



Universidad
Católica del
Uruguay

**Facultad de Ciencias Humanas
Departamento de Comunicación**

**Trabajo Final de Grado
Licenciatura en Comunicación Social**

***What Framing? Can News Discourse Create
States?***

**American and British Media Coverage of Daesh in
2016**

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Febrero, 2019

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Abstract

Mass media, as part of the public sphere, play a fundamental role in social construction of terrorist organizations.

The present research analyzes news framing of Daesh (or “Islamic State”) in 2016, per ideological bias and nationality of the media. Four Anglo-Saxon online news brands are studied through quantitative content analysis to find out the main features of four structural dimensions present in news framing. These are the syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure.

The selected media outlets are MailOnline (British and right-leaning), Guardian Online (British and left-leaning), Fox News (American and right-leaning), and New York Times (American and left-leaning).

Analysis of Daesh news framing per ideological bias of the media shows that a vast majority of publications from right-leaning media are wires from international news agencies. Left-leaning media produce mostly original articles, and publish more opinion-based contents than right-wing news brands.

The majority of publications from American media are wires from The Associated Press, while wires from Reuters and Agence France-Presse together constitute more than one half of publications from British news brands.

Daesh news framing generally tends to center on the role of the United States in the fight against terrorism. There is consensus around the use of the “Islamic State” designator, which is widespread in all the analyzed media. It discursively legitimizes the *stateness* of Daesh, while it coexists with the de-legitimizing “terrorist” designator.

Keywords: Daesh, Islamic State, news framing, mass media, wires

Resumen

Los medios de comunicación, como parte de la esfera pública, tienen un papel fundamental en la construcción social de las organizaciones terroristas.

La presente investigación analiza el *news framing* sobre Daesh (o “Estado Islámico”) en 2016, en función del sesgo ideológico y la nacionalidad de los medios. Cuatro medios online de países anglosajones se estudian por medio de un análisis de contenido de corte cuantitativo, para identificar los rasgos principales de cuatro dimensiones estructurales presentes en el news framing. Estas son la estructura sintáctica, la estructura de secuencia, la estructura temática y la estructura retórica.

Los medios seleccionados son MailOnline (británico y orientado hacia la derecha), Guardian Online (británico y orientado hacia la izquierda), Fox News (estadounidense y orientado hacia la derecha) y New York Times (estadounidense y orientado hacia la izquierda).

El análisis del news framing sobre Daesh en función del sesgo ideológico de los medios muestra que la mayoría de las publicaciones de medios sesgados hacia la derecha son cables de agencias internacionales de noticias. Los medios orientados hacia la izquierda producen ellos mismos la mayoría de sus artículos y publican más contenidos basados en opinión que los medios sesgados a la derecha.

La mayoría de las publicaciones de medios estadounidenses son cables de la agencia The Associated Press, mientras que los cables de Reuters y Agence France-Presse constituyen más de la mitad de las publicaciones de medios británicos.

El framing sobre Daesh tiende, en general, a centrarse en el rol de Estados Unidos en la lucha contra el terrorismo. Hay consenso en el uso del *designator* “Estado Islámico”, corriente en todos los medios estudiados. Ello legitima discursivamente la estatidad de Daesh, al tiempo que coexiste con el designator “terrorista”, que lo deslegitima.

Palabras clave: Daesh, Estado Islámico, news framing, medios de comunicación, cables

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Introduction

Terrorism is today a top item on the international agenda. Attacks of varied nature take place almost on a daily basis somewhere on the globe. Governments try to cope with these episodes which are almost impossible to foresee. Organizations like Al Qaeda, Al Shabab and especially the self-proclaimed *Daesh*¹ or “Islamic State”—called that way despite lacking recognition whatsoever from any State—constantly appear on the media, particularly due to actions carried out by its members in Western countries. In a landscape of civil and military conflicts in several countries with Muslim majorities, millions escape their countries of origin to resettle mostly in neighboring countries or in Europe. This tendency has boosted nationalist and xenophobe movements that reject immigration, and consider the mindset and actions of a radicalized minority as representative of the whole Muslim world. Therefore, the issue of terrorism gained relevance as part of the public sphere, that is, the arena of interaction between political actors, mass media and public opinion. Its treatment by those three actors can have an influence on election results, public policy and eventually on the quality of democracies. This research analyses the role of one of the three: mass media.

Both Daesh’s communications strategy and the framing built by the mass media around actions conducted or supported by that organization are relevant in terms of the struggle for meaning in the realm of the public sphere. This work focuses on the way the media purport Daesh and how that affects the construction of meanings surrounding the latter. Since issues involving the components of the public sphere and their cross-linkages are of a political nature, this study case falls within the field of political communication.

Brian McNair (2011) identifies terrorist organizations as a type of political actor. He warns (p. 9) about the bias in the usage of the term “terrorism” as a way of clustering organizations with diverse ends. To prevent the mentioned conceptual stretching, this work embraces the definition of terrorism as “the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals” (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003, p. 3).

¹ From the Arabic word داعش (*dā'ish*), acronym of الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام (*ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām* or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)

McNair's definition (2011, p. 9) emphasizes once again the political objectives of terrorism, and numbers the most frequent tactics adopted by terrorist organizations: urban bombing, hijacking, assassination, and kidnapping. The author characterizes these groups (p. 9) by their *modus operandi* as regards communications, claiming that they "actively court media attention, striving to make their 'target publics' aware of their existence and their objectives, often by illegal or violent means."

Terrorist organizations have reshaped their ways of communicating taking other political actors and their techniques as examples. These include news conferences, press releases and leaks (McNair, 2011, p. 9). They have adapted the methods developed by the rest of political actors to their own belief system, deviating from the constraints imposed by the Law.

As McNair (2011, p. 9) points out, "even acts of random violence directed against civilians may be viewed as a form of political communication, intended to send a message to a particular constituency, and capable of being decoded as such." Almost immediately, mass media recanalize those political communication events that are based on violence. The characteristics of that process for the case of Daesh terror attacks (planned, sponsored, supported or acknowledged by that organization) constitute the purpose of this research.

As it has been explained so far, "social understanding of terrorist organizations is discursively derived and socially constructed" (Smith et al., 2016, p. 43). Mass media, as part of the public sphere, play a fundamental role in such social construction and that is studied, in the present work, through framing analysis.

This research follows previous steps taken in research on the subject for Anglo-Saxon countries, and is nourished by research conducted by the group Islam and Media Studies of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), which comprises specific studies on news framing of Daesh. One of them was carried out by Davydov, Kashirskih, Logunova, Pronkina, and Savin (2017). It analyses the framing of Daesh by ten English-speaking media outlets (American, British, and Asian) in 2014 and 2015. Briefly, they identify different kinds of framing according to nationality of the media.

These IAMCR researchers globally identify the “War on Terror” framing as the general pattern for media coverage of the United States’ foreign policy. On the one hand, they remark that British media put emphasis on diplomatic solutions and frame their contents in wider contexts, making long-term comparisons and understanding social phenomena as consequences of social trends. They call that style “thematic framing.” On the other hand, they observe that American mass media have a bias towards military solutions, and tend to focus on isolated events rather than elaborating further on the context. That feature is identified as “episodic framing” (Davydov et al., p.3). The same Islam and Media Studies academics describe media framing around Daesh as “impersonal” in general (p. 10), and lacking any positive publications about the organization. They perceive a strong inconsistency too. Daesh’s status as a State is acknowledged, but at the same time it is categorized as a terrorist organization. Finally, they assert that media discourse on Daesh resembles other cultural frames of Islamic terrorism built along the past five to seven years.

Nonetheless, the cited IAMCR authors do not consider ideology as a variable. And that is the step forward that the present work is taking. The media outlets selected for this study are American and British—countries for which there are audience maps² available that allow the ideology variable to be considered in addition to nationality.

² A comprehensive definition of this concept can be found on page 21.

Research Questions

How was framing of Daesh presented by American and British media outlets according to their ideology in 2016?

How was framing of Daesh presented by American and British media outlets according to their nationality in 2016?

Research Objectives

To describe the characteristics of Daesh framing by American and British media outlets in 2016 according to their ideological orientation.

To describe the characteristics of Daesh framing by American and British media outlets in 2016 according to their nationality.

Theoretical Framework

Political Communication and the Public Sphere

Political communication is, according to McNair (2011, p. 4), “purposeful communication about politics.” That comprehensive approach of the concept involves not only explicit discussions between stakeholders about subjects of public interest, but also symbolic aspects and non-verbal manifestations of language. Political communication entails those messages produced *by* political actors, addressed *to* them or *about* them. As it was lined out in the introduction, McNair identifies three parties that determine the public nature of events or situations: political actors, the media and public opinion. The public sphere is the arena where those three actors struggle for the hegemony of meaning. Habermas conceptualizes it as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1964, p. 49).

Framing analysis studies the possible impact of the second party, the media, in the complex body of interactions in the realm of the public sphere. It is true, though, that political actors and public opinion can be linked directly through social media. But this communication is still mediated by different formats and specific languages. Moreover, mass media canalize contents from social media and frame-resignify them, so social media contents are liable to framing too. Yet, the emergence of social media means that traditional media do not have the monopoly on agenda setting anymore.

The Media and Terrorism

Political communication, as noted before, “is largely *mediated* communication, transmitted through the print and electronic media. The media alter the message, in their roles as reporters of and commentators on it” (McNair, 2011, p. 27). In other words, mass media have an impact on the message itself. “Not only do they transmit the messages of political organizations to the public, but they transform them through various processes of news-making and interpretation” (McNair, 2011, p. 43). There is no possible neutrality in the media, as they stick to certain rules and forms of language while they put others aside. Additionally, journalists do not produce beyond their socio-historic and cultural context. Their values and preferences can influence the pieces they work on, even when they strive to prevent it.

Framing analysis intends to examine the possible causes of a certain type of framing or its potential impact, rather than only make descriptions (Norris, 2004, p. 2). But any attempt to study the effects of a piece of communication on the behavior of the audience gives rise to the epistemo-methodological problems present in any effects research. That is, how to trace the cause-effect relationship between variables without the influence of other environmental factors (McNair, 2011, p. 28).

Semiotics is a helpful resource to better understand the mechanisms of production and transformation of messages by the media, as well as the possible consequences of that mediation. The semiological school puts emphasis on the “social semiotics” of communicational processes, instead of considering the contents of the message alone. Particular backgrounds (cultural, social, political, historic, religious, and economic) can provoke “differential decoding” of the message. Thus, the message can acquire a “plurality of meanings” across a diverse audience, followed by a potential “variety of responses” (McNair, 2011, p. 28).

The characteristics of audiences are, then, fundamental to understand how messages from Daesh might be understood. The media canalize those messages, sometimes retrieving contents from the group’s official channels and platforms, sometimes portraying Daesh’s actions (also messages themselves) through news making techniques. Could all those messages trigger attitudes in certain individuals who are somehow predisposed by features of their personality, also nourished by the context they live in? As McNair puts it, “The ‘quality’ of a message, the skill and sophistication of its construction, count for nothing if the audience is not receptive.” (McNair, 2011, p. 29). Stewart (as cited in Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, 2004, p. 52) makes a remark in the same direction when he affirms that communicating does not mean just transmitting ideas but “evoking”, through symbols, the public’s “own ideas or meanings.”

Although this research focuses on how the media purport Daesh—the meanings they stress, through what methods, and what formats—it is relevant a) to present other tools the group counts on to settle in the public sphere, like social media, and b) to discuss how both media coverage and the use of other communicative resources by Daesh may be functional to that organization’s communications strategy.

McNair observes that the Internet allows to “freely scrutinize and comment on politics,” due to its relative uncensorability. The author points out that some see this tool as the cause of a too unruly and anarchic globalized political public sphere (McNair, 2006, as cited in McNair, 2011, p. 46). That last negative aspect is being exploited by Daesh, on the grounds that the organization’s online propaganda hardly faces any obstacles to spread out. For instance, even if Twitter accounts that belong to Daesh supporters are constantly blocked, and their videos censored, there will usually be an alternative—at least temporary—to publish those contents. Pipa Norris pays attention to the weak control measures on which the Internet relies, compared with the traditional media: communications can flow in a variety of ways such as one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one or many-to-many with a poor participation of gatekeepers, government censors or other possible intermediaries (Norris, 2004).

Daesh, as a political actor, takes advantage of the relative absence of intermediaries in online communications. As for the rest of the media, those intermediaries are still relevant (e.g. journalists). That terrorist organization intends to orient their actions in favor of the goals it wants to achieve. Briefly, terrorist groups try to have their own agenda endorsed by the media, like politicians do. Still, their capacity to influence and exploit the media is limited by the latter’s condition of agenda-setters themselves (as “providers of information”) (McNair, 2011, p. 48).

Yet, Daesh did catch the attention of the media, with a combination of bloodshed and high-quality audiovisual production that seemed close to Hollywood’s fictions. There is a series of elements, as Papacharissi and Oliveira (2008) observe, that make terrorist acts “sympathetic with news values.” They include “drama, visuals, sound bites, relevance, and general newsworthiness” (p. 55). The videos released by Daesh—sometimes even broadcasted without any editing or just with a subtle blurring—partially shape the way in which that organization is framed. That framing may be functional to the group’s communications strategy. The media tend to highlight attributes of Daesh like violence and fanaticism, and purport them as negative, but those attributes reflect causes that Daesh promotes (such as martyrdom and holy war), and that might help in attracting new adepts worldwide. In that scenario, the already mentioned “evocation of ideas and meanings” in the public would be operating.

The involuntary reproduction of Daesh’s interests could happen to different extents according to each media outlet’s type of coverage. Some may treat the subject more

cautiously. Others simply retransmit the original videos of beheadings—which many times include speeches by the killer in English or French, conceived for a Western audience—and disseminate Daesh’s core values. In other words, journalists could end up unintentionally functioning as “facilitators” who are giving oxygen to Daesh with free publicity when they reify terrorist acts (Norris et al, 2003, p. 5, and Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 55). When Daesh conducts any kind of operation, the media play a central role in how that event will impact the general public. As Norris et al. (2003) explain, “terrorists initiate routine or spectacular cases of political violence, but once this catalyst is launched, the communication and framing of the meaning of the events is largely out of their hands” (p. 5).

The factors that surround decision making in the media should be thoroughly analyzed. As it was stated before, no single journalist can claim to be neutral. They all live under a context that has an influence in their thematic selection (Dader, 1990), as well as the contents they produce. That inevitable bias along with their power as providers of information makes them more than just “event reporters” but “key players in hegemonic processes,” sometimes even becoming their protagonists (Ericson et al., as cited in McNair, 2011, p. 57).

The above arguments are coherent with the principles of agenda-setting. That theory is defined as the capacity of the media to select and highlight certain themes versus others, making the selected matters to be perceived as important by the public (Dader, 1990, p. 2). McComb (as cited in Dader, 1990) affirms that the main idea behind agenda-setting is a straight and causal link between the contents of the media’s agenda—or thematic repertoire—and the subsequent public perception of what the day’s important matters are (p. 3).

Both framing analysis and the theory of agenda-setting identify news making as a decisive factor in social construction of reality. News making produces sense, and canalizes expectations and social responses to that reality, from individuals and institutions too (Dader, 1990, p. 33). The main difference between agenda-setting and framing analysis as applied here is that the second “expands beyond what people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 70).

Approaches to the Concept of “Frame”

Pan & Kosicki (1993) cite Goffman’s definition of “frame,” which stresses that people actively classify, organize and interpret their life experiences to “make sense of them,” creating the “schemata of interpretation” we call frames “to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences or information” (Goffman, as cited in Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 56). Frames are also defined as central organizing ideas or story lines that give a meaning to “events related to an issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, as cited in Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 193). Those definitions come from the sociological literature and they entail a constructivist conception that “makes strong assumptions about individual cognitive processes—structuredness of cognitive representations and theory guidedness of information processing” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 56).

Entman defines framing as a selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality” that are made “more salient in a communicating text,” thus promoting “a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, as cited in Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 53).

Norris et al. (2003) orient the definition of “frame” towards its role in journalistic activity. They focus on the concept of “news frame,” which they define as “persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events” (p. 2). They add that daily decisions and newsgathering practices also shape those frames, as they determine what stories are covered and how they are produced. Although there are several ways to describe events, journalists tend to “rely upon familiar news frames and upon the interpretation of events offered by credible sources.” Based on such interpretations, they convey dominant meanings, make sense of the facts, focus the headlines and structure the story line (Norris et al., 2003, p. 2). Conventional frames can even give priority to aspects that, while not being the most relevant of a terrorist act, might best fit in the mainstream interpretation of an event (Norris et al., 2003, p. 6).

After defining “news frame”, the authors center on their role in media coverage of terrorism. While each terror episode may be unique, they are usually covered following certain patterns, called “conventional frames” (Norris et al., 2003, p. 2) that provide with familiar categories, giving order and meaning to complex events. They constitute “consistent, predictable, simple and powerful narratives that are embedded in the

social construction of reality” (Norris et al., p. 2). Gitlin observes that frames “enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely [and to] package the information for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, as cited in Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 56). Therefore, those patterns of regularity connect episodes that may be very different from each other.

Frames and Terrorism

Norris et al. acknowledge the relevance of the media in the diffusion and unintended, implicit promotion of terrorist acts. The produced frames build, nourish and reproduce certain narratives surrounding terrorist organizations like Daesh. As they prioritize some elements over others (key concepts, phrases, and iconic images), they unconsciously promote “one particular interpretation of events” while they reinforce “the narrative flow of events” (Norris et al., 2003, p. 6). That process does not necessarily have a spurious objective behind, but an array of political, economic, social and cultural values. There are three reasons to explain how news covering is performed:

- (1) An attempt at breaking down the complexities of a story to accommodate an audience’s understanding of the situation, (2) having holes in the information received, or (3) having a short amount of time to communicate a message to the audience (Scheufele, as cited in Lowry, 2016, p. 5).

Both Norris et al. (2003) and Pan and Kosicki (1993) propose models to explain framing of terrorism. None of them achieve a solid explanation for the prevalence of certain frames over others when there are colluding perspectives on a certain issue or conflict. Norris et al. suggest a typology to sort those conflicts according to the degree of intrasocietal consensus that may exist around the interpretation of an event:

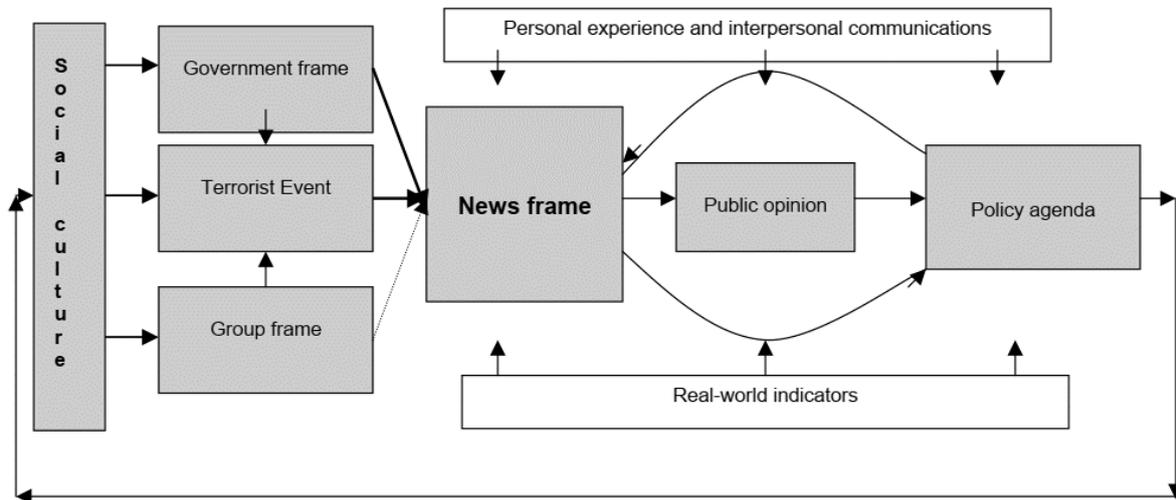
- (1) *One-sided* conflicts, where there is a broad consensus about the interpretation of events shared by most leaders, journalists and the public within one particular nation state.
- (2) *Two-sided* conflicts, where leaders, journalists and the public are deeply divided by long-standing political violence (Norris et al. 1993, p. 2).

Norris et al. describe the production of conventional news frames associated with terrorism and how these are linked with the formation of public opinion and policy

processes. One of the factors that operate in the general level is **social culture**, “the predominant norms, values and beliefs in any community” (Norris et al., 2003, p. 7).

Figure 1

Norris’s Model of Terrorism News Framing



Source: Norris et al., 2003, p. 6.

Within a particular social culture, a **terror news frame** is developed in accordance with three factors: **facts** surrounding the episode, the **official interpretation** of those facts established by political authorities and the **alternative interpretation** proposed by dissident groups (Norris et al., 1993, p. 7). This model posits that the news frame will shape **public opinion** especially if the episode is mostly one-sided. The influence of the news frame on the public involves “what people learn about any terrorist event, how they evaluate the main actors and issues under contention, and [their] concerns and perceptions of the risks and threats of further terrorist acts” (Norris et al., 1993, pp. 7-8). The news frame can also affect, directly or indirectly (as a consequence of public opinion), the way in which government officials and security services respond to an event (Norris et al., 1993, pp. 7-8).

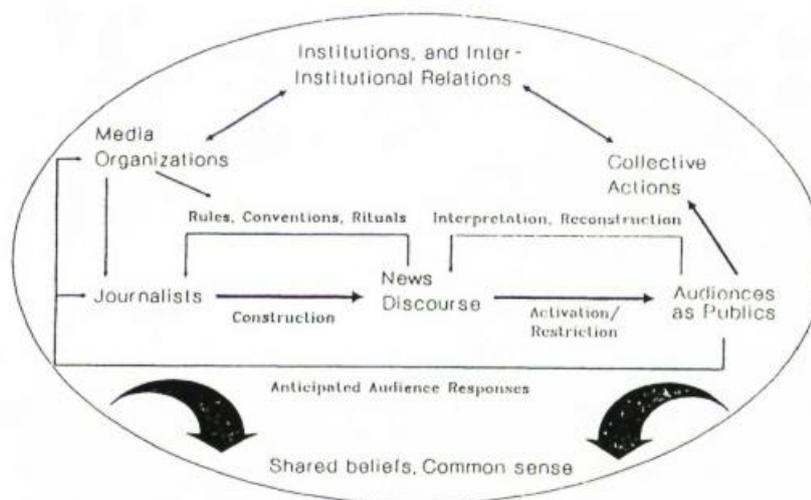
In one-sided contexts, news frames are naturalized like paradigms are in natural sciences, and they end up being perceived “as natural and inevitable, almost as common sense, with contradictory information or interpretations discounted as failing to fit pre-existing views” (Norris et al., 1993, p. 8). In journalistic practice, those “framing paradigms” become so deep-rooted that journalists might believe that they are doing an objective and balanced coverage of an event or issue, unaware of how the dominant frame is shaping their narratives (Norris et al., 1993, p. 8).

However, Norris et al. emphasize that a news frame is not the only factor that influences public opinion on a terror episode, even if its role may be central. They also identify what they call **real-world indicators**, and **personal experience and interpersonal communications** as intervening factors (Norris et al., 1993, pp. 7-8), but they do not clearly explain their meaning of such concepts.

Pan and Kosicki (1993) offer an alternative, circular “news discourse process” model. They affirm that the construction of a news frame starts “when a source stages an event that is recognized as newsworthy or when information about an event or an issue is sought by a journalist” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). Sources are mentioned in both models. Norris’s purports them as shapers of interpretations of an event’s meaning, since they provide “alternative ways of understanding the ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ that makes sense of the incident” (Norris et al., 1993, p. 7).

Figure 2

Pan and Kosicki’s News Discourse Process Model



Source: Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 58.

The news discourse process model explains that **journalists** *construct* the **news discourse** according to certain **rules, conventions and rituals**. News discourses, as they are naturalized, also influence those rules. Besides, both journalists and their rules are influenced by **media organizations**. The news discourse *activates* an array of concepts in the **public** while *restricting* other perspectives. The audience is capable of *interpreting* and *reconstructing* the news discourse. That public/audience can direct **collective actions** towards **institutions and institutional relations**, and these can

have an impact too on those collective actions. There is a **mutual impact** between institutions and media organizations. The audience's features do have an influence on journalists and media organizations. **Anticipated audience responses** imply that journalists and media organizations will imagine possible reactions by the public to a certain news discourse while they produce that narrative, according to previous experiences and expectations. This complex process happens in the framework of **shared beliefs and "common sense,"** what would be equivalent to Norris's social culture.

Characterizing the News Text

The news text is in the center of the framing process, and it falls within Hall's definition of "message" as a system of specific sign-vehicles that is produced within certain rules (Hall, 1980). When delivered to audiences, the news text and its features will construct "some of the limits and parameters within which decodings will operate" (Hall, 1980, p. 135). Pan and Kosicki (1993, pp. 57-58) add that those signs and rules "regulate as well as differentiate between intended and processed meanings" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, pp. 57-58). Accordingly, this approach does not assume the existence of frames in news texts independent from the readers of those texts. Nor does it conceive frames as bearers of objectively identifiable meanings, but rather as "symbolic devices" that will interact with each individual's memory towards the construction of relative meaning (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 58).

Every news story has a theme or central organizing idea that "connects different semantic elements of a story (e.g., descriptions of an action or an actor, quotes of sources, and background information) into a coherent whole" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, pp. 58-59), so it is the way in which an event or issue is characterized through a series of rules and strategies.

Theme is hence related to meaning. There is no a biunivocal relation between signifying elements and meanings but there are *functional relations* between them instead, according to "shared rules and conventions." Those functional relations can be exploited by newsmakers or news consumers "to maximize the probability of getting their intended or preferred meanings across" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59). That suggests that there is an "intended theme," not necessarily the same as the "comprehended theme" due to the dynamic nature of texts. But it does not mean that

audiences will be “completely free” while processing the news discourse. As Umberto Eco (1987) already suggested in his textual cooperation theory, readers are constrained by an array of signifying elements that constitute the “model reader”. Those signifying elements “set up parameters of a cognitive ‘window’ through which a news story is ‘seen,’ ” and that structuring function shows that a theme is in fact a frame (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59).

Creating the Cognitive Window: Signifying Elements

To analyze the construction of any news frame it is vital to identify the signifying elements that functionally relate with meanings co-constructed by news makers and audiences. Signifying elements are “structurally located lexical choices of codes constructed by following certain shared rules and conventions.... They are tools for newsmakers to use in composing or constructing news discourse as well as psychological stimuli for audiences to process” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59). Signifying elements, as recognizable framing devices, are the vehicle to set an array of meanings into the “message form” (Hall, 1980), in order to make them narratable.

Pan and Kosicki identify four categories of framing devices in the news discourse that represent its four structural dimensions: syntactical structure, script structure, rhetorical structure, and thematic structure (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 59).

Syntactical structures are patterns of arrangement of words or phrases into sentences. News discourse is characterized by source attribution and the use of the inverted pyramid, “a sequential organization of structural elements” such as a headline, lead, episodes, background, and closure, with a signifying power that varies in descending order (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, pp. 59-60).

The same authors point out that the syntactical structure of news is made up of professional conventions “developed to indicate balance or impartiality,” the working definition of “objectivity” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 60). There are three main syntactical framing devices that make an “objective” article according to that definition:

Claiming empirical validity or facticity by quoting experts or citing empirical data, linking certain points of view to authority by quoting official sources, and marginalizing certain points of view by relating a quote or point of view to a social deviant (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 60).

News reports are conceived as stories in their social function, and in the sense that they describe events by arbitrarily covering “concrete newsworthy events... in a continuous flow of history” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 60). The way in which those sequences of activities are organized and internalized is called a *script*. The structure of a news script is characterized in general by the five Ws and one H: who, what, when, where, why and how. They might not always be present but at least they are expected.

News stories tend to appear as independent units, as they will probably have a beginning, a climax, and an end. The news script “also contains the intrinsic push of our attention to drama, action, characters, and human emotions. To this extent, a reporter writing a news story is not that much different from a storyteller or a novelist writing a fictional story,” state Pan & Kosicki (p. 60).

Rhetorical structures are “stylistic choices made by journalists in relation to their intended effects” (Pan y Kosicki, 1993, pp. 61-62). Some framing devices that are among those choices are metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, cited in Pan & Kosicki, pp. 61-62). They are used by journalists to make their pieces more effective, attractive, or to evoke the public’s empathy. Briefly, those tools help journalists to be more persuasive about the factuality of the news they are publishing. And those choices, essentially subjective, end up having an epistemological value.

The rhetorical claim of news being factual and impartial helps establish the epistemological status of news as a source of factual information and the authority of news as a mirror of reality. Such a rhetorical claim is clearly used by journalists in constructing news stories (Pan y Kosicki, 1993, p. 62).

Lexical choices called “designators” are labels made to locate a “signified” within a “specific cognitive category” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, pp. 62-63), so they are powerful rhetorical framing devices too. There is normally a repertoire of designators for one single cognitive category, and each of them portrays a particular frame.

The authors also remark the presence of hypothesis-testing elements in news stories, made explicit when words like “because”, “since”, or “for” are used (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 61). Even the order in which facts are presented could make some of them appear as consequences of the others. Hypothesis-testing is usually combined with the use of the already mentioned narrative patterns. “Very often, to appeal to human

interest and to increase psychological proximity to the audiences, journalists start a story with a vivid image or a concrete case and gradually lead to a point that logically functions like an empirical generalization” (Pan y Kosicki, 1993, p. 61).

The central hypothesis will be backed or refuted in the main body, that will connect some subthemes, included as evidence or associated with supporting elements. That hierarchy is the thematic structure (Pan y Kosicki, 1993, p. 61).

According to Iyengar (as cited in Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008) news coverage can adopt two types of framing which correspond with two possible thematic structures: episodic or thematic frames. Episodic frames are “event or case oriented and focus on hard news and concrete, isolated instances... [They] tend to be more drama oriented, visually compelling, and compatible with the economics of the news cycle” (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 65). Thematic frames, on the other hand, provide context and background information even when a punctual issue is covered. They are “less descriptive and more analytical” (p. 65). Thematic frames may report several events concerning the covered issue, and contain certain hypothesis-testing features. Those cited events and quoted sources function as support for the hypothesis (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Both types of framing usually coexist, but one tends to dominate the other.

Therefore, it is probable that the more audience-oriented a country’s media are, the more episodic their frames will be. Semetko et al. (as cited in Davydov et al., 2017) concluded that there is an episodic-thematic framing dichotomy between news coverage in the United States and The United Kingdom. Media outlets in the United States tend to cover events mostly for their audience value, while those in the United Kingdom cover events “based on their inherent and accepted news value” (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 59). This contrast stems out of “institutional differences between the media systems, having to do with the audience-based, stratified U.S. system and the more partisan tradition of the U.K. press” (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 59).

Framing and Orientalization

Framing of Islam and Middle East is characterized by “orientalization”, a construction that positions the “West” as “a beacon of democracy and enlightenment,” and sees the

“Muslim world” as “mired in backwardness and intolerance” (Kumar, 2010, p. 255). Orientalization favors the idea that the West is a “dynamic, complex, and ever-changing society,” whereas the “Orient,” and especially the Muslim-majority countries, are “static, barbaric, and despotic” (Kumar, 2010, p. 258). Thus, Western intervention is required to “bring about progressive change” (Kumar, 2010, p. 258).

The orientalizing framing is strengthened by the use of episodic frames and the frequent appeal to death as a designator linked with Daesh. According to the Terror Management Theory (TMT), the thought of one’s mortality or “mortality salience” (MS) is usually “uncomfortable and does not give a person’s life significance” (Greenberg & Kosloff, as cited in Filicky, 2017, pp. 9-10). This theory posits that, to avoid the discomfort associated with their inevitable death, people’s beliefs will tend to “provide a buffer against the anxiety that results from living in a largely uncontrollable, perilous universe, where the only certainty is death” (Greenberg & Kosloff, as cited in Filicky, 2017, p. 10). Filicky affirms that the buffer is eroded when MS is primed, so “people react to uncomfortable thoughts of death” (p. 10). As a form of defense, their attitudes about their worldview are strengthened. It means that people primed with MS will evaluate their in-group better than before, whereas they will “give more negative evaluations to out-groups out of fear that out-group members threaten existing worldviews” (Filicky, 2017, p. 10).

In the case of an orientalizing framing of events related with Daesh, the Middle East and the Muslim World will tend to be evaluated worse than before, as an out-group, by the Western public.

Because terrorism has become top-of-mind for Americans and because much of the conflict occurs in a Muslim-majority region of the world, Americans may identify the Middle East as the agent of responsibility for terrorist violence. Consequently, Americans may generalize responsibility for attacks to Muslims, the majority religion in the Middle East (Filicky, 2017, p. 11).

The present literary review has shown that framing processes play a significant role in the struggle for the signification of reality. As Reese and Lewis (2009) put it, “the particular power of a frame lies in it being an organizing principle, guiding (even if mentioned in passing) policy discussions through its resonance with supportive cultural elements” (p. 782). News frames do have an impact on how reality is shaped and interpreted, so they must be studied.

Methodological Framework

The present research is a compared study of Daesh framing according to the ideology and nationality of four of the most popular American and British media outlets. It follows a qualitative approach, although the underlying epistemological conception is interpretivist. The applied research technique is structural-quantitative content analysis.

Content analysis is the systematic interpretation of communication processes in communicative products (messages, texts, or discourses), through which qualitative data can be converted into quantitative data. It aims to collect and process relevant data about the conditions in which the evaluated texts were produced, or about the possible conditions of their future use (Piñuel Raigada, 2002).

The analyzed documents are online articles from 2016. The objective is finding out what are the predominant news frames about Daesh according to the nationality and ideological bias of the selected media outlets. In other words, this research studies the impact of two independent variables—nationality and ideological bias—on a complex dependent variable that is news framing of Daesh. The analyzed media are based in the United States and The United Kingdom, so they belong to an Anglo-Saxon social culture. The most “right-wing” and “left-wing” media of both countries were picked out of the 15 most consumed online media in those countries.

The selection of the analyzed media outlets is based on the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017* (Newman et al., 2017). That study includes audience maps for the top online news brands in the selected countries. Those audience maps allow for the identification of ideological biases in each country’s media.

To understand more about polarisation, we have mapped respondents’ political beliefs on a left–right spectrum and combined this with the sources of online news they use. The mid-point represents the mid-point of political opinion of our respondents; in the country in question the size of each bubble represents volume of consumption for each brand (Newman et al., 2017, p. 21).

Results for each country are obtained through a public opinion survey including these two questions (Newman et al., 2017, p. 21):

Q1. “Some people talk about ‘left’, ‘right’ and ‘centre’ to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale?”

Q2. “Which of the following brands have you used to access news ONLINE in the last week? Please select all that apply.”

Respondents who answered “don’t know” to Q1 were excluded.

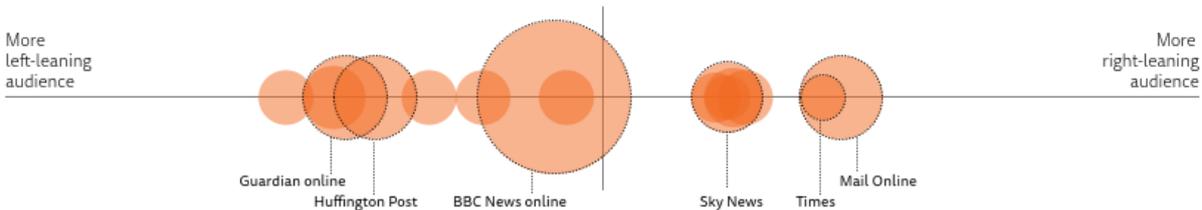
Results are aggregated as follows:

Polarisation score for each brand is the difference between the mean ideology (measured on a seven-point scale using Q1F) of the audience for each brand and the mean ideology of the population as a whole, expressed in multiples of the standard deviation [of] the mean ideology of the population as a whole (Newman et al., 2017, p. 21).

The ranking of top online news brands per country is calculated from data of weekly consumption of digital media by respondents. Although the analyzed articles were published in 2016, audience maps were first released in 2017.

In the United Kingdom, The Guardian Online is the most left-oriented digital media outlet among the 15 most consumed digital publications. On the other hand, MailOnline is the most right-oriented from that group.

Figure 3
Audience Map for the Top Online News Brands – UK

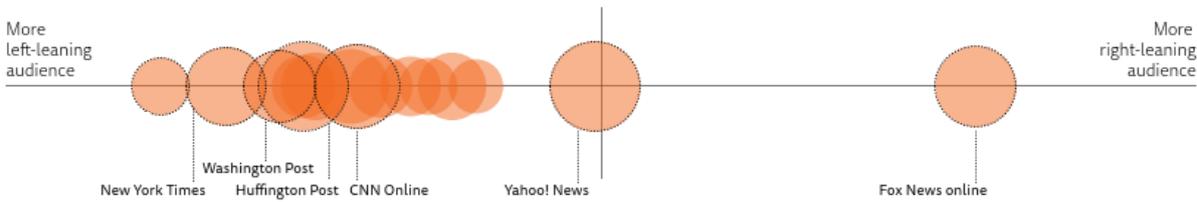


Source: Newman et al., 2017, p. 39.

In the United States, The New York Times (NYT) is the most left-oriented digital media outlet among the 15 most consumed digital publications. For the same group, Fox News is the most right-oriented platform.

Figure 4

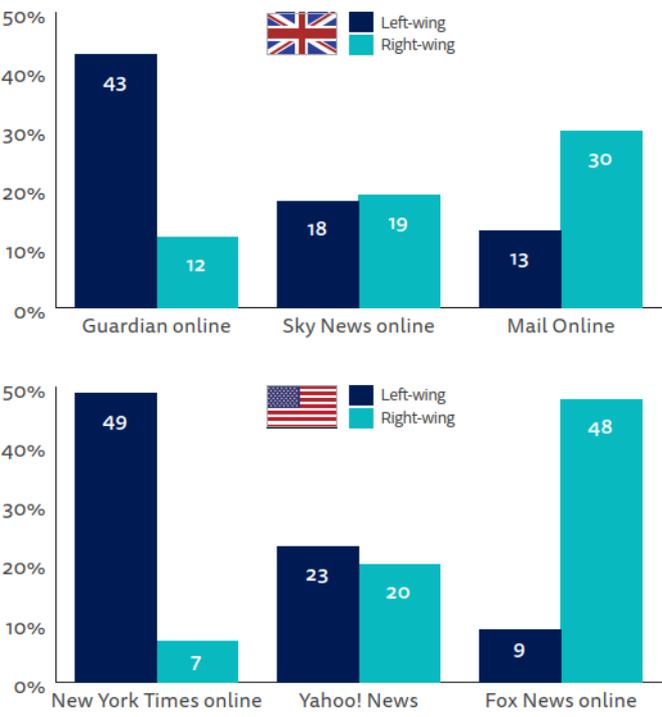
Audience Map for the Top Online News Brands – USA



Source: Newman et al., 2017, p. 103.

Figure 5

Political Breakdown of News Audiences for Selected Brands – UK and USA (%)



Source: Newman et al., 2017, p. 38.

The media in the United States are more polarized than in the United Kingdom, according to the report. The fact that all the media outlets are English speaking facilitates compared analysis.

The considered time range comprises the dates between March 22, 2016 (date of the Brussels bombings), to December 19, 2016 (date of the Berlin truck attack), both executed by adherents of Daesh. These events demarcate the “attacks season” in Western countries during 2016.

The selection of articles for each media outlet is made through simple random sampling. Confidence level is 95%, and sampling error is 5%, calculated for a completely heterogeneous population. The selection was made through search engines on each news brand's website, as they are supposed to contain all the articles about or related with Daesh published during the period considered (sampling frame). A search of articles containing the term "Islamic State" is then run to obtain the number of articles with that keyword within the time range (03/22/2016 to 12/19/2016), and calculate the respective sample size. Each article from the sampling frame is given a number, and the sample is finally drawn using a random number generator.

The obtained sample is n=1320 cases:

Guardian Online	n=262
MailOnline	n=369
New York Times	n=347
Fox News	n=342

During data collection, some articles belonging to the sample had been deleted from the Web, so 1114 articles were processed instead of 1320. This happened because the other 206 links, retrieved from NYT website (left-leaning, USA), were broken. Those links corresponded to wires from The Associated Press (AP, 93 articles) and Reuters (97 articles). Weighting was used to reduce the bias caused by the deleted wires. The obtained results for left-wing media and for American media outlets were adjusted with the results obtained for the total of AP and Reuters wires regardless of the media outlet. One multiplier was calculated for AP wires and another, for Reuters wires.

360 AP wires were processed, and 93 AP wires were missing on NYT website.

174 Reuters wires were processed, and 97 Reuters wires were missing on NYT website.

The formula to calculate the weights for sample balancing is the following:

$$W = T / A$$

“W” is the “weight” value

“T” represents the “target” proportion

“A” represents the “actual” sample proportion

A = 100 in both cases

For AP wires:

$$T = 93 \cdot 100 / 360$$

$$W = 93 \cdot 100 / 360 / 100 = 93 / 360 = 31 / 120 \approx 0,2583$$

For Reuters wires:

$$T = 97 \cdot 100 / 174$$

$$W = 97 \cdot 100 / 174 / 100 = 97 / 174 \approx 0,5575$$

Those multipliers were then used to calculate projection weights, used for the data analysis of left-wing media and America media outlets. All the re-balanced frequencies were calculated as follows:

$$f_{i/left} = f_{i/left0} + (31/120)f_{i/AP} + (97/174)f_{i/Reu}$$

$$f_{i/USA} = f_{i/USA0} + (31/120)f_{i/AP} + (97/174)f_{i/Reu}$$

$f_{i/left}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article was published in a left-wing media outlet (re-balanced)

$f_{i/left0}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article was published in a left-wing media outlet (before re-balancing)

$f_{i/USA}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article was published in an American media outlet (re-balanced)

$f_{i/USA0}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article was published in an American media outlet (before re-balancing)

$f_{i/AP}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article is an AP wire

$f_{i/Reu}$ ---- frequency of an event i given that the article is a Reuters wire

Still, each news brand could have different attitudes towards wire selection according to their ideological orientation or their nationality (the media do not usually publish all the wires that are sent to them), and that can have an impact on the other analyzed aspects of news framing. It is now impossible to characterize the type of wires that NYT selected during the considered time range when covering Daesh. Even if re-balancing—re-incorporating the weight value of the missing wires—could reduce the bias, its main weakness in this case is that the sample of AP and Reuters wires used for that re-balancing is biased itself. The latter does not comprise the total of wires from AP and Reuters mentioning “Islamic State” within the time range, but only those selected by Guardian Online, Mail Online, and Fox News. Although these news brands are based in different countries and present different ideological biases (the sample is heterogeneous), they choose which wires to publish, and which to discard, following certain criteria that are not evident. Therefore, there is sampling bias in those wires. On the other hand, wires stick to very rigid genre structures, and are constrained by corporate policies in the terms they can contain (designators) and the style they can be written in (they are relatively homogenous).

As stated before, this research studies the possible impact of the nationality and ideological bias of the media on the type of framing about Daesh that they develop. “Type of framing” is a complex variable, so it will be disaggregated into four dimensions, namely, the four framing devices identified by Pan and Kosicki (1993):

syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure. Nominal indicators were identified for each dimension.

For the syntactical structure, the genres of publications will be compared. These can be news stories, analytical articles, or columns/editorials. Sometimes, there is a grey area between news stories and analytical articles, given that a reportage can be based on a story but at the same time contain observations and conclusions by an expert/analyst drawn from the events or issues featured in the story. Therefore, “contains analysis,” is a more accurate category than “analytical article,” as the first comprises both pure analysis and analysis within a news story. Columns and editorials are characterized by the statement of opinions, as well as the use of qualifiers, declarations, and occasionally the first person.

Script structures can be compared through the “mentioned social groups” indicator. If groups such as victims, terrorists, law enforcement agencies, or Government armies are mentioned, mortality salience will be stronger. That will make the publication more drama oriented.

It should be noted that if a news article is only the reproduction of a wire, the script will tend to follow a “5Ws-1H” pattern, as that is the standard usually applied by international news agencies. The presence of unaltered wires will be part of the analysis.

The thematic structure, following the theoretical framework, can be split into two categories: thematic of episodic. A publication will be considered episodic *unless* it mentions more than three different social groups, which must include political actors (representatives of domestic and international organizations, political parties/politicians, or civil servants/officials) and experts, statistics, or analysts. The rest will be deemed as thematic. Key themes, mentioned countries and mentioned persons³ will be brought into the analysis of thematic structures, as well as four thematic spheres that may appear simultaneously in each article (political, social, cultural/religious⁴, and economic). Still, possible logico-empirical relations between

³ Mentioned countries and individuals are defined by the number of articles in which one of them is cited, regardless of how many times per article.

⁴ It should be noted that the use of the term “Islamic State” was not considered as a reference to identify the “culture/religion” category, as it is commonly used just to designate the organization here referred to as Daesh.

them will not be tested in this research. Statistical hypothesis testing will be conducted in future stages of research, only after qualitative content analysis is performed, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of those logico-empirical relations.

The compared analysis of rhetorical structures will consider the designators that surround the concept of “Daesh.” How that organization is named, how terrorist actions are depicted and how Daesh is defined (“Image of Daesh”) will be the indicators for the rhetorical dimension.

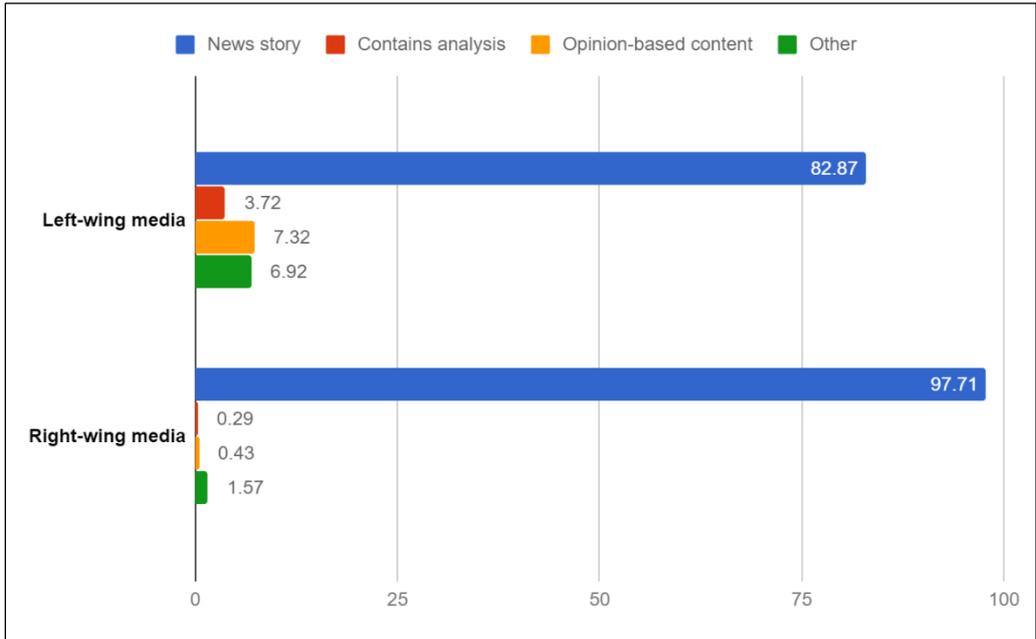
Analysis of the Results

Compared Analysis of Framing Devices per Ideological bias

According to the media’s ideological bias, some of the indicators that form the “type of framing on Daesh” variable show disparities between left and right.

First of all, there is a clear difference concerning the genres of publications. In right-wing media outlets, almost all publications which mention Daesh are news stories (98%). Right-wing news brands, on the other hand, have a more significant number of columns or editorials, as well as “other” genres such as video, photo, cartoons, literary fragments, reviews, and fact-checking publications. It means that left-wing media have a more heterogeneous syntactic structure than right-wing ones. Opinion-based contents are more prevalent in left-wing media outlets (7% vs. 0.4% in right-wing media outlets), what could mean that these are more editorialized. Those columns and editorials usually focus on how to combat or defeat Daesh. Nevertheless, as stated in the theoretical framework, there are many vehicles to highlight certain meanings and dismiss others apart from explicit opinion, so the latter is not necessarily related with a higher degree of subjectivity.

Figure 6
Genres of publications per ideology of the media (%)



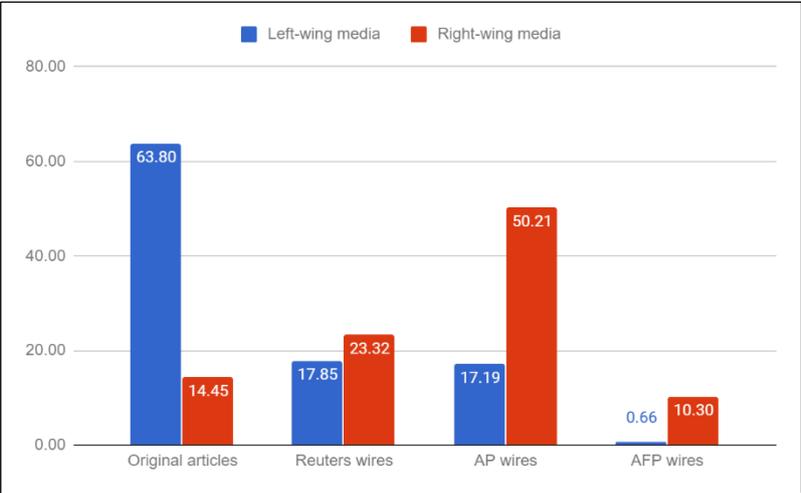
Source: own elaboration.

Almost all the articles (99%) mentioned either victims, terrorists, law enforcement agencies, or Government armies, regardless of each media outlet’s ideological orientation. Following the Terror Management Theory, those four actors may be associated with death by the publics. Thus, mortality salience is a general feature of Daesh news framing’s script structure. That may nourish the tendency to orientalizing, already explained in the theoretical framework (p. 19). However, further research is required to analyze that possible relation.

The strongest quantitative difference between the media per ideological bias is the number of wires that they re-publish as news without modifying them. 85% of articles by Fox News and MailOnline (right-wing) are entirely reproduced wires sent to the newsrooms by either AP, Reuters, or Agence France-Presse (AFP). In fact, half of the news published by right-wing media are AP wires, and that figure does not include original news articles that only cite news agencies as sources.

The Guardian and NYT (left-wing) publish much less unaltered wires. Only 36%, that is, less than one half in relative terms of wires reproduced by right wing media. This evokes the question of how international news agencies portray Daesh. The type of framing that they devise should be studied, in search of possible relations between framing by news agencies and that of right-wing media outlets. In left-wing media, there is a similar proportion of wires by AP and Reuters (around 17-18%), and an insignificant participation of AFP (less than 1% of the cases).

Figure 7
Origin of articles per ideology of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

The United States is the most mentioned country in the analyzed articles for both ideological biases (it appears in more than 60% of articles). It is followed by Syria and Iraq respectively in both cases. Furthermore, the 11 most-frequently mentioned countries are the same for right and left-leaning media. But all those countries more frequently mentioned in left-wing media outlets than in their opposite. That could imply a more territory-based Daesh coverage by left-leaning media than that of right-leaning media. The prominence of the United States applies to all the analyzed media outlets. One hypothesis to explain this general feature of thematic structures in Daesh news framing is the occurrence of a national election within the analyzed time range. Some Western-European countries are more referred to by left-oriented media: The United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Germany. The attacks in Belgium and France, Brexit, and Germany’s leading role in European politics might explain references to those countries.

Non-Western countries have approximately the same frequency of mentions in all the analyzed media.

Table 1

Most mentioned countries per ideology of the media (%)

Country	Frequency in left-wing media (%)
United States	67%
Syria	52%
Iraq	41%
United Kingdom	21%
France	19%
Turkey	18%
Russia	18%
Belgium	11%
Germany	9%
Afghanistan	9%
Lybia	8%
Iran	8%

Country	Frequency in right-wing media (%)
United States	60%
Syria	47%
Iraq	37%
Turkey	20%
Russia	16%
United Kingdom	13%
France	12%
Lybia	9%
Iran	7%
Germany	7%
Afghanistan	6%
Belgium	6%

Source: own elaboration.

The rates of mentioned individuals support the US-election-influence hypothesis. Among the most mentioned people, three are American politicians. In media on the right of the spectrum, these people are Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. In left-leaning media, Obama, Trump and Hillary Clinton are on top of the list. Barack Obama, the President of the United States by that time, was the most mentioned individual in both pairs of media. One of the issues discussed during the campaign, in relation with Daesh, was foreign policy. That being said, it is not surprising that John Kerry, Secretary of State in 2016, ranks fifth in mentions in both pairs of news brands.

Table 2

Most mentioned individuals per ideology of the media (%)

Individual	Frequency in left-wing media (%)	Individual	Frequency in right-wing media (%)
Barack Obama	15%	Barack Obama	10%
Donald Trump	11%	Bashar al-Assad	7%
Bashar al-Assad	10%	Donald Trump	6%
Hillary Clinton	8%	Haider al-Abadi	5%
Vladimir Putin	5%	John Kerry	4%
John Kerry	5%	R. T. Erdogan	4%
Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi	5%	Hillary Clinton	4%
R. T. Erdogan	4%	M. Gaddafi	3%
Boris Johnson	3%	Ash Carter	3%
F. Hollande	3%	Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi	3%
David Cameron	3%	S. de Mistura	3%
Haider al-Abadi	3%	Vladimir Putin	2%

Source: own elaboration.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is among the three individuals with most mentions in both right and left-leaning media. That is not the case with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who ranks much higher in mentions in left-wing media (fifth position) than in right-wing ones (twelfth position). Hence, it is likely that left-wing media give a more relevant place to the Russian President in their coverage of Daesh than right-wing media. This turns into a contradiction, since Russia as a country is more

mentioned by the latter, what suggests that they dissociate the country from its leader when covering Daesh-related events or issues.

As it happened with mentioned countries, rates of mentioned individuals are higher in left-wing media. That could imply that their coverage of Daesh relies more on individuals than that of right-leaning media. Daesh coverage by right-wing media could be deemed as more abstract, since it mentions less people and it is less territory based.

Daesh leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is only mentioned in 3-5% of articles. That coincides with Davydov's observations, which emphasize the high degree of impersonality in Daesh media coverage regardless of ideological biases. Daesh framing could be globally described as rather impersonal. In left-leaning media outlets—where individuals as a whole are more frequently mentioned than in right-oriented ones—Obama, while being the most mentioned, appears in only 15% of articles. No individual terrorists are mentioned in more than 2.5% of articles in the analyzed media.

Media outlets with different ideological biases tend to have a similar behavior regarding the social groups cited in their publications. On both sides of the spectrum, the predominant social group is that of terrorists or Daesh supporters. They reach a 90% mention rate in left-wing media, and 96% in left-wing media. Terrorists appear to be, then, much more relevant actors in Daesh media coverage than they were according to Davydov et al. (2017). They found out that terrorists as a group were present in only one third of articles published in 2014-2015. But their research does not specify how they defined "terrorist." They did not find, either, remarkable differences in ideological biases related with mentioned social groups.

The ideological variable could in fact be related with the frequency with which experts⁵ are cited in articles. Left-wing media mention experts in 42% of their publications, whereas right-wing media do it in 33% of cases.

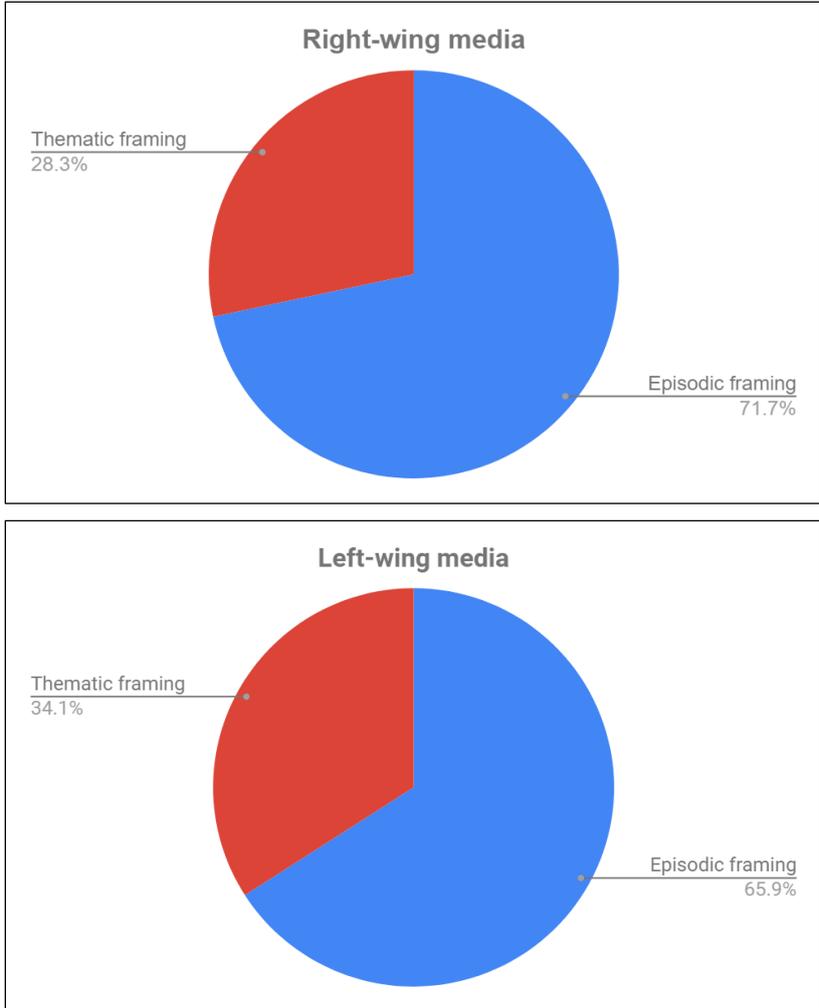
It was found that 34% of articles by left-wing media outlets presented a thematic framing of Daesh. Right-wing media, on the other hand, presented 28% of thematic

⁵ The "experts" category includes analysts, statistics, think tanks, specialized journalists, and fact checkers.

framing in their publications. This means that episodic framing is dominant in both right and left-leaning media, although more prevalent in the latter.

Figure 8

Type of framing per ideology of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

The most frequent key themes of the analyzed articles were the war against Daesh and military operations in general. More than 80% of publications include that dimension, regardless of the media’s ideological bias. The main difference between ideological orientations is the presence of policy analysis and the mention of public reactions to terror acts in articles. In left-wing media, this subject appears in 9% of articles, against only 1% in right-wing news brands. That feature of left-wing media is probably associated with the larger relative abundance of analytic pieces in that type of media.

Victims' accounts (or testimonies of witnesses, victims' family and friends, or terrorists' family and friends) are more present in left-wing media articles (10%) than in those of right-wing media (5%). This could be a resource to provoke empathy in publics, through a focus on individual life experiences related with terror episodes. That narrative entails highly mortality-salient, drama-oriented publications.

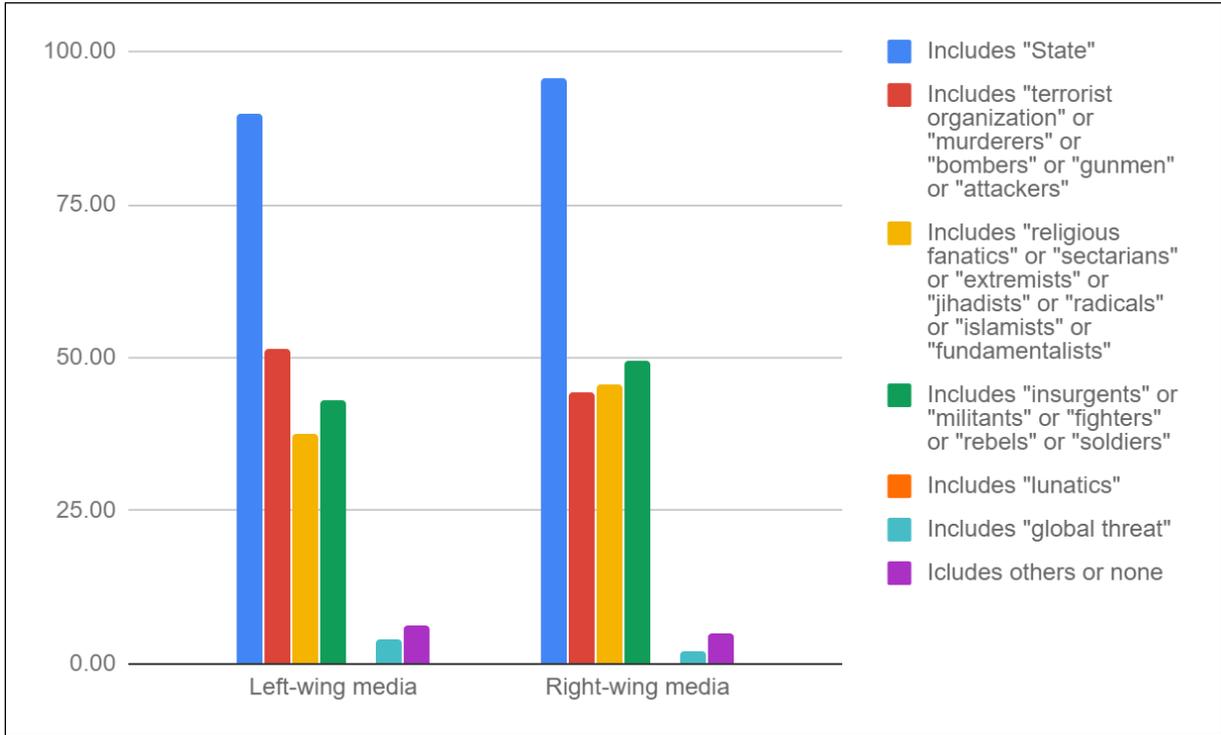
More than one half of articles, regardless of the media's ideological bias, refer to some specific episode related with Daesh. Those which do not, usually focus on its general organization, their recruiting techniques, and national strategies to possibly defeat Daesh.

The four thematic spheres (political, social, cultural/religious, and economic) appear at similar rates in both pairs of news brands. The political dimension is present in almost every article (99% in right-wing media, and 95% in left wing-media). Articles that do not mention either politics or policies at all, or any political entities or international organisations, mostly cover victims' accounts or cultural aspects. The economic sphere is the least considered, and is included in nearly 30% of the cases. For both sides of the ideological spectrum, articles that involve the four spheres reach 15% of the total.

The fourth framing device studied, the rhetorical structure, is characterized by the "Islamic State" designator. Daesh is identified as a State in 96% of right-wing media articles. In left-wing media, the frequency rate of the same designator reaches 90%. This confirms that Daesh has succeeded in settling down on the public agenda as a State actor, even if it has not been recognized by any UN member States. Daesh is usually purported as the enemy—a target which should be combatted and defeated by Western forces—but, at the same time, it is discursively positioned at the same politics level of the world powers that are facing its threat. The conception of Daesh as a State is also contradictory, as observed by Davydov et al. (2017), since it is simultaneously identified as a terrorist organization. That "terrorist organization" category—which also comprises designators like "murderers," "bombers," "gunmen," and "attackers"—is present in slightly more than half of the articles by left-wing media, while it is present in 44% of right-wing media articles.

Figure 9

Image of Daesh per ideology of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

Identification of Daesh with religious fanaticism is more frequent in right-wing media (46%) than their opposite (38%). A more patriotic portrayal of Daesh is also prevalent in right-wing media, where designators such as “insurgents,” “militants,” “fighters,” “rebels,” and “soldiers” are used at higher rates to describe Daesh supporters. The “global threat” designator appears explicitly in very few occasions, but the “global threat” frame (implicit) underlies media coverage of Daesh. For instance, 31 countries were mentioned in at least 8 articles about or related with Daesh in 2016. Therefore, “global threat” is more present in the thematic structure than in the rhetorical one.

The “Islamic State” designator could stimulate the tendency to orientalizing. The data analyzed so far shows more favorable conditions for orientalizing and stigmatization of Islam in right-wing media, due to a stronger association between Daesh—mostly identified as “Islamic State”—and religious fanaticism. That supposes a stronger discursive bond between mortality salience and religion. Moreover, the legitimizing designator “State” is more frequent in right-wing media, while the de-legitimizing designator “terrorist organization” is more frequent in left-wing media. Thus, it could be

posited that right-wing media promote orientalization to a higher extent, but this is only a hypothesis that requires testing. Still, “Islamic State” is used as a designator in more than 90% of publications in all the analyzed media outlets. “Daesh” is only used in 6% of cases. The term “ISIL” (“Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant”) is mentioned in around 3% of cases. Even if that designator still purports Daesh as a State, it territorializes the organization. That rhetoric goes against the organization’s will, as the latter changed its name from “ISIL” to “Islamic State” to impose a universal, de-territorialized self-conception on the public agenda. In the analyzed texts, Barack Obama appears as one of the promoters of “ISIL” as a designator for Daesh.

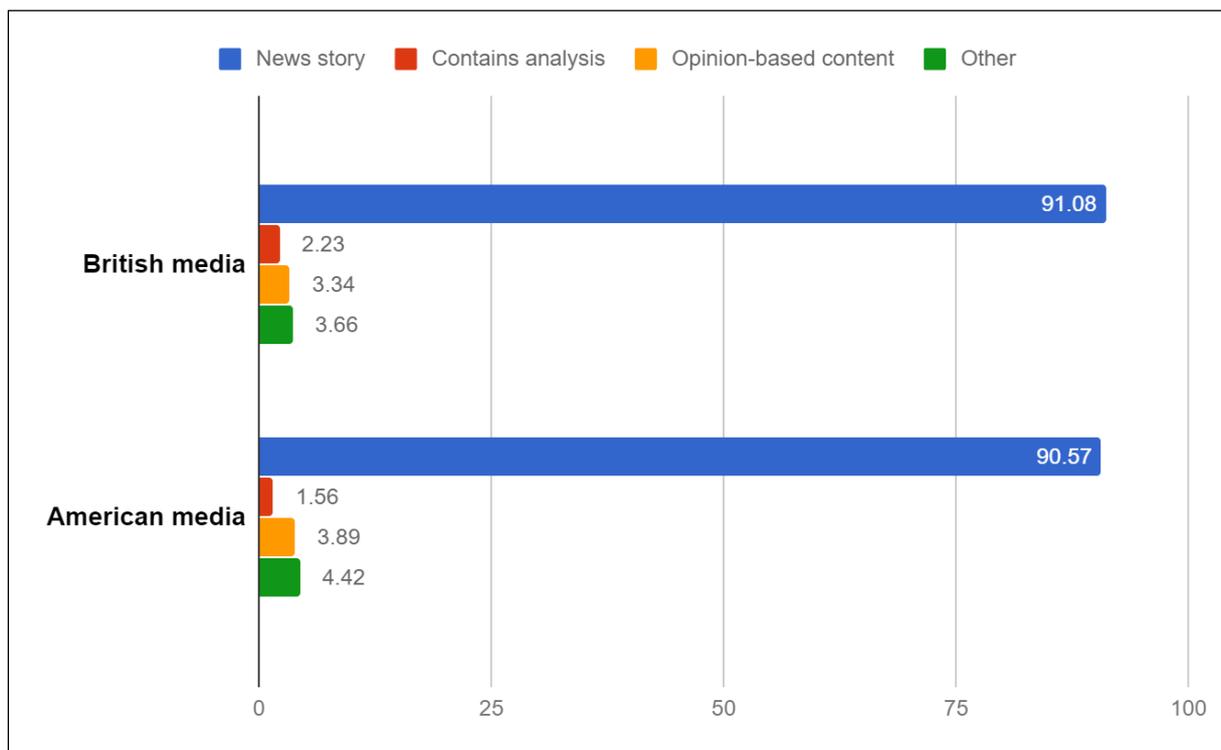
Finally, the way in which actions by Daesh are framed varies across ideological biases in the media. In coincidence with data about the image of Daesh—which indicate that the “terrorist organization” designator has higher frequency rates in left-wing media—results show that the “terrorist act/attack/crime” designator for actions by Daesh is prevalent in left-wing media too (37% against 26% in right-wing media). This observation could mean that left-wing media present a more de-legitimizing framing of Daesh than right-wing media. Besides, it is more frequent to find right-wing media articles that do not mention any kind of actions by Daesh, they do mention the organization but do not frame its actions. This happens in ¾ of cases in right-wing media, albeit it does occur in left-wing media too (63% of publications). That is probably a bias caused by the national election in the United States, when Daesh may have been mentioned in articles covering the campaign. However, both types of media present very high frequency rates of the “State” designator for Daesh.

Compared Analysis of Framing Devices per Nationality

News articles represent 91% of contents in both pairs of news brands per nationality for the analyzed time period. The rest of contents also show very similar rates between groups. Analysis articles are a little more frequent in British media, while the opposite happens with opinion-based contents and other publications (such as videos, transcripts of programs, interviews, and photographic exhibitions). Hence, syntactical structures of frames on Daesh are very similar when compared by the nationality variable.

Figure 10

Genres of publications per nationality of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

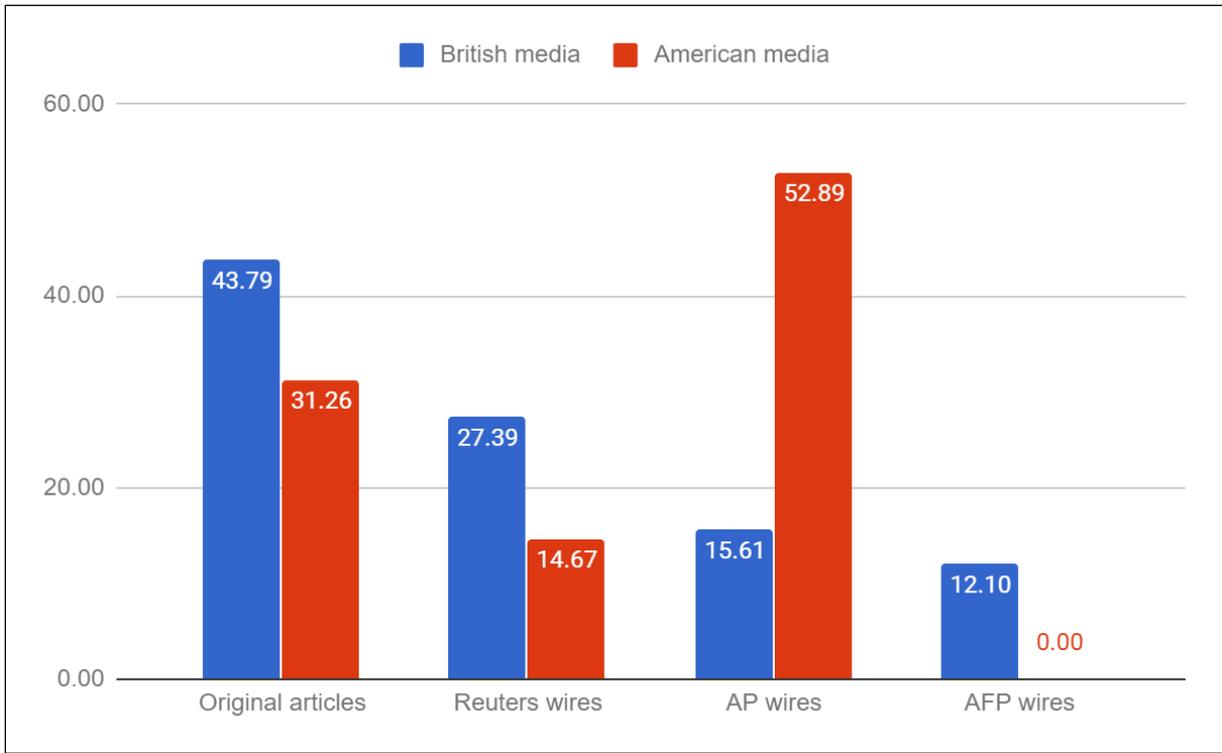
The number of wires from international news agencies that the media re-publish unmodified varies per nationality. That has an impact on the script structure, as wires tend to have very standardized composition (generally, a “5Ws-1H” structure).

In American media, 69% of articles about Daesh are wires. 53% of those belong to AP, the largest US-based international news agency. In the British case, AP wires comprise only 16% of publications. Reuters, the British agency, is more present in

news brands from that country (27%) than in American media outlets (15%). For both nationalities, most of the publications are in fact wires. Still, these are more frequent in American media. AP wires alone make up more than one half of publications from American news brands. The same does not apply to Reuters and British media. There are more original articles by British media outlets (44%) than Reuters wires (27%). So, British media have relatively more original publications about Daesh than their American peers, but wires altogether are still a majority in any case. AFP wires are absent in American media, and represent 4% of articles from British media.

Figure 11

Origin of articles per nationality of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

The ten most mentioned countries in the media are barely the same regardless of nationalities. The United States ranks first, with frequency rates larger than 60% in both cases. Therefore, the hegemony of the United States characterizes the thematic structure of media from both countries. Probably, the national election in that country has an impact on the indicator, as well as this country’s role as the leading power in the so-called “War on Terror.” The United Kingdom appears more frequently in British

media, but only in fourth place (eighth place in American media), and it is mentioned in only 20% of British publications.

Table 3

Most mentioned individuals per nationality of the media (%)

Country	Frequency in British media (%)
United States	61%
Syria	52%
Iraq	44%
United Kingdom	19%
Turkey	18%
France	16%
Russia	15%
Lybia	10%
Belgium	9%
Germany	8%

Country	Frequency in American media (%)
United States	65%
Syria	47%
Iraq	34%
Turkey	20%
Russia	19%
France	15%
United Kingdom	15%
Lybia	8%
Germany	7%
Belgium	7%

Source: own elaboration.

Russia and Turkey are mentioned more frequently in American media. Syria and Iraq rank equal per nationality (second and third place, respectively), but are relatively more present in British articles.

The protagonism of Russia in American media coverage of Daesh in 2016 could be related with constant political tensions between the Russian Federation and the United States. The former supported the Syrian Government, while the latter was giving aid to rebel movements against al-Assad’s regime. Second, in the context of a national election in the United States, links between presidential candidate Donald Trump and the Russian Government were typically a part of the agenda.

Mentions of Turkey in Daesh coverage from both pairs of media could be explained by this country’s role as refugee host, as well as its contradictory political position. Although Turkey was combatting Daesh, it was also fighting against the Kurds, who were, like the Turks, at war against Daesh.

The frequencies at which certain individuals are cited in the media vary per nationality. Even if Barack Obama is the most mentioned individual both in British and American

media, that rate is 50% higher in American media. Hillary Clinton is mentioned two times more in American media than in British news brands. The rate of mentions of Donald Trump in American media doubles that of British media. John Kerry, by that time the United States's secretary of State, is relatively more relevant in American media too. In British media outlets, not a single national political actor ranks within the top ten positions. The protagonism of the United States in Daesh media coverage is hardly questionable regardless of nationalities, but it is more evident in American media.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—the self-proclaimed “caliph” of the “Islamic State”—ranks fifth in mentions in British media. His name was rarely seen in media coverage of Daesh before 2016 (Davydov et al., 2017, p. 21). That is still the case, as he only appears in 5% of the analyzed British news articles from 2016. No individuals are mentioned in more than 15% of articles, so it could be said that Daesh framing relies more on the role of countries than that of individuals. In American media, Orlando attacker Omar Mateen has more mentions than al-Baghdadi.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad ranks within the top-five most mentioned regardless of the media's nationality. In British media, he is the second most cited individual, right after Barack Obama, and almost twice as mentioned as Donald Trump. Al-Assad's protagonism in American media is also considerable (fourth in the ranking). Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is highly mentioned in news brands from both countries.

Davydov et al. (2017) distinguished a military-oriented Daesh framing in American media from a diplomacy-oriented one in British media. Although being a diplomat, Staffan de Mistura (the United Nations' chief mediator for Syria) ranks within the top-ten most mentioned individuals in American media, but not in the British. He is the only diplomat ranking top ten in mentions, and only in American media. There are no diplomats cited as frequently in British media.

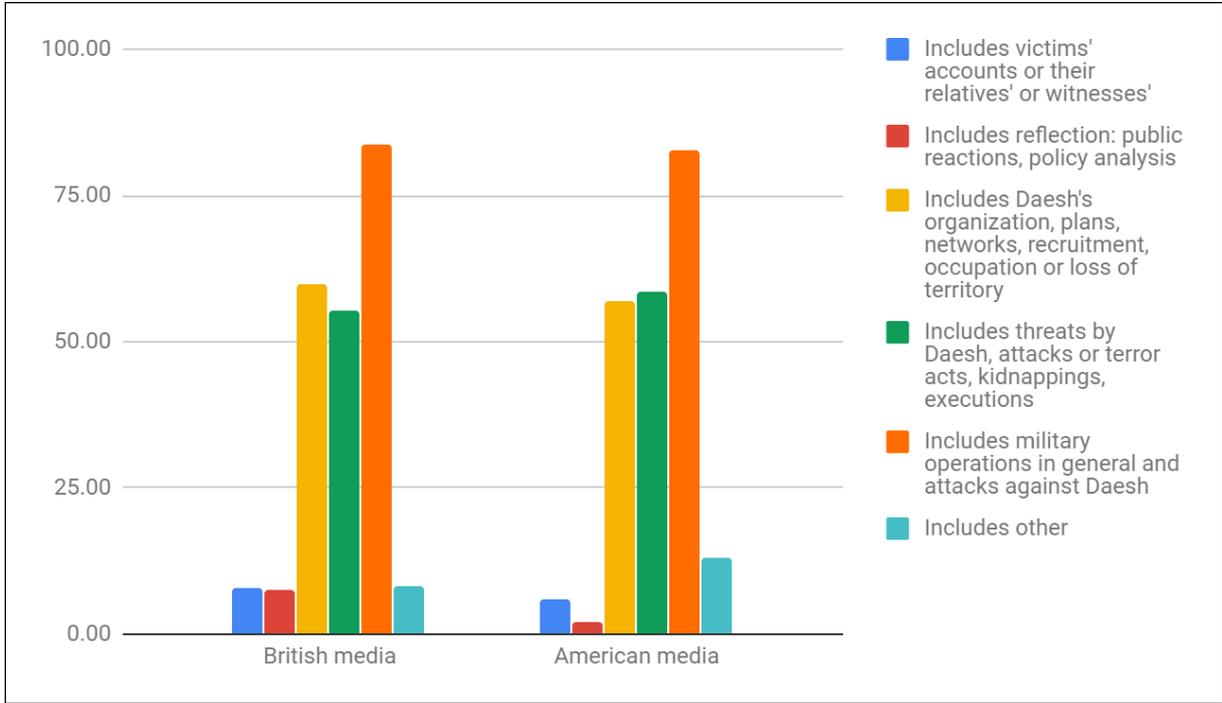
There are some differences concerning the most mentioned social groups per nationality of the media. Victims appear more frequently in American than in British news brands, albeit their presence surpasses one half of cases in both of them. Something similar occurs with mentions of Daesh supporters, who are cited in almost every American article (98%), but a little less in British articles (88%). Political actors appear more frequently in American media outlets. The same applies to activists, civil

society, NGOs, and doctors. Government armies have very similar mention rates per nationality. That deviates again from Davydov’s conclusions, which attributed a more military-oriented Daesh framing to American media. Mentions of experts are almost equal per nationality as well. So, differences related with mentioned social actors, which were almost inexistent when comparing media outlets per ideological bias, are more relevant when compared analysis per nationality is performed.

Results show that a minority of articles present thematic framing in both cases. Thematic articles are slightly more common in American media (33%) than in British media (29%). It means that American media coverage of Daesh tends to involve more social actors (including experts and political actors) than the British. Again, this is inconsistent with what Davydov et al. (2017) found for 2014-2015. But comparisons are hard to make on this matter, as the IAMCR researchers do not specify in their published study how they elaborated the thematic-episodic indicator.

Figure 12

Key themes per nationality of the media (%)



Source: own elaboration.

The main key theme in both groups is the fight against Daesh and military operations, with a frequency rate close to 83%. In British media, that one is followed by the Daesh’s

organization as key theme. Terrorist acts/attacks/crimes and threats are the second key frame in American media. Still, these themes appear at similar rates per nationality. Victims' accounts are not represented in significant proportions, but are higher in British media. The main divergence per nationality concerns policy analysis and public reactions, for which frequency rates in British media are four times those of American media.

The political thematic sphere is present in almost the whole of cases, followed closely by the social one. Both pairs of news brands consider the cultural/religious sphere in less than one half of articles, and leave the economic sphere in the last place. The amount of articles that entail the four spheres in American media (19%) doubles that of British media (10%).

The rhetorical structure of Daesh framing is characterized by the portrayal of Daesh as a State. This feature is more common in British media (88% of articles) than in American media (80%). The "terrorist" designator is present in almost one half of cases regardless of the media's nationality. This means that, in most cases, there is not an explicit discursive association of Daesh with terrorism. On the whole, the prevalence of the "State" designator and the relative absence of the word "terrorism" could suggest a rhetoric legitimization of Daesh as an organization with political powers. Daesh is the enemy, but it is also a State, positioned at the same level than any legitimate state.

The link between Daesh and religious fanaticism, as well as its association with militance, are more common in British media. The concept of religious fanaticism is present in 43% of British articles, and in 33% of American ones. That could nourish orientalizations and negative visions on Islam.

Actions by Daesh are designated as "terrorist" in only 32-33% of articles in both groups. American media use the "Islamic State" designator a little more frequently than the British (92% to 88%). The "Daesh" alternative is more frequent in British media outlets, but it usually appears as part of direct quotations, and it coexists with the term "Islamic State."

Conclusions

The conducted study shows both similarities and differences in Daesh framing per ideological bias and nationality of the media. These span the use of four framing devices that were considered for compared analysis: syntactic structures, script structures, thematic structures, and rhetorical structures.

Syntactical structures of framing per ideological bias are not radically diverse, but they present some nuances. Left-wing media publish more opinion-based contents than right-wing media so they adopt positions more explicitly. (apart from the systems of values and beliefs that underlie the the rest of their “objectivity-aimed” journalistic production). Left-leaning news brands venture more analysis and give more space to alternative contents, like photo reportages, videos, cartoons, and literary reviews. Unlike right-wing media, left-oriented news brands produce most of their contents themselves, even if they frequently use international news agencies as the main sources. Right-wing media outlets mostly publish wires from those agencies, without modifying them. That means their script structure tends to strongly emulate that of wires, typically following the “5Ws-1H” narrative structure. Mortality salience is a general future of Daesh framing, with 99% of publications citing actors such as victims, terrorists, law enforcement agencies, or Government armies, that is, social groups that nourish drama-oriented narratives.

Media coverage on Daesh by left-wing media is more territorialized, since their articles mention countries more frequently than those from right-leaning media. References to European countries are more present in the former as well. Media coverage by right-oriented media involve Eastern countries, like Russia and Turkey, more commonly than that of left-oriented media.

The United States is central in Daesh framing, regardless of ideological biases in news brands. The leading role of that country in Daesh framing is also evident as regards mentioned individuals. Those on top of the ranking are politicians from that country. It is hardly contestable that the American national election and the fierce campaign that it entailed played a major role in Daesh media coverage in 2016.

Media coverage by left-leaning media tends to involve more individuals than the one by right-leaning media, and it includes the insight of experts more often. Episodic framing is dominant in both pairs of media, what means that articles are most likely

poorly analytic and may lack plurality. Daesh framing by right-wing news brands is less territorialized and relies less on individuals, as these tend to mention countries and individuals at lower rates.

The War Against Terror framing is present in the majority of cases. Victims' accounts are more frequent in left-wing media. These might evoke the publics' empathy through a highly drama-oriented thematic and script structure. Policy analysis and public reactions are more frequent in left-wing media as well. That feature may intend to promote a reflexive attitude in publics. But this key theme appears only in a minority of articles.

The "Islamic State" designator is widespread in all the analyzed rhetorical structures, regardless of ideological biases or nationalities. It implies a legitimization of the condition of Daesh as a State. This term coexists with and contradicts the use of the "terrorist" designator (a de-legitimizing element).

Right-wing media use the "State" designator more frequently than left-wing media, while they use the "terrorism" designator less frequently than the latter. Publications from right-wing media show stronger associations between Daesh supporters, religious fanaticism, militance, and "jihadism." That might contribute to the orientalizing phenomenon, provoked by the discursive construction of an obscure, barbaric Muslim world, that must be feared and rescued from chaos.

The other independent variable considered to analyze Daesh framing is the media's nationality. There are singular features that differentiate between coverage by British and American media outlets.

Opinion-based contents and analytical articles are rare both in British and American media. It is common to both groups to have a majority of wires among their publications (around 2/3 in American media). Wires from The Associated Press, the largest American international news agency, represent more than one half of publications about or related with Daesh in American media. Most of the wires published by British news brands that concern Daesh belong to Reuters, the biggest British international news agency. Yet, unlike the case of American media, there is a simple majority of original articles about Daesh published by British media (43%). In both cases, script structures are highly shaped by those of news wires.

The United States is the most frequently mentioned country both in right and left-leaning news brands. Middle East countries occupied by Daesh rank equal in mentions between both pairs of media, but appear at higher rates in British media. Even if the United Kingdom is mentioned more frequently in British than American media, it ranks only in fourth place in the former. This suggests that, while American media tend to focus on their own country's role when they cover events concerning Daesh, British media seem to adopt a more global perspective, instead of centering on their own country.

The centrality of the United States is evident in rates of mentioned individuals. On top of the list appears Barack Obama, followed by other American politicians. That applies to both groups of media per nationality. Even John Kerry is relatively more mentioned in British than American media. British politicians play a minor role in Daesh media coverage by their country's news brands.

The self-proclaimed Daesh "caliph," Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, has a higher rate of mentions in British media, and is cited more often than any diplomats, British politicians, and even more than Hillary Clinton (in articles concerning Daesh). American media, on the other hand, mention Clinton at rates two times higher than the British. It should be noted that she was a presidential candidate in 2016 and had been secretary of State during the full withdrawal of US troops from Iraq (2011).

Davydov et al. (2017) observed that news framing of Daesh as an organization was highly impersonal. It is true that Daesh leader is never mentioned in more than 5% of cases, but it has more protagonism in news discourse than some of the world's most powerful politicians. Daesh media coverage is impersonal in general (besides the relative absence of its leaders), since not a single individual is mentioned in more than 15% of publications per nationality.

Daesh framing is mostly episodic in both pairs of news brands. Unlike what Davydov and his team concluded (for 2014-2015), thematic framing of Daesh does not appear to be hegemonic in British media. But it is more frequent in the latter than in American news brands. Mentions of military actors have very similar rates between nationalities, and a diplomat ranks within the ten most mentioned individuals only in American media. That does not reflect the findings of the same authors, who posited a more diplomacy-oriented Daesh framing by British media than that of American media.

The tendency to legitimization of Daesh and to orientalizing is probably stronger in the rhetorical structure of news framing by British media. They use the “Islamic State” designator more frequently than American media, and they associate it more often with religious fanaticism, as well as militancy and insurgency.

This study has proven useful to describe the main features of Daesh news framing according to the media’s ideological bias, and regarding their nationality. In following stages, statistical hypothesis testing should be conducted. A future study that incorporates more media outlets should be performed, in order to analyze news framing of Daesh per ideological bias and nationality of the media *simultaneously*. Qualitative content analysis of a reduced number of articles would be necessary as well, to consider elements that could have been overlooked in quantitative research, or hardly measurable.

This work is based on a previous study by IAMCR researchers Davydov, Kashirskih, Logunova, Pronkina and Savin, presented in 2017. That permitted the analysis of how some features of Daesh framing might have evolved between 2014 and 2016, which was beyond the original research objectives, and limited by methodological differences. Punctual similarities and divergences have been already pointed out, but there is global consensus around the *one-sidedness* of Daesh news framing.

It is generally believed that the Islamic State is an enemy that should be destroyed. There are no positive publications about ISIS (where, for example, militants are portrayed as fighters for a righteous cause)” (Davydov et al., 2017, p. 21).

As a broader conclusion, although the analyzed articles generally present a negative framing of Daesh—that transcends ideological biases and nationalities—they discursively recognize this organization as a State. Therefore, this discursively recognized “Islamic State” becomes another political actor in the sense that McNair (2011) gives to the concept. It settles in the public sphere as one of those three actors that take part in the struggle for meaning. In fact, this study demonstrates the crucial role that the media play in the conceptualization of Daesh as a State. One actor of the public sphere constructed the other. News discourse can create States.

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