “critiquing corruption” code, whereby the NYT covered the Yemen story through international relief agencies and focusing on prior political events while much of the criticism found in the Paris articles were found to revolve around the collapse of the state, criticising the French government or EU security and intelligence policies. When the NYT covered the Yemen incident, both the results from the “specific story” and “critiquing corruption” codes depicted the victims and incident in Yemen through a Western gaze- as problematic, lesser, and at a further distant, in comparison to the victims of the Paris incident and coverage of the Paris incident itself. By examining the Yemen incident through international relief agencies, this distinctly places their lives at a lower standpoint in need of help; furthering the dichotomy of victim and victimizer, colonized and colonizer.

### **The “Us Versus Them” Rhetoric**

Results from the “labelist theory”, as part of assessing the use of responsibility framing, depicted instances of using certain terms with negative connotations such as “Islamic” or “extremist”. It showed the NYT as more prone to engaging in this behavior than an Arab news network such as AJE, as the NYT articles experienced more frequencies of the code regardless of which incident it was covering. Under the NYT articles, the code appeared

twofold for the Paris story than AJE, and 17:1 for the Yemen story (respectively). This supports previous literature and critical acclaim of AJE as promoting counter-hegemonic news perspective. By enforcing previous narratives and agendas of the “us-versus-them” dichotomy, the NYT is here acting as a political tool benefiting the political interests of the United States, by depicting those not from the West as savage, other, uncivilized, perpetuating extremism and the Islamic faith not as a reaction to the dominant white colonizer but as a singular barbaric and irrational entity, individualised from socio-economic and political circumstances, and portraying Yemeni lives as less worthy than Parisian lives. This fits into Marx’s conflict theory, wherein groups in society fight for limited resources. In order to maintain power and positionality, those in power, the West, will use their materials to exploit groups with lesser power, through use of the media, to influence and shape public opinion. In this case, the NYT engaging in more responsibility framing than AJE allows the colonial structure of the U.S. to continue in the so-called “war of terror.”

Despite the results from the “demeaning description” code being too low to draw any substantial conclusions, the results from the “religious reference” code similarly supported the conclusions from the “labelist theory”- of the NYT as a tool for the West to further maintain its power in a global dichotomy. Reductionist views on “Islam” that are exclusive to other areas of the culture and lead to constraining line of thoughts is perpetuated through institutions such as the media, in this case the NYT, that labels, stereotypes, and scapegoats marginalized communities. Similarly, the lack of consensus surrounding the definition of the term “terrorism” leads to the media creating its own definition and understanding of the term, which therefore shapes public perception of the phenomena. Here the NYT supports previous research of the media as having an agenda in demonizing Islam and Muslims, and in enforcing pre-existing values and narratives through communicative framing.

**The “CNN Effect”**

The differences of how both news sources engaged in thematic framing as seen in the code “political reporting” for the Paris versus Yemen incident further supports Frost’s argument, which stated a need to examine the “hegemonic whiteness” that is perpetuated through institutions like the media, and is seen here in both Arab and Western media. Focusing on how the two news sources differed in their thematic framing, in other words, reporting on facts, the articles on the Paris incident as being dominated by discussion surrounding the political reaction and next steps taken, such as increasing security, must be examined in comparison to the topics focused on in the Yemen articles- revolving around reporting on multiple political actors, events leading up to the mosque bombings such as the Arab Spring, the Houthis and their relationship to Saleh, and so on. Here both news sources engaged here more so in responsibility framing when reporting on the Yemen incident than the Paris incident.

The media making moral judgements and placing blame in examining the socio-political circumstance of things when covering the Yemen incident more so than when covering the Paris incident can be discussed in relation to the influence the media holds in shaping public policy and affecting high-level foreign policy decision-making in respect to humanitarian crisis. In other words, both news sources, regardless of Western or Arab, plays a role in driving policy decision-making, further supporting the “CNN effect” theory.

**Conclusion**

The current fabric of society is experiencing a rise in xenophobia and Islamophobia, seeing terrorism as one of the largest security issues affecting nations and states across the globe. The normalization of anti-Muslim rhetoric in a technological era is perpetuated by media across the globe. The patterns discerned here in an examination of the multidimensional

phenomenon of terrorism calls for more comparative studies of media from the developed world and the developing world.

Much of the literature on the media and its relation to the war on terror discusses the media as having a certain rhetoric, appealing to emotion and pushing forth previous agendas. In this case, the “us versus them” rhetoric is widespread, depicting Muslims and the Islamic faith as dangerous, barbaric, and therefore, less worthy than the “us”- the dominant, civilized, West. This study examined the use of thematic and episodic framing from the *New York Times* and *Al Jazeera* (English) on the 2015 Paris and Yemen attacks. In applying codes to a pool of articles and using quantitative content analysis to assess how they differ and resemble in their coverage of the two stories, an examination of episodic framing and thematic framing was conducted. The results concluded not that one news source was less biased than the other, but rather, unveiled some of the intricacies and complexities surrounding the phenomena of news reporting on the war on terror.

The *New York Times* generated more instances of biased reporting or episodic framing when covering either attack – thereby showing its role as a U.S. news source in perpetuating the mainstream rhetoric that leads to the rising of xenophobia, Islamophobia, and “othering”. When covering the Yemen stories, the stance of outsiders and relief agencies in comparison to *Al Jazeera* (English)’s focus on victims and civilians within the region shows the *New York Times* holding a distanced Western gaze on the Yemen story. *Al Jazeera*’ (English)’s unequal portrayal and sympathy attributed to the Paris attack and the Yemen attack, with the Paris attack receiving more coverage on victim stories, general mourning, and use of descriptive language rather than neutral language, is reflective of its Westernisation as an Arab news source targeting an audience largely located in the West.

Both *Al Jazeera* (English) and the *New York Times* reflect the reaction of the public sphere and the masses, as they cover the reactions the two attacks of similar demographics

but of drastically differing societies received. The instances of unbiased reporting proved overall similar for the two news sources, but a qualitative analysis allowed a deeper understanding of the news sources' agendas. Topics covered by both news sources found in the Paris articles were found to focus more on increasing security measures and the EU's political agenda, while a focus on previous events such as the Arab Spring and the role of political agents in the region through the voice of international relief agencies largely dominated the unbiased reporting for the Yemen attacks. This is demonstrative of the way in which the global entities respond to an attack occurring in a cosmopolitan urbanized industrialized nation and a developing nation. The entire world responding differently and substantially more to the 137 Parisian lives taken than the 142 Yemeni lives is a phenomena that calls for further questioning.

### **Limitations**

Limitations for this study were twofold. The first includes the logistical limitations due to cultural differences and norms between the developed and developing world. While the Middle Eastern region experiences terror attacks on a substantially higher frequency, it is a rare anomaly when occurring in a Western European country. This perhaps led to more reactions to the Paris incident from other leaders, more support for France and in general more shock and empathy felt for the Parisian lives lost, despite the similarity in the demographics of both attacks. It is questionable whether an attack on a less romanticized Western city or a more internationally cosmopolitan known Middle Eastern city where, in the eyes of the West, terrorist violence is not the norm and is thus shocking, would generate equal attention. Nevertheless, the reality of the Middle East as a region experiencing failed states, corrupt military and regimes, high poverty and inequality as an everyday norm holds a relationship to the media as an institute perpetuating stereotypes and concepts towards people, religions, and cultures.

Despite the small sample size constraining and inevitably altering the study, with more time, a deeper analysis can be conducted with a larger sample size and perhaps wider coverage, including other attacks and other news sources from both the West and Arab world. The westernization of the media and its ongoing relationship to social phenomena such as the war on terror must continue to be examined, exposed and critiqued. More focus on this within academia and non-government organisations, and a larger public sphere examining the sociological enquiry behind the war on terror and the framings on the subject matter from the media as an institute, will lead to radical changes in today's society.

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### **Appendix A: Development Models**

The outdated three-world model of First, Second and Third Worlds involved in the WTO (World Trade Organisation) was used primarily during the time of the Cold War. The term “first world” referred to so-called developed and capitalist, industrialised countries; ultimately the countries aligned with the United States after WWII and with similar political and economic interests. The “second world” referred to former communist-socialist and industrial states in the Eastern Bloc, and the “third world” referred to the remaining countries, mostly in the geographical regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

The United Nations in recent years has primarily used the two-fold “developed” and “developing” countries model, using these terms to describe countries in their reports, such as in the “Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries” report. The United Nations currently splits regions in two ways: geographical region and composition, and through “selected economic and other groupings”, which include sub-categories of: developed and developing regions, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.<sup>5</sup> This division is based on the “developing” and “developed” dichotomy.

In 2011, the DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) department of the United Nations published a report of GNI per capita, with the France as a major developed economy having high-income and Yemen as a least developed country with lower middle income.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Nations Online. *First, Second and Third World*. Nations Online Project Org.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. (2016). Composition of Macro Geographical (Continental) Regions. *United Nations Statistics Division*.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. (2011). Country Classification: Data Sources, Country Classifications and Aggregation Methodology. *Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat*.

**Appendix B: Paris vs. Yemen Comparative Graph**

