



# **JOURNALISM, MEDIA & COMMUNICATION**

## **Early American Foreign Policy Towards the Syrian Conflict Captured Through Two Mainstream U.S. News Organizations**

A Multidisciplinary Content Analysis of Fox News and CNN News Articles

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## **Abstract**

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**Purpose:** To study and analyze the media discourse of CNN and Fox News articles which reported and framed the early stages of the Syrian conflict and the corresponding early American foreign policy.

**Theory:** Framing theory, Bakhtinian utterance and metaphor theory were used as the theoretical approaches to conduct this research.

**Method:** Qualitative approach through the content analysis of CNN and Fox News articles' texts that were published online to report the early stages of the Syrian conflict.

**Result:**

The CNN and Fox news articles conveyed to us multiple aspects of the situation in Syria. Through the analysis of the media published articles, the magnitude of the Syrian people suffering is evident to be substantial. The media framed many interacting local, regional and international factors that displayed to us the complexity of the conflict. Through this media content analysis, one can realize how the media reported and framed the political communications and interactions between these factors which could infer what formed the main characteristics of the early US foreign policy in the

Syrian unrest. Both Fox News and CNN focused on the likelihood of early American military intervention, the American diplomatic fight against Russia in the United Nations, the Republican opposition of the Democratic government policies, and the fear of opposition and radical extremists arming by the west. CNN and Fox News had multiple similarities and differences in reflecting specific parts of the Syrian conflict. By media focusing on the aforementioned areas of the conflict, this study concludes that the two American media sources framed a horrific humanitarian crisis in Syria and a reluctant and probably ineffective early American policy then.

## **Dedications**

This thesis captures the zeitgeist of the last two years of my life which were full of hard work and devotion to attain higher level of education. The COVID-19 pandemic had certainly exacerbated the difficulties in the making of this thesis, however, I am extremely delighted that this is going into a decrescendo mode now.

I thank God for providing me with the strength and faith to achieve my goals and carry on my life surrounded by beautiful family and friends.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciativeness and gratitude to Dr. Mats Ekström for his wisdom, patience, and mentorship. Without his support and advice, this thesis would not have seen the light.

My work is entirely dedicated to my mother who instilled within me the values of patience, generosity, euphoric hope and perseverance.

To the spirit of my beloved father who is the everlasting determination that has been strengthening my soul and mind.

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***Gothenburg, Sweden***

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## INTRODUCTION

The ongoing conflict in Syria, which started in March 2011, is certainly one of the most complex political situations in the Middle East. The implications of this conflict affected the whole world socially, politically, economically and had severe after effects on the neighboring countries and Europe. The humanitarian toll, the refugee crisis (see figure A), and the growth of Islamic radicals like ISIS were many of the aspects that resulted from this current war. These very same aspects shocked the western world and deeply changed the geopolitical natures of many European countries.

Figure A shows the sudden increase of Syrian refugees after a year of the Syrian conflict particularly after March 2012. This Figure reflects data from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, which estimated a peak from few thousands to two million refugees between March 2012 and September 2013.

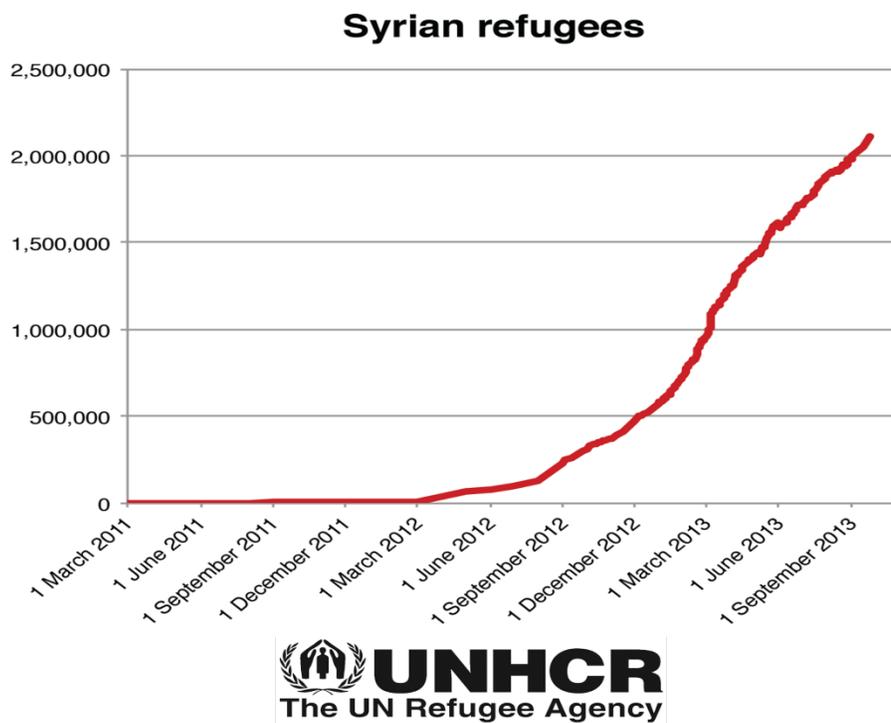


Figure A. Peak flow of Syrian refugees after March 2012. Based on UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, <https://www.unhcr.org/5245a72e6.pdf> accessed April 10 2020.

Key governmental responses, policies and procedures are also captured through the media. This is particularly important in times of a war. The media in this regard plays a crucial role not only in reporting these important aspects but also in registering

their chronological occurrences, implementation, and results. The American foreign policy towards Syria is important to study because of the radical change potential it carries and the immediate effects on the course of the conflict and its regional and international domains. This study focuses on how the media framed the early American policy of the Syrian conflict through the news articles of two influential American media outlets: CNN and Fox News.

The media like CNN and Fox news has become a major component of political life and development. These mainstream media providers are unquestionably as Somerville considers a “main source of news and information about conflicts and war, especially for people in distant lands. Few persons directly witness or are able to directly research the nature, causes and consequences of conflicts. They rely on the media to help them better understand war and why it is being waged” (Somerville, 2017). So clearly majority of information regarding key events and developments at times of war come from the media. The media then becomes an active factor socially and politically. Thus, citizens would see through the media eyes and interpret events and “realities” based on the media politics-based principles.

The violence which was witnessed throughout the very long Syrian war was and still is a hot media issue. The media plays an unequivocal role in representing facts and it could take two different and opposed forms in depicting conflicts. Thus, the media takes either an active role in conflicts and then would have the responsibility for increased violence, or remains independent and then would contribute to alleviation of the violence and resolution of conflicts (Puddephatt, 2006:4).

The Syrian conflict has been covered heavily by several media outlets all over the world. This coverage included: the humanitarian toll, the immigrants’ problem, and the ways the international community dealt with the conflict. Many have studied the media representation of wars (Cottle, 2006 & Hjarvard, 2008). There is not enough research about how the American early foreign policy was formulated through the media representation of the Syrian conflict. In this study, I critically analyze the texts’ content of the online articles published in Fox News and CNN websites to explore how these two mainstream U.S. media framed the Syrian unrest in its early phases and the corresponding American policy.

## II. STUDY AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research examines the news articles published online by CNN and Fox News which reported the early stages of the Syrian uprising and correlated American policy.

The major subjects reported are: the humanitarian crisis, the roles of the formal Syrian government and the opposition, the international political support of one or the other party, the military aid to one particular party, possible direct American intervention to end the war similar to other American interventions in the Middle East, the international legal aspect in the UN Security Council.

The aims of the study are:

- 1- To study and analyze Fox News and CNN news articles content that covered the early stages of the Syrian conflict
- 2- To determine the major aspects of what the CNN and Fox News published relating to the American foreign policy towards the Syrian conflict

The study attempts to answer four research questions by analyzing the content of media texts:

***RQ 1: How did Fox News and CNN frame the possibility of American intervention?***

***RQ 2: How did the media frame the international position from the Syrian conflict particularly the positions of Russia and the United States?***

***RQ 3: How did the two-news outlet display the Republicans' position from the official American policy in Syria?***

***RQ 4: How did the media report the fear of radical Islamists in Syria and how did the news articles frame the response of the U.S based on that fear?***

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has three parts, the first part searches the political science relevant publications which ultimately could yield in the understanding of the political scene in Syria prior and through the conflict. The second part searches the papers that studied the media coverage and framing of the Syrian conflict and the related American positions. The third part gives a brief summary of this section.

As a result, the literature review has three main sections: 1- A concise review of related Syrian politics before and through conflict, 2- Review of research on how the media reported and framed both the Syrian conflict and interrelated American foreign policy, and 3- Summary.

#### **1- Brief review of related Syrian politics before and through the conflict**

Understanding the political situation in Syria is fundamental, however, this will not be discussed in details as it is not the focus of the study. Historical and current factors affected the Syrian uprising; additionally, the global foreign policy battle between Russia and the United States is a key factor in this conflict.

#### ***Syrian conflict factors***

Assad family has been holding the power in Syria Since 1970. Hafez Assad (the father of the current Syrian president) performed a military coup that then resulted in a stubborn authoritarian regime under the umbrella of the Baath party for many years to come. The critical political, military and security positions were occupied by persons from the Alawite minority that the Assad family belongs to. The centralization of the power and the government circuits in the hands of minorities and Assad's loyal elite caused deep divisions within the Syrian community in every aspect of its life.

Bashar Assad inherited the presidential "chair" after the death of his father in the summer of 2000. Many (inside and outside Syria) had hopes that the UK-trained ophthalmologist with mouthful of democratic reform promises would drastically change the dark reality in Syria (1). Despite the efforts by Assad to carry out reforms "Scheller (2013) argued that president Bashar al-Assad is still maintaining his father's authoritarian regime."

The Syrian unrest started on March 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Damascus when a demonstration demanded democratic changes, then this expanded to the city of Daraa which then had widespread demonstrations that lit the flame of the Syrian revolution (2).

The Syrian war is a multi-sided conflict which began as protests by revolutionary forces opposing the Syrian regime (3). This ongoing war is one of the most serious problems in the Middle East and it is considered as one of the deadliest (4). The protests demanded political changes toward building a real democratic country, however the overuse of force and brutal violence by the security forces caused the widespread of protests that called to end the Assad's regime. Gradually, the situation became murkier and far more complex, and the nonviolent protests turned into fighters in a ruthless conflict that destroyed the country. Moreover, the involvement of several jihadi groups into the conflict with their own different agendas, and intensified fighting between sectarian and ethnic differences complicated the conflict in a way that there seemed no easy solution in the horizon for resolution. The conflict extended easily to other countries of the Middle East which has made Syria an active battle not only between the Assad regime and numerous militia forces, but also between regional and international forces with diverse interests that continues to keep the situation unresolved, most significantly the United States and Russia.

(Lounsbury & Pearson, 2009, p.30) state that when describing complexity, "there is nothing that causes something as complex as the outbreak of civil war". Karim (2016) identified different factors that might have contributed to the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, such as "the authoritarian nature of Syrian government, sectarian division and deteriorated socioeconomic condition within Syria". The economic problems were compounded by faulty governance and corruption at the local level (Berti & Paris, 2014, p. 22). Furthermore, people in power used their influences in favor of their own interest rather than the state's interest, and that contributed to creating an insecure situation to the public (Bates, 2008, p. 1).

Moreover, the influence of foreign powers over sectarian groups and their opposing interests intensified the conflict to a larger scale. Non-state actors like Hezbollah, ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Kurdish rebels have competing interests in the conflict (Carter, 2017). State actors such as Russia, Turkey, the United States, Iran, and the Arab Gulf states also carry particular interests in the conflict and have played some role in exacerbating the situation on the ground (Carter, 2017). The list of actors present in Syria is quite long, but the two most crucial and influential actors in the Syrian revolution are Russia and the US. These two economically and militarily capable countries have been writing contradictory destinies for both the Syrian regime, and the Syrian people.

## *Syrian conflict actors*

Researchers described Syria today as a battlefield of many interested actors, most importantly the United States and Russia. This description gave the researchers the chance to analyze the growing roles of both the United States and the Russian Federation. Homsy (2019) refers that “These two key actors’ involvement in Syrian conflict reminds political scientists of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which had a devastating impact on the country”.

Homsy (2019) examined the Syrian revolution as it relates to broader global foreign policy. The author argues that the Syrian war has developed into a “proxy war between the US and Russia”. Despite the fact that the Syrian conflict is by far one of the most violent conflicts in contemporary world history and the number of civilian casualties has reached high records, this ten-year war became the newest center for the US-Russian modern-day cold war.

The two great powers grouped many regional allies to dominate the Middle East in a cold war style (Hove & Mutanda,2015). Hove & Mutanda (2015) argue that, “in spite of pitting superpowers, the Syrian conflict deeply divided the Arab World with no solution in sight”. The authors further note that, “while serious damage was done to the country, peace-making in Syria needed a compromise to be struck by Moscow and Washington, considering their active role in the conflict”. Hove & Mutanda (2015) show that the conflict increased the sectarian violence and affected Syria’s neighbors.

## **2- Review of media research on framing the conflict and American policy**

### *Framing the Syrian conflict*

The local media coverage of events at distant areas of the world generates a flow of information that can deliver sides of the facts and reality to their countries. Media have the power to influence foreign policy, however the interest of news agencies to report on events and then the concentration and frequency of reporting vary. According to (Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger, 1987 as cited in Cozam & kozman, 2014) there are four factors that can decide the American media coverage of foreign events, and these factors are: 1- significance of the event or events, 2- the relevance to the US, 3- the social change potential of the events, and 4- the place distance from America.

These four factors are also applicable to the media coverage in other countries. The more significant the Syrian matter to specific country, the more coverage the local media will provide. Correlating to this, Godefroidt & Berbers and d’Haenens (2016)

found significant coverage of the Syrian war in the American press, followed by the French and British journalism. However, they found limited attention to the Syrian issue in the Russian media which then revved up after August 2013 (Godefroidt & Berbers and d'Haenens, 2016).

The media could then focus on reporting various aspects of the Syrian conflict including the battle between the government and the rebels, the humanitarian crisis and suffering, the devastating economical results, the moral responsibilities of the international powers, the conflicting interests of the great powers in Syria, and the actors who are responsible for the Syrian war and for a meaningful solutions to it. (Cozam & Kozman, 2014).

In their studies on the media coverage, Cozam and Kozman (2014) stated that majority of the news did not focus on the war events (Cozam & Kozman, 2014), they concluded that there was bulk of articles which focused on the American, Russian and the UN diplomatic efforts to end the Syrian chemical weapons crisis (Cozam & Kozman, 2018).

After the third year of the conflict, the Syrian government started to use chemical weapons and Islamic state (ISIS) announced its presence in Syria. The aftermath of these two major events escalated in the later years in forms of mass immigration towards Europe, and in the export of terror to neighboring countries and the world. The chemical attack was a pivotal event that triggered intense press coverage (Brosius and Eps, 1995: 393 as cited by Godefroidt & Berbers and d'Haenens, 2016). Godefroidt & Berbers and d'Haenens (2016) showed that the huge attention to this event and newspapers coverage outweighed the reporting of 100 thousand lives loss during the conflict. These authors then noticed an abrupt decline of attention to the Syrian matter after parties reached an agreement to stop the use of chemical weapons and to destroy the Syrian weapons arsenals. Conflicts are usually heavily discussed in the media but resolutions of conflicts are not, so subsequent events after the conflicts resolutions become less valuable. (Galtung and Ruge, 1965: 84 & Gans, 1979 as cited in Godefroidt & Berbers and d'Haenens, 2016)

Simons (2016) argued that the content which the media deliver plays an important social role in forming the opinions in communities. The media can affect the foreign policies, but in the same time the media content could be manipulated by politicians or governments to serve their specific agendas. The author saw Obama's use of images of chemical attack victims as an example of how politicians take advantages of the media reports to seek public support of their plans. Similarly, the UK government along with the US government assumed Assad's responsibility of the chemical gas attack prior to any formal international investigation. (Simons, 2016)

The permission of stories to be leaked to the media could be one strategy that policy makers use to lead the public opinion. The timing of media reporting of events cannot be just random, but rather intentional as argued by Simons (2016). Per the author, the timing of the media concentration on reporting industrial killing incidents by the Syrian regime matched the Geneva II peace talks in 2014. Simons (2016) noted that the US officials knew about these incidents in late 2013 but did not reveal them to public.

The media utilization in the Syrian conflict was evident to establish a public opinion that would support military actions as a necessary humanitarian intervention to stop the bloodshed and the use of chemical weapons. Simons (2016) indicated that the news was then used to inform the public who the good and the evil were without clearly explaining the risks of potential western interventions.

Doucet (2018) argued that the Syrian conflict was a social media war where the press relied on social feeds from activists on the ground. The reasons behind it are the unprecedented security risks and targeting of foreign journalists in Syria. In the author's opinion, the obtained contents from the social media were often of value, but difficult to verify and sometimes misleading.

Doucet like Simons illustrated the media roles on forming foreign policies and actions. She referred to the complexity of these roles by giving an example of Trump decision to launch American missiles against the Syrian military after distressing reports of chemical attack on Syrian civilians. The author compared this to the "no military actions" taken by Obama's administration when the Syrian government started to use chemical weapons in 2013. The author concluded that the media has great influence but it is one of the factors among many that affect decision making on major matters. (Doucet, 2018)

### **3- Summary of the literature review**

From politics perspective, many studies have focused on various aspects of the Syrian conflict which include the reasons and the factors behind the conflict, the economic reasons, and the corruption of the Syrian government. Multiple studies referred to different actors that led to the escalation of the conflict and the exacerbation of violence on the ground. These actors included sectarian Islamic militias, Arab gulf states, Iran, Turkey. Studies also identified what seemed like a new proxy cold war between the US and Russia happening in Syria with regional allies standing behind Washington or Moscow.

From media focused perspective, some research has been done to reflect what factors make the American media focus on one conflict or the other. Other published literature shows also how the media news were used by politicians to justify humanitarian military interventions. As discussed, the media had a role in influencing president Trump to air strike a Syrian air force base after chemical gas attack on civilians by the Syrian government. This influence of the media was absent early on the conflict when chemical weapons were used in the time of Obama's administration. Harmoniously, studies have shown that the international media had a surge in their coverage of the Syrian conflict after the chemical attack on civilians in 2013.

Different to other studies that focused more on the media reporting and framing of the conflict after the use chemical weapons, this study's focus is the media coverage of very early stages of the unrest in Syria and how the American government dealt with the humanitarian crisis that started in that country. The Americans and behind them the western international community's positions and implemented policies did affect the results of the conflict and did shape the years that came afterwards. This early period of media coverage is very important and could show important facts about the crisis in general and the key American policies at that time.

#### IV. RESEARCH RELEVANCE

The media discourse that covers wars is very diverse and complicated which naturally follows the complexity and the deep effects of wars themselves. The Syrian civil war has been active since 2011 which makes it certainly a long-lasting unresolved conflict. This war proved to have significant influence on the Middle East countries and several other countries globally. The study of the media coverage and discourse at the time of war provides a unique opportunity within the field of journalism, media and communication. The media grasp chunks of reality, then frame them and present them locally and then to the world. The media discourse is essential in communicating what is occurring in distant areas of the world and in generating a public realization of what is happening. The study of the American media is particularly of importance since the United States has been leading the western world ever since World War II. The United States media is coherently related to the political life in the US as it affects policy making and reciprocally it could be manipulated to reflect the official story.

Many research studies have been published about multiple aspects of the Syrian conflict. However, no research has been done yet about how the media viewed and framed the early American foreign policies in the early stages of the unrest in Syria. The differences between various news agencies in reporting events can cause political opinions of the public. Therefore, it is important to make research about this topic.

These political opinions are relevant and can change the official policies towards conflicts. Thus, the media does not only play the roles of observant, and reporter, but also it plays the role of effective part of change for both the public and governments. The complexity of the Syrian conflict derives from the numerous factors that directly and indirectly influenced its course. The media is unquestionably an essential factor which deserve close attention and study.

Again, this research provides insight into how the U.S media framed the early stages of the Syrian uprising and how the media displayed the American government foreign policy from the Syrian conflict.

## V. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The study of media discourse that covers wars and conflicts is important, but it can be challenging. Wars and conflicts are not just confrontations between armies or enemies, they are instilled within a variety of cultural, religious, political, communicative, and economical aspects. Media discourse concerning war should employ multiple methods of analysis to better understand these various aspects in an appropriate way allowing the researcher to answer the questions and at the same time enrich the reader. This research will use multiple theoretical approaches to the critical study of the media discourse on the Syrian conflict which turned into a troublesome civil war that is thriving to present.

### *Framing Theory*

Framing is commonly used in journalism in which the author chooses specific fragments of the facts and redefines the problem systematically. Entman states that:

*“Framing is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.* (Entman, 1993: 52).

The public will see the problem, its salience, moral applicability, and suggested ways of resolution through the eyes of the journalists. The journalist’s understanding and judgement of the issue would then dictate how it is presented and “framed” to the public discourse.

When news producers use framing, they go through a cognitive process that analyzes the subject. The analysis would ultimately yield in specific way of presenting the subject to the audience (Reese,2001).

Basically, framing includes selection and salience. Selecting parts of the reality and then presenting them coherently to the reader is a key step in the framing process. Salience depends on how the information are presented and what makes them important to the public.

Frames per (Gitlin,2003 p. 6) are “little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters”, which appear within the discourse between the media and the public. The news is produced within cultures and thus these cultures and their related dominant ideologies are very important in shaping news (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Framing enables the journalist to use the reported news in such a way that would affect how the readers understand it (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1987). This is very relevant in mass media where significant framing shapes the awareness of the public.

*“Mass media may not only be successful in telling us what to think about, but they may also be successful in telling us how to think about it”.* (McCombs - 2005b)

The use of frames in media discourse gives the media a social power so it would be possible to say that a frame “is really the imprint of power—it registers the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text” (Entman, 1993, p. 55). Frames in general have four elements: the problem, the cause, the moral judgement, and the solution. Entman stated that, “Frames, then, *define problems-determine* what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose* causes-identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgments-evaluate* causal agents and their effects; and *suggest remedies-offer* and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects.”(Entman 1993)

As discussed earlier, what is framed in the media depends on the culture of the community and its ideologies. As a result, “frames reflect the ideological views of the political elites” (Entman & Rojecki, 1993) and “the media” (Solomon,1992).

In the research of significant conflict that changed the world over its course, Framing theory is very related to the social dimension. The justified or sometimes the modified realities that result from the media framing of an issue are socially relevant and this can be extended to the ontological theory of constructivism. While framing theory studies how the journalist delivers facts or realities to the readers, the constructivism theory is “concerned with the nature of being, existence or reality” (Marsh and Stoker, 2002:18). This theory claims that “reality is socially constructed by individual actors that form social, political and cultural processes by their values and views” (Marsh and Stoker,2002:39-40). This is sturdily related with framing theory as the journalists become in many instances the actors that form social or political understanding of the readers or sometime the public about specific topic based on their values and opinions. In constructivism theory these actors are conceptualized in a specific way. This theory visualizes strong relations between people’s actions and how social norms and ideologies form their behaviors. People actions towards outside matters are based on the meanings of other persons or objects; this people-meanings interaction challenges the understanding of the structure and methods in which people act against social order like in times of revolutions (Klotz & Lynch, 2007:3-4,7,24-25).

Social constructivism confirms “the extent to which our understanding of the world are the products of social forces” (Burr,2003:19-20). Information is constituted by many factors like signs and statements and it is inseparable from them, knowledge is then a construction in every understanding, (Bacchi & Eveline 2010,117). Framing is particularly important to understand social constructions especially when the press is covering unusual circumstances that involves entire societies like wars. What is written and distributed by the media can be a crucial social factor which affects the social understanding of war. This social understanding could be partly then based on what framed by the media whether it is true and independent press or it is modulated by skewed knowledge or political purposes.

### *Utterance as conceptualized by Bakhtin*

Bakhtin put great emphasis not solely on the manners that form a literary work but rather on its meaning. Predominantly, he argued for the significance of the meaning within historical and social contexts.

Bakhtin is the founder of dialogism, a literary theory that analyzes the various layers of communications between authors and literary works. He stressed on what he considered linguistic communication between language users that takes place in certain social situations.

Utterance is a key concept in Bakhtin theory which extends out of the traditional definition of being chunks of spoken language to units that reflect humans’ interactions and the social side of the language.

Per Ken Hirschkop, Bakhtin viewed utterance as “the unit of social interaction within discourse”. The real-life sense and importance of utterance could be comprehended if discourse itself was conceptualized as a main tool of social interaction. This real-life sense and significance per Voloshinov, “does not coincide with the purely verbal components of the utterance. The spoken words are imbued with what is implied and unspoken” (Voloshinov,1986).

Reflecting on that, any meaningful use of utterance within spoken language or text must, as Hirschkop argues, connect to a speaker, the situation related ideology, and the social context (Hirschkop,1986).

In media and journalism, the utilization of quotes from key political figures especially on critical subjects like wars actually formulates indirectly what the author

wants to say in his specific selection of quotes, words or specifically utterances (Ekström,2006).

The usage of quotes does not only create the content, but it also defines what is relevant and salient within the content. Utterance as the unite of speech is what forms the quote. Mats Nylund argues that “news content revolves around the practice of quoting: the (co-)construction, selection, editing and representation of comments, explanations, interpretations, speculations, praise and blame, among others” (Nylund, 2003).

The media selection of utterances constitutes particular importance in the message conveyed to the reader which in turns formulate the context or the social forces within the communicative discourse. I will use Bakhtin’s ideas on utterance in some parts of the analysis section of this study.

### ***Metaphor Theory***

Metaphors are used to explain things and to motivate feelings or induce actions based on how the target receives them or interprets them. This interpretation is based on what constitutes the target and what defines it. For example: “putting something under the microscope” would mean in medical terms to examine a thing under magnified power of the microscope. If I would examine someone’s reactions under the microscope, that would mean to carefully wait and react accordingly to these reactions. The metaphor “under the microscope” used to explain a situation which might be personal between two people, or maybe within a company or maybe political between countries. The metaphor was explained by the target who received it and it is interpreted based on what that target is, what defines it and what experiences constitute postulates for it. For example, using the same metaphor with a 4 years old child who never saw or dealt with a physical microscope will be useless as the target does not have the pre-required experience which is used by the metaphor. Metaphor is then concerned with the linguistic use of a word or combination of words that explains another word, term, idiom, or idea. This explanation is formed through a collection of prior experiences, ideas, or postulates that are instilled within a receiver. The receiver could be a person, a group of people, an organization or maybe an entire society.

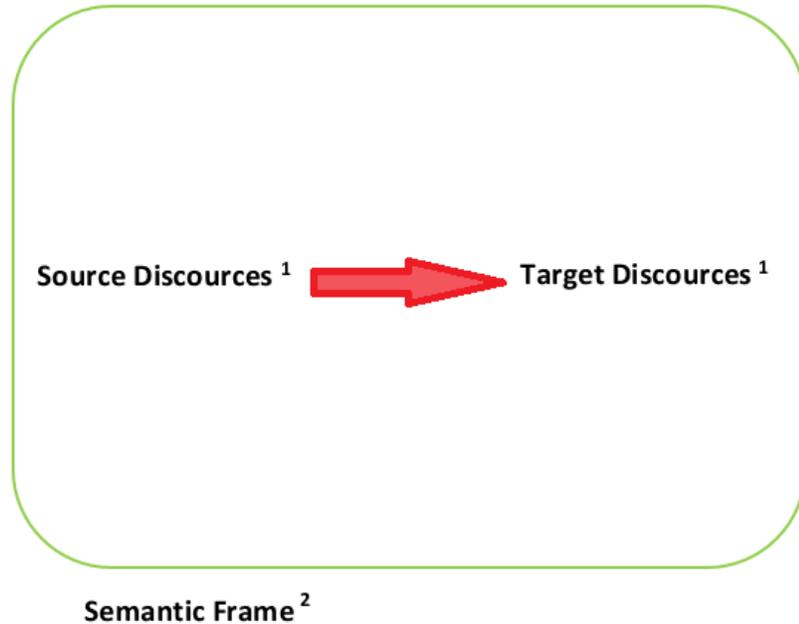
Thus, metaphor is not only found in literature, but also it is perceived in ordinary language, everyday language and maybe without even being realized. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) referred to metaphors ‘pervasive in everyday life, not just in

language but in thought and action' because even our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature' (p.3). The kernel of metaphor is understanding one thing in terms of another, metaphor is the cognitive relationship between a familiar experience (the source domain) and the message or the issue that presenters wish to send (the target domain) (Lakoff&Johnson,1980), so it is not a matter of words or language , it is rather a matter of thoughts, a cognitive phenomenon, a way of thinking that is based on our capacity to think of one kind of thing in terms of another. Going back to the child and the “under the microscope” metaphor example, the physical experience of using a microscope in reality is the source domain; the target domain would be the realization of the need of meticulous consideration of a matter that is “under the microscope”.

The concept gets a little more subtle and maybe complicated when applied to mass communications for instance in political leaders' speeches or in prominent media and journalism. I think the metaphor in mass communication is very critical and can change the political opinions of a society or their policies towards something. George W Bush used fear from terror and terror attacks (source) in many of his speeches based on 9/11 experiences (semantic frame of the American society) which triggered acceptance of extended war on terror (target) like war in Iraq (that ultimately was shown to have zero nuclear weapons). The fear from a specific enemy or enemies as a metaphor to generate policies or actions is used by politicians; the results of this can be referred to as “the politics of fear”.

The media effects can be direct through the use of metaphor within framing theory or indirect through the overall semantic frame of understanding. The media can feed, affect and modify how the community receives and acts on specific source domains. Metaphor is to comprehend a theoretical idea through comparison to previously well understood thing. In cognitive linguistics, the theory of metaphor uses a source frame which could be sensory or direct bodily experiences or emotions and a target domain which contains abstracted and more complex ideas (Lakoff & Johnson,1980) (Lakoff,1993). The understanding of the merge is performed under semantic frames (Fillmore,1985). See figure (B).

**Communicative Activities**



**1: Lakoff 1993**

**2: Fillmore 1985**

Figure B. Metaphor theory and effects of communicative activities like the media. Adapted from the theoretical work of Lakoff 1993 and Fillmore 1985.

So, metaphor involves a mapping of concepts from one semantic domain onto another domain and also helps us to understand complex phenomena, unfamiliar topics or any other less well-structured, or less well understood semantic domain. The use of photos within published media by itself is an example of how metaphors are utilized in journalism. Images capture moments of what is happening and in the same time reflect emotions. Thus, photos provide a good method to explain media content to the public (Jensen,2012, Väliverronen & Hellsten,2002).

Using metaphor theory in this research is needed to explain how emotions like fear can influence policy making in times of war. Metaphors are persistently used in media discourse and they are a great source of influence (Lakoff,1991). Consequently, when the public cannot assimilate both facts and frames, they keep the frames and discard the facts. Both metaphors and ideologies are interrelated. In metaphorical language, metaphors can be the big bang creator of new ideologies and

vice versa ideologies can be the womb where metaphors are conceived and where they grow and get their dimensions.

## VI. STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### *Qualitative design*

This study is a qualitative research of media articles' content. Qualitative research sometimes focuses on the relations between groups that participate in political life and their behaviors (Bryman - 2012:408).

Qualitative methods are used to analyze how the Syrian conflict has been framed by American media. This approach of qualitative research focuses on various factors that generated the media coverage of the Syrian conflict and the American policies. Qualitative research is suitable to answer the study research questions which are diverse in their nature.

Reliability in qualitative approaches depends on the researchers' honesty and carefulness in conducting research (Robson, 2002, p.176). Reliability could be graded as high or low. High reliability results from consistent and trustworthy methods of collecting data which would yield in reliable data materials. If this is not the case in the collection methods of data, the reliability would be low. Validity is considered as another word for truth, does the researcher use the right tools? (Bryman - 2012:168-171,389-390). Qualitative analysis of texts' contents partly depends on the researcher's interpretations which can affect the reliability because different interpretations could create distinct results. Integrated and multidisciplinary application of study theories that targets answering specific aims and research questions would make the outcomes of the study reliable (Durlauf & Pfarrer, 2007). Based on this, I argue for high degree of reliability of this study based on the following: 1- choosing two mainstream US media like Fox News and CNN could provide trustworthy sources of data. 2- This researcher attempts to collect consistent data by setting clear methods in performing the articles content analysis.

Multiple theoretical approaches (framing theory, Bakhtinian utterance, and metaphor theory) are the tools which will be utilized in looking for the truth and validity. However, bias in data gathering can affect the validity of the study. One possible shortcoming is selecting a sample of articles. Sampling would make the study feasible especially that the topic of a war is complex with large amount of covering articles. Selection of data to be analyzed can predispose the study to selection bias. Selection bias occurs when the data that have been selected is not necessarily a representative sample of all articles published. This bias can be minimized by selecting articles regardless of which opinion they reflect or report (Berk, 1983). Attempts to avoid selection bias were made by including articles that reflected non-

western political opinions like ones of the Syrian regime, Russia, Iran, or Syrian fighters when found.

***Method for gathering data for qualitative analyses:***

Data collection involves collecting different kinds of information. Information for data collection can be found in published documents, or in several outputs of the media like articles, interviews, and reported news in printed or digital journals, radio or TV. The study data materials come from 97 articles on the Syrian conflict published by CNN and Fox news media at their Internet websites (please refer to appendix). Specific pieces of the texts are extracted after accurately reading the articles multiple times. During reading of the texts, special attention is paid to the relations between passages within every article with emphasis on their social and political relevance. The texts were selected non-randomly to provide more credible results. The beginning of the Syrian conflict is the analytical interest in this research and therefore the review includes the articles published between December 2011 and June 2012. Figure (C) shows attention over time paid by CNN and Fox News in the coverage of early stages of the Syrian Conflict.

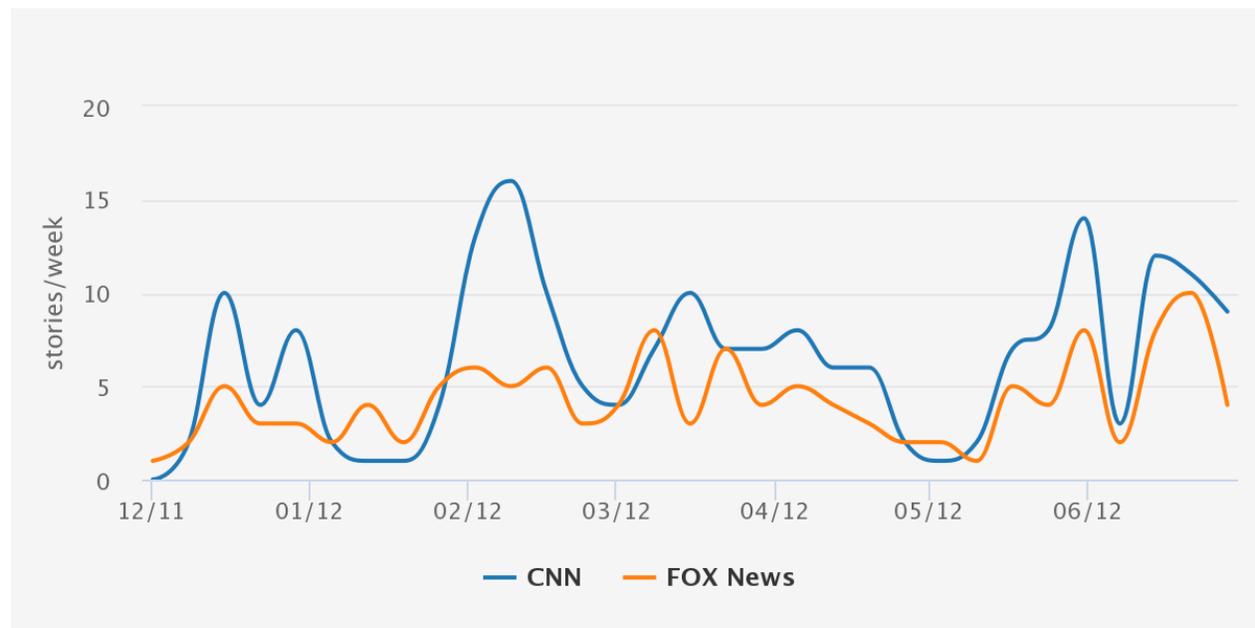


Figure C. Attention over time (stories per week) paid by CNN and Fox News in the coverage of the Syrian Conflict between December 2011 and June 2012. Source: Mediacloud.org, accessed April 10, 2020.

Study materials are written news on the official Fox News and CNN websites that focused on the Syrian conflict and the U.S. responses. The study focuses on news articles so editorials, and broadcasts were not included in the analysis. Certain

keywords were entered to research CNN and Fox News websites: “Syria and violence”, “Assad” “Syria and USA”, “Syrian conflict”, “Syrian war”, “Russia” and “UN”. Many of Fox News.com stories had contributions from the Associated Press; prior researches used these stories from Fox news and kept them in their analyses with no tangible effect on results (Guzman, 2016).

CNN and Fox news are two mainstream news providers in the US (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007). Fox News is regarded as conservative, whereas CNN is viewed as liberal (Gil de Zúñiga, Correa, & Valenzuela, 2012). This correlates to the two main American political parties: The Democratic which is liberal and the republican which is conservative. A partisan news coverage alters the public cognition and opinions of different political issues. The analysis of the Fox News and CNN news articles could provide an understanding of how the Syrian issue was presented.

The media articles fall in one of two broad categories: 1- Group one articles that reported the violence and other humanitarian crisis aspects, 2- Group two articles that reported the political aspects of the conflict. Full list of reviewed articles can be found in the appendix.

The content of CNN and Fox News articles of only texts were meticulously read multiple times. Special attention was paid to the date of publication to ensure the articles did cover the research period of interest. Specific parts of the texts were then highlighted and considered important to analyze. The selection process of parts of the texts was not random but rather depended on meeting one or more of the following inclusion criteria:

1. Reporting of violence
2. Reporting casualties or economic consequences of the conflict
3. Stating if the Syrian government or the opposition as a responsible party
4. Reporting of the role of an important actor including: The United States, Russia, The United Nations, the Arab league, Iran, Libyan war, Arab Gulf states, Syrian military, Opposition forces, Western governments, Islamists fighters, Syrian government, diplomatic efforts
5. Quoting key figures including: US or Russian government officials, Republicans, UN officials, Military leaders or officials, current or old diplomats, human rights activities, political or economic experts, Syria activities inside or abroad, American public readers
6. Reporting United Nations Security Council diplomatic efforts or decisions related to the period of the study about Syria
7. Reporting the “fear”, the “concerns” or the “worries” from the opposition, Islamic fighters, ISIS, Al-Qaeda or Iran.

Exclusion criteria were articles that did not cover the period of interest, American press articles other than reported by CNN and Fox News, commentaries, pictures, audios or videos within the article were not analyzed, internet links to irrelevant material within the text if encountered, parts of the text that did not focus on the Syrian matter were not included.

Out of the 97 reviewed articles, two articles published in CNN and one published in Fox News (total of 3) reported the Chinese position from the situation in Syria. The Chinese position was aligned with and echoed the Russian attitude. This is reflected in the analysis of frame 2 (see analysis section below); the mentioned three articles were omitted from analysis. Similarly, two CNN articles were found to mention the European position from the Syrian regime, these two articles were also omitted from analysis due to alliance and concurrence of European and American positions. The articles in group one category were tabularized in the analysis of the Syrian humanitarian crisis under frame 1 (see analysis section below). The Major events reported in each corresponding article were listed in the table.

The analysis of group two articles was a content analysis of the news articles' texts. These articles were then sub-grouped based on the major political aspect they framed or covered. The media articles' attention in these subgroups were concentrated on four areas that correspond with the study aims and research questions which are: Media framing of intervention, Media framing of the international position, media framing of the Republicans positions, and the framing of fear from radical opposition. Only few articles were chosen from the subgroup of articles that reported the same events or focused on the same issue. The selection included both CNN and Fox News articles of same topic for later comparison and was inline of the inclusion and exclusion criteria mentioned. Figure D shows the selection process of the articles. From these finally selected articles, the parts of the text were then isolated and presented separate from subsequent analysis. One or more of theoretical concepts of framing theory, Bakhtinian utterance, and metaphor theory were applied to the selected parts of the texts to infer how the media framed the conflict or the policies related to it. The analyses of group two articles will have the following common theme:

1- A *subtitle* that reflect the common characteristics of group of analyzed articles will be presented first (the *subtitle* will be italicized and underlined)

2- A brief introduction of the articles in analysis will then come after the subtitle

3- The text from the news articles will be then analyzed.

4- The “*texts*” from the news articles will be italicized and between large quotation marks.

5- Brief conclusion then would follow.

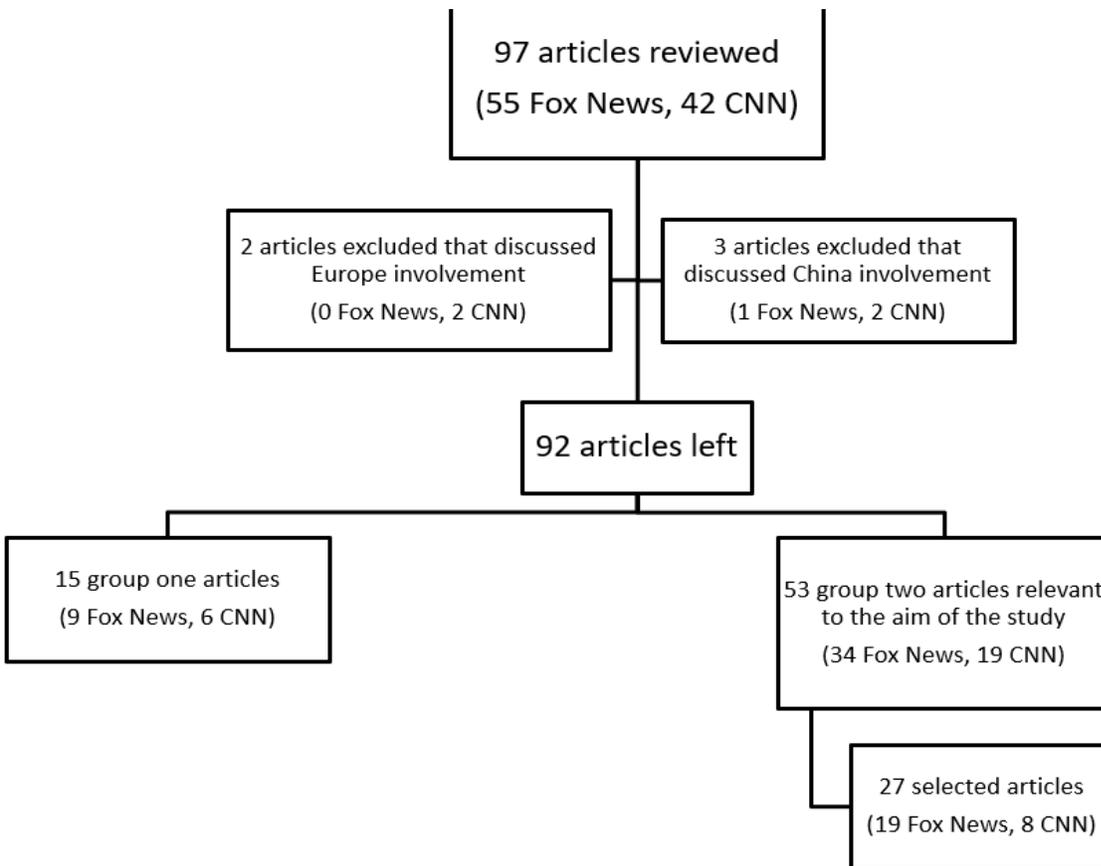


Figure D. Flow chart of the selection process of Fox News and CNN articles for analysis.

## VII. ANALYSIS

This essay will unfold in four frames that correlate with and answer the four research questions. First, the media texts are analyzed through the theoretical approach of framing theory to capture the key elements that determined the American government intentions to use military force in Syria. This study argues that the American foreign policy was hesitant to use violence, with a particular focus on comparison to what was done in similar parts of the region like in Libya. Second, the researcher then turns her attention to analyzing the media texts concerned with the international diplomatic fight between the US and Russia. It is noted how the media showed Russia as a provider of a strong shield to the Syrian regime whereas the media showed the US as not equally supporting the opposition neither in the UNSC nor on firm decisions against the regime. Third, the study reviews what the media framed as the republican positions against President Obama's strategy at the early stages of the Syrian war. Fourth, I outline the media use of "fear" as a metaphor in their framing of Obama's administration's strategy for dealing with the Syrian opposition and the concerns of growing power of radical Islamic fighters in the ongoing Syrian civil war.

### **Frame 1: Should we intervene or should we not intervene?**

The American foreign policies in many regions of conflicts around the world are based on military interventions (Jentleson & Rebecca, 1998). There are numerous examples of such policies extending from after world war II through reactions to 9/11 events to date. Sometimes, it appears to be within one's unconsciousness the question of not if America will intervene but when? These military actions are often preceded by abundant influx of news and media coverage which continues to occur simultaneously with reporting and analyzing them. The journalistic approach or rather framing of each conflict affects intimately the public opinion and understanding of the issue. Thus, the media generated frames of a matter, which is in the case of the early stages of the Syrian conflict, are pivotal in creating a social realization. "Each frame is part of and derives from an ideologically imbued social discourse relating to social, political and economic power. Frames are used, reproduced and renegotiated in social interaction" (Dierf-Pierre et al. 2013). Sometimes the conflicts do not necessarily result in military actions, but still it can produce a certain reality or maybe "public hyper-awareness". For example, the US media framed a "cold war" between the US and Russia with no overt military. This concept was instilled within the minds of the public ever since (Entman, 1993).

This concept of media framing of international unrest in certain areas of the world is particularly not only important but also interesting to examine in the American journalism. As known now, many of American endeavors did not only change the political world of today but also changed the everyday lives of millions of people in countries like Cuba, Korea, Libya, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and also affected lives of me and you directly and indirectly through economics and the refugee crisis. The resultant social discourse amplitude reciprocally affects and is affected by the official government policies and reaction towards the matter of interest. Again, these social discourse and realization are sometimes based on the media.

I will explain how important it is to focus on this framing model of intervention or no intervention by briefly giving two examples from the American political history. First example of the intervention side, and prior to the war on Afghanistan, ten large American newspapers supported the war against terror in the form of military interventions (Ryan,2004). The second example on the side of no intervention is the division between some European countries and the US about war on Iraq 2003. This was reflected on western journalism framing of anti-war for example within Swedish press coverage like in *Dagens Nyheter* newspaper (Dimitrova & Strömback,2005).

In 2008, Barack Obama was elected to be the first African American president of the United States of America. During his presidential campaign, Obama was critical and in opposition to GW Bush's foreign policies specifically the international war on terrorism. Obama aimed to build open relationships with other countries and to forgo "the policeman of the world" theme of the United States. Despite that, Obama actually kept many of the anti-terror policies of his ancestor administration that included multiple air strikes and intervention in Libya against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in March 2011 (5). In the same time, specifically March 2011, the Syrian uprising started against the government of Bashar Al-Assad. The articles published by Fox news and CNN concentrated on whether the US should military intervene or not in Syria.

This section examines how the media framed the US government response based on significance of the subject to the American people and the options that the administration used to deal with the Syrian crisis based on facts of the conflict itself and then based on similar interventions in the region like in Libya.

Figure 1 shows the four components of this media framing which are: 1- should Americans care about the Syrian matter? as the problem, 2- the Syrian humanitarian crisis as a cause, 3- comparison to military intervention in Libya as the moral

judgement of the frame, and 4- Military intervention VS none as the remedy to the problem. (please refer to methodology for more details on the four components of framing theory).

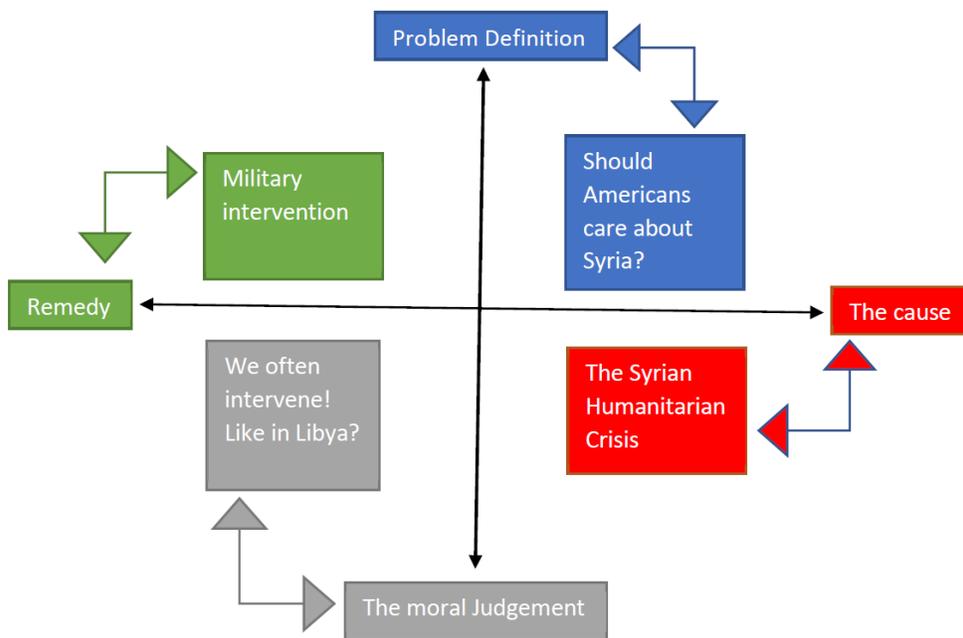


Figure 1, the four components of framing of “Should we intervene or should we not intervene?”. Adapted from framing theoretical work of Entman 1993

I will now present and analyze each one of these components based on what CNN and Fox News reported.

### 1a. Why should Americans care about the situation in Syria?

The American people have been shown to be prudent about their governments’ foreign policies in times of wars (O’neal & Joyner, 1996). A logical argument of media coverage of the Syrian conflict is: Why should Americans who live thousands of miles away from a small country called Syria care about any of its politics? It is critical that the media includes and illustrates to the American audience how relevant the Syrian subject is to their lives and country especially early on in the course of the uprising. If it is non-relevant then observational position is satisfactory i.e. being reactive to the coming news rather than proactive.

The short answer to this question is yes, the Americans should care about the Syrian conflict. The CNN and Fox news framed a horrifying humanitarian crisis that would not resolve without American help, and then framed Syria as a country of particular geo-political and economic importance to the US.

*A Major and horrifying humanitarian crisis*

After a few months of the uprising, the Syrian government had a brutal crackdown on anti-regime protests. Human rights activists demanded an international response to end the violence in Syria and with that a growing pressure was building for the world leaders to intervene (CNN, Bryony Jones, 2011a).

In its attempt to convince the Americans to care about the Syrian crisis, CNN actually starts by admitting that several of its “readers reacted to Tuesday's top story on CNN about Syria by commenting”:

*“Zzzzzz not our problem ” and “ Anyone surprised? \*yawn\*.”* (CNN, Ashley Fantz,2012b)

CNN interviewed a human rights activist Mr. Mousab Azzawi. In this interview Mr. Azzawi says that by default:

*“ Foreign powers who failed to act are participating in the bloodshed in Syria ”* (CNN, Bryony Jones, 2011a).

CNN directly asked the Question “Why Syria should matter to Americans” and argued that this question may be understood as Americans don’t mind about the humanitarian crisis or the Syrian people suffering (CNN, Ashley Fantz,2012b). The CNN interviewed professor Hillary Mann Leverett, Middle East and Syria expert. Prof. Leverett said:

*“ We are afraid to ask this question -- 'Why care?' -- because it's like saying we don't mind that there's a humanitarian crisis happening or that people are suffering ”*

This concludes that CNN in both articles gesture toward the moral responsibility of stopping the suffering of the Syrian people.

CNN and Fox news early coverage focused on protesters’ situation and the violence they had faced by the government military. Table (1) shows some of the media

coverage by CNN and Fox news to the lives' loss and the violence in Syria early on in the conflict (group one articles). Interestingly, only Fox News highlighted some of the Syrian regime official stories (bolded in the table)

Table (1) Early News reporting of the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Fox news reported Syrian regime's side of the story in bold font.

Article Title		Major events reported in the Article
CNN Articles	Violence rages in Syria despite high-level diplomacy (April 2012)	12 thousand killed since the uprising  Continued airstrikes against the opposition and 61 died in one week
	Where is Syria crisis heading? (February 2012)	Suburbs of Damascus facing a complete siege and closure
	Syrian opposition group: More than 5,800 died in 2011 (January 2012)	“More than 5,800 people, including 395 children, died in 2011”
	Syria: Battle for the cities (June 2012)	Fights over the two big Syrian Cities: Damascus and Aleppo

	Killing continues in Syria, Arab League says (January 2012)	“Syrian tanks have withdrawn from residential areas in cities, but snipers remain a threat”
	More violence, protests in Syria as U.S., Turkish leaders discuss aiding opposition (March 2012)	“Morek Massacre. 70 dead; 17 in the province of Homs, 17 in Hama (where the town of Morek is located), 11 in Idlib, 10 in the suburbs of Damascus, nine in Daraa, five in Aleppo and one in Hasakeh.”
Fox News Articles	Violence in Syria spills over into Lebanon (May 2012)	2 Killed and 15 wounded in Lebanon
	Violence Across Syria Kills 25 as Defectors Battle Regime Forces (December 2011)	25 killed in City of Idlib
	Syrian rebels target security officials in capital (April 2012)	30 people killed in City of Hama by the regime in “retaliation for a large rally to welcome UN monitors team”

<p>Syrian rebels refuse to give 'written guarantees' to Assad regime (April 2012)</p>	<p>Kofi Annan says “the escalation of violence is unacceptable.”</p>
<p><b>Syrian leader Assad says terrorists are behind unrest (May 2012)</b></p>	<p>UN team of 200 observers done nothing to stop violence.  Six observers had to be evacuated from Syria</p>
<p>Syrian forces, opposition both abusing children, carrying out unlawful killings, UN panel charges (May 2012)</p>	<p>Government and anti-government forces responsible for unlawful killings, torturing opponents and abusing children</p>
<p><b>Syria's President Assad grants amnesty for crimes committed during unrest (January 2012)</b></p>	<p>“Ban Ki-moon told Assad to stop killing his own people”</p>

	Activists Say Dozens Of Bodies Dumped In Syria (December 2011)	50 Killed, bodies in the streets
	Children Among the Dead in Syria Crackdown	9 killed in one day, two are children

*Syria in many aspects is important to America*

According to experts interviewed by CNN that “beyond human suffering, Syria has practical implications for Americans” (CNN, Ashley Fantz,2012b). Prof. Leverett said:

*“People have to know it's allowed to take a discussion beyond the human suffering,” she said. “There are huge, practical consequences for the United States when it comes to Syria.”*

The explanation by experts (Zarate and Prof. Leverett) showed several factors: **Geography:** Syria is the core of the Middle East, and the violence could easily split bordering countries such as (Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey), where that kind of conflict would spark another serious political and diplomatic problem the United states would inevitably have to address. **Al-Qaeda:** the first enemy to the United states. **Iran:** *“Syria is Iran's arm in the Middle East” Zarate said. “Iran has used Syria as a staging ground to train and support militants who have crossed into Iraq to hurt our troops and to train for other terrorist activities”* **Oil prices:** Oil prices could be affected by continued conflict in Syria *“violence in Syria could affect global oil speculation and prices”* Leverett said. *“Ultimately, that affects how much American consumers pay at the pump”* **The economy:** *“many in the United States may not think about the Iraq war now, but they say it's important not to forget*

*that war cost an estimated \$1 trillion. Whether one supports or opposes military intervention in Syria, the costs incurred by any approach will affect the American economy*” Leverett and Zarate note. **Global reputation:** “*People around the world are looking for some kind of consistency in our foreign policy, and we've been criticized for not having that, not having anything close to consistency during the Arab Spring, “Zarate said” (CNN, Ashley Fantz,2012b)*

## **1b. Comparison to Libya**

As I have mentioned earlier, around the same time of the Syria unrest had started, the United States and allies under NATO did militarily intervene in Libya helping the protesters and the opposition militia groups which put an end to the regime of Gaddafi. The moral judgement would be here: why not do the same in Syria? Per Hasler 2012, “In public, and also in scholarship, the non-intervention of the international community in cases of crimes against humanity by ruling regimes (like in Syria) often causes lack of comprehension and levels criticism against the democratic leaders of the West” (Hasler,2012).

Despite the ethical and moral basis of needing intervention as well as the similarities between the two situations, one should admit that there are significant differences. Below are two lists of similarities and differences between the situations of Libya and Syria partly based on the review of CNN and Fox News articles (please refer to appendix for full lists of articles reviewed).

### Similarities:

1. Both Syria and Libya are Arab and majority Muslim countries
2. They have been under the rule of authoritarian regimes for long time
3. Protests and unrest started in both countries in 2011
4. These countries are geographically close in the middle east and Mediterranean area
5. Both countries are geopolitically important for the stability of the Middle East
6. The Humanitarian crisis in them was very evident to the whole world
7. Both regimes have outrageous record in humans’ rights violations

### Differences:

1. Gaddafi regime was more isolated from the international community
2. There was no clear civilian community in Libya compared to Syria
3. Syria has more sophisticated military abilities like chemical weapons
4. Syria has historical and strategic relationships with Russia and China
5. Syria has inseparable core relations with Iran and Hezbollah
6. Gaddafi had persistent non-cooperative relationships with the west while Syria did cooperate with the international community like in Iraq war against Kuwait
7. Libya has dominant homogenous Sunni Muslim population, while Syria has multiplicity of religions with regional implications like the regional Sunni-Shia tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran

To explain how CNN and Fox news framed and displayed this issue, few examples will be reviewed from some of the articles that were published early on and around where many observers called for treating the Syrian situation like the Libyan situation. Also please refer to the second part of this analysis section for discussion about how the media showed the international disagreement between the US and Russia in the UN and the UN security council which adds a dimension to this point.

### International society division

Let me go back to the CNN article labelled: Should the world intervene in Syria? (CNN, Bryony Jones, 2011a). CNN quotes human right activist, Mr. Azzawi said:

*“When the international community went to Libya to protect civilians, were they deceiving [everyone]?”*

CNN clearly is echoing the principle of moral responsibilities of intervention based on similarity to the Libyan situation. Mr. Azzawi also added:

*“What happens in Syria is no different from what happened in Libya -- it's the same atrocities, the same tyranny and the same crimes against humanity committed there.”*

CNN refers back to the principle of protecting the civilians and rescuing people. Begging to do the same as in Libya communicates to the back of the reader's mind, backyard and consciousness: We should help save lives regardless of how complicated and different the situation might be? (CNN ,Bryony Jones, 2011a).

*Syria is larger than Libya, or is it? Legalization?*

In the same article, CNN mentions the world leaders' arguments that the situation in Syria is different in many, many ways from Libya, and more complicated. They stressed particularly at that point of time that no major action can be taken against the Syrian regime without the U.N support. CNN quotes Mr. Oliver Miles, a former British ambassador to Libya (CNN, Bryony Jones, 2011a):

*“Syria is a larger country than Libya, it's a more complicated”*

Objectively and interestingly the above argument is false at least geographically. Libya is almost ten times larger compared to Syria (1.8 Million km<sup>2</sup> compared to 185 thousand km<sup>2</sup>)

Mr. Miles continues in the same article:

*“I think the situation in Syria is absolutely dreadful, and if I could think of a way that the British government, or any other government, or the United Nations could intervene effectively, I would be all for it, but I think intervention would probably make things worse”*. (CNN, Bryony Jones, 2011a)

CNN refers to the legal umbrella of any Syrian intervention which was difficult to obtain due the Russian and Chinese opposition (again discussed in part 2 of this section)

In the Fox news article, Dempsey: Syria 'much different' from Libya, 'big players' involved in conflict (Fox News, 2012a). Fox News concentrates on the US official and one of the top US military figures arguments on why the US should not interfere.

In its article “How the White House Sees Situation in Syria as Different from Libya” (Fox News, Kimberly Schwandt, 2011b), Fox News repeats the same concerns that CNN discussed but from American perspective through the White House speaker at that time. Fox article states that: The White House defends its passive position from the war in Syria by arguing that the two situations in Syria and Libya are different. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said:

*“Libya was a "unique situation" in that large portions of the country were out of control”*

Moreover, the article expresses that the intervention in Libya was labeled by international consensus and supported from the Arab League for action. Carney said that with Libya “*there was also an international consensus to act and support from the Arab League for action*”

### Special factors in the Syrian situation

Below is an analysis of how the two media outlets presented the differences in Syria specifically.

#### 1- Big players

The Fox news frames a complicated political conflict using terms of “players” and “stakes” to refer to the huge outer interferences into the Syrian war by regional and international entities and how the situation is different from Libya. Dempsey said:

“*There's also huge regional implications, big players and actors who have vested interests there. That it is a much different situation than we collectively saw in Libya*”

#### 2- Syrian Regime is stronger than the Libyan; the Syrian opposition is not!

The Fox article presents the Syrian regime as one unity, however questions the rebel forces internally and externally by being spread with no trust from the Syria people. Dempsey said that the American officials do not have:

“*as clean an understanding of the nature of the opposition," though is working to develop that*”

Dempsey spoke to the strengths of the Syrian government:

“*Syria poses a chemical and biological warfare threat and has a very credible military.*”

### 3- Historical curse: Sunni- Shia tension

The history of Muslim Sunni-Shia did not play to the favor of the oppressed and assaulted Syrian people. The Fox News article emphasized on the conflict as a field for historical religious compact and giving the role of igniting this conflict to Saudi Arabia and Iran. Fox News cites these suggestions in Dempsey talk to the congress:

*“And so those who would like to foment a Sunni-Shia standoff, and you know who they are, are all weighing in in Syria. It is the last remaining piece in the puzzle of what you and I probably months ago would have described as the Arab Spring. But this is a very important moment in the region, and all the players are weighing in.”*

Both Fox News and CNN echo the concern of the potential involvement of radical Islamists or even Al Qaeda in the Syrian unrest (discussed in more details in part 4 of the analysis section).

In the Fox news to start with a growing suspicious role of radical Islam within the opposition also was prominent fear although it was backgrounded with claims of a majority domestic powers of the rebels. Dempsey had *“no confirmation that al-Qaeda is actually involved in the country but he also would not discount the possibility. He added that rebels are for the most part domestic”*

In CNN, the situation in Syria was still unclear and the intervention in Syria would be very difficult, since there are a number of players involved in Syria. Dempsey warned that Syria is:

*“an arena right now for all of the various interests to play out.” Those interests include neighbors such as NATO ally Turkey; the region's Sunni and Shiite Muslim powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which is Syria's leading ally; and the al Qaeda terrorist network, which has shown signs of interest in the conflict”* (CNN Wire Staff, 2012c). In that article the CNN summaries and repeats the same concerns reported by the Fox News that were discussed earlier.

## **1c. Reluctance of the American Foreign Policy**

The U.S administration was not against using force to help and protect civilians, yet it resisted to end the violence in Syria by a military intervention. Three years prior to the Syrian war, president Obama was elected to end the U.S war in Iraq and Afghanistan by people who got tired of paying the war cost of blood and treasure. The American administration was extremely reluctant to get sucked into another messy Middle East conflict. The American foreign policy was framed as hesitant and reluctant not only through refusing to use military force but also through wobbly diplomatic efforts.

Below I will analyze some aspects of fluctuation and uncertainty of the early American foreign policy reflected by the media. These include: 1- the recall and redeployment of the American ambassador to Syria, 2- undefined strategy, 3- the weak support of opposition, 4- unwillingness to end Assad regime, 5- No military interventions and 6- arguments that military action will not help the Syrian situation

### *1- Recalled ambassador sent back to Syria within weeks*

Reluctance in the U.S diplomacy through Obama administration to return the U.S ambassador Robert Ford to Damascus after he was recalled six weeks prior (FoxNews,2011c)

### *2- Searching for a strategy*

The American administration mainly relied on pressuring the Syrian regime by imposing sanctions and isolating it economically early on in the conflict. Fox news quoting uncertainty by State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland:

*“It’s frankly not clear how much we’re going to be able to do, but we want to help”*  
(Fox News, 2012d)

This statement clearly reinforce what Fox News is framing as unclear strategy in Syria.

### 3- Testing the waters: meeting with opposition aboard

Another indicator shows the reluctance in the U.S administration was reflected in a Fox News article indicating that the U.S secretary of the state Hillary Clinton asked group of Syrian activists about their plans if they would succeed to take over power in Syria. Obviously, this indicates that the U.S was unable to make the right decision in supporting the Syrian opposition, as it was not certain of the opposition's plans to establish a new democratic government. The Fox news then concludes that Clinton's invitation in Geneva to the Syrians pre-reform activists was "*a step short of endorsement, but at the same time a clear sign that the U.S. wanted to work closely with those who might assume leadership roles*" (Fox news, 2011c).

### 4- Leave, but we are not forcing you to do so!

The US government asked the Syrian president to step down. The US administration's annoyance with the ongoing reports of the violence led to the description of the Syrian regime, in the words of the White House spokesman, that "*it has no credibility and that President Assad cannot be trusted and must leave power*" (Fox news, 2011e).

Despite the allegations of the US administration that the Syrian president was no longer a legitimate leader, it exerted no direct leverage to end his regime, or make him comply to international pressure. (Fox News, 2012f )

Fox news then suggests that the US policy toward the situation in Syria is an implicit sign of Assad's strong grip.

### 5- No silver bullets

Through many news analyses, it appeared that the United states was counting more on diplomacy solutions to resolve the situation in Syria, as stated by the American defense secretary:

*"There is no silver bullet, at the same time, the situation is of grave consequence to the Syrian people"* (Fox News, 2012g)

*"This position did not prevent from some split inside the Congress between supporters and opponents of opting on military action to stop 13 months of violence bloodshed, as Sen. John McCain has complained that Obama administration has*

*taken too soft a stand against Assad and his brutal crackdown on his own people*  
” (Fox News, 2012g).

Again, Fox news is reporting that both formal military and official government efforts in the congress were not interested in military intervention in Syria.

#### 6- No military intervention; no fuel on the fire

In an article titled “Military leaders say US will be ready if needed in Syria but insist diplomacy remains best option” (Fox News, 2012h), Fox News highlighted what is going on in the minds of the U.S leaders. Representative of California, Mr. McKeon said:

*“I am not recommending U.S. military intervention, particularly in light of our grave budget situation, unless the national security threat was clear and present, ”*

The media showed that the US was not planning to directly intervene, the media also showed that sending weapons to the opposition would be a bad decision. In Fox News such policy included risks with unintended consequences. According to Fox news article, some weapons may end up in the hands of Al-Qaeda or other extremist groups such as Hezbollah that could destabilize the region or attack Isreal. (Fox News, 2012i).

Fox transferred these concerns under the talk of the State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland who said:

*“We don't think that adding fuel to this fire is the right way to go ”*

Both CNN and Fox news admitted the humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the importance of Syria in many aspects to the US, however, they framed many scenarios of severe consequence of direct or indirect American military work. The American foreign policy was framed as reluctant and unsure early on in the Syrian conflict.

## **Frame 2: International Domain: US VS Russia**

In this chapter, I will discuss how CNN and Fox News showed that the US wanted an international backup before deciding on going into any military work against the Syrian government at the beginning of the conflict between the Syrian regime and the opposition. Of note, the US sent American troops to support the Syrian Kurds in northern Syria later on in the conflict with no backup from the UN or the UNSC.

The competition between Russia and the US since the cold war is evident in the Syrian problem. The United States would change facts on the ground in Syria only if there is UN, NATO, and Arab league support. This was faced by solid rocks of long historical and strategic relations between Syria and Russia.

To understand the context of the media coverage of the Russian intervention and the relationship of that to the early American policy from the Syrian war, it is important to briefly review of the Syrian- Russian relations.

Syria represents a special case of a country to Russia. Figure 2 below summarizes the relations between the two countries which go back historically to the Soviet Union times when it supported Hafez Assad with military arming against Israel in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Strategically, the Syrian city of Tartus is Russia's only military base in the Mediterranean region. Economically, Syria owed about 12 billion US dollars from Soviet times alone, and militarily, the Syrian army depends almost exclusively on Russian weapons (Katz, 2006). CNN reported 162 million dollars per year as the Russian weapons sales to Syria in 2009 and 2010 (6).

## RUSSIAN SYRIAN RELATIONS

■ Historical ■ Economical ■ Stratigical ■ Military



Figure 2, Domains of the Russian Syrian Relations

Russia showed continued support for the Syrian government of Assad. The reluctant American foreign policy towards Syria and unwillingness to change the Syrian regime could partially explain the heavier support by Putin to the Assad government (Allison,2013)

The refusal of western military intervention was a Russian policy in the last 20 years. Putin in his first presidency considered the humanitarian interventions of the US with other western countries as “attempts to infringe the sovereign rights of states and a legacy of the Cold War” (Lance, 2015). Despite that policy, Russia did not actually contradict (other than words) the US inside or outside the UN security council in many instances like in the war on Afghanistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia, or Libya in 2011. However, Syria was an exception. Russia supported the Syrian regime in many ways for example (Lance, 2015).

1. Rejecting no-fly zones in Syria
2. Stopping any Chapter VII resolution suggestions by the UN
3. Refusing to deal with the political wings of the Syrian opposition
4. Labelling the Syrian opposition as Islamist extremists
5. Declaring the situation in Syria as civil war despite sole peaceful protests early in the unrest

The foreign American policy as framed by both CNN and Fox news was patient waiting on international concurrence with military endeavor. The foreign policies of the US and Russia on the Syrian matter were framed as contradictory powers. CNN and Fox news framed Russia as a diplomatic and military shield to the Syrian regime after UNSC positions and ongoing supply of the Syrian army with Russian weapons and equipment.

## **2a. US waiting on International support**

Per Allison 2013, “In the case of Syria, neither NATO nor the United States, nor indeed other western states, have been enthusiastic about imposing a no-fly zone or engaging in other forms of significant intervention” (Allison,2013). With failing diplomatic efforts from Arab league and the UN, and the continued horrific war in Syria, the US found itself looking into military options. However, under the Obama administration, the US only wanted this under the UN legal support. The media covered these diplomatic movements and displayed them as ineffective and more like wasted efforts.

### *UN diplomacy did not work, time for force?*

CNN reported that after a year of the violence, Kofi Annan presented six-point peace plan for Syria in March 2012 that was adopted by the Arab League and the UN. The Assad regime did not comply with this plan and as a result, the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the Syrian government refusal to withdraw its army from cities, a key element of Annan's peace plan. (CNN,Labott & Vaccarello-2012d). Within the same article, the American foreign affairs led by Hillary Clinton started diplomatic efforts within the UN to siege the Assad regime and to lead towards adoption of chapter seven of the UN that would allow international military force deployment.

The CNN framed the US foreign policy in the status of actively working within the United Nations organization and in its security council towards decisive steps against the Syrian regime. In the same CNN article: Clinton called for decisive U.N. Security Council steps against the Bashar al-Assad regime. Clinton suggested moving “*very vigorously toward a Chapter VII sanctions resolution, including travel and financial sanctions as well as the arms embargo, pressure that would coax the regime to comply with U.N. and Arab League envoy Kofi Annan's six-point peace plan. Chapter*

*VII resolution would provide for the use of force if needed.”* (CNN, Labott & Vaccarello-2012d).

## **2b. Russia contradicts the US on Syria**

In an article about the US efforts in the UN against the Russian resistance. In an article titled: “Clinton urges UN to back anti-Assad resolution despite Russian resistance”, the Fox news draw the image of clashing American and Russian positions. Fox framed a righteous American policy compared to Russian policies that prolonged the bloodshed in Syria.

The United States led diplomatic efforts against the Assad dictatorship government in the security council, the Arab Foreign Ministers Council, and the United Nations General Assembly. These movements were opposed by Russia and China. In fact, Russia and China had a joint position to support the Assad regime. They used the veto repeatedly to block several international resolutions condemning the regime's use of brutal force to crush the uprising in the UNSC (Fox news, 2012j) (CNN,Holly Yan-2012e).

The Russian had firm opposition to take any position condemning the Syrian regime, while the United States was trying to pressure the UN to adopt an Arab league resolution that called for Syrian President to step down in order to end violence. In return, Russia rejected the proposal of the Arab league. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said:

*“We are going to witness a very bad situation, much, much, much broader than just Syria or Libya or Egypt or any other single country, ”*

The Russians considered the western countries military action in Libya a mistake and they refused it in Syria, which is their strategically-important Arab ally (Fox News, 2012j).

### *Russia is arming the regime; the US is arming the opposition*

A diplomatic battle between the United States and Russia was quickly escalating early on in the Syrian conflict. Russia and the U.S. exchanged accusations of fueling the violence in Syria. Clinton accused Russia of suppling the Syrian army with attack helicopters, while Lavrov said:

*“They (the United States) are providing arms and weapons to the Syrian opposition that can be used in fighting against the Damascus government ”*

Syria is *“ spiraling toward civil war ”* with Russia supporting the violence by continuing to arm the Syrian regime; Clinton called on Russia to stop supplying the Syrian army (Fox news, Berger, 2012k).

James Goldgeier, a veteran Russian analyst states that the Syrian situation exposed the limits of the American- Russian relationships:

*“It's not the Cold War. It's not going to be the Cold War ”*

Russia supported the Syrian regime politically and with military aid. This acknowledgement was made by the Russian foreign minister Lavrov who said that *“Russia is providing Syria with weapons to fend off external threats but has no intention to use military force to protect Syrian President Bashar Assad”* (Fox news, 2012L).

## **2c. Russia shielding the Syrian regime**

### *Syrian blood on Russian hands*

Despite the violence that claimed thousands of lives, The UNSC was not able to pass a resolution on Syria after Russia and China voted against it (Fox News, 2012m).

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice told CNN.

*“Those that have blocked potentially the last effort to resolve this peacefully ... will have any future blood spill on their hands, ”*

*“The people of Syria have yet again been abandoned by this Council and by the international community ”* (CNN Wire Staff, 2012f)

CNN echoes the blame of the violence on Russia. CNN framed the Russian veto as a deep split between Russia and the US. CNN stressed on the strategic importance of Syria to Russia as an ally and as a revenue generating resource through arms sales.

Conclusion: The two media outlets showed a coherent status of the American foreign policy within the UN system which intended to end the violence in Syria, at the same time both news agencies displayed Russia as an irrational supporter of a brutal regime and blamed it for continued bloodshed in Syria.

### ***Frame 3: Republican criticism of Obama's Syria policy***

As I have mentioned earlier in the methodology section, framing is how the media actually select, digest, analyze and signify certain topics and then present facts based on these processes of: selection, comprehension, analysis, and salience to the reader. The opinion, or in the study, the political opinion of the reader then can be generated based on that unprejudiced or to the contrary biased “reality” created by that frame. As discussed earlier, framing includes *selection* and *salience*; “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text” (Entman,1993). Both CNN and Fox news presented the “inner” dialogue generated by the Syrian conflict topic within the two wings of the American politics: The Republicans and the Democratic US government (during the timeline selected for the analysis).

According to Entman (2004), “The White House, its supporters, and its critics peddle their messages to the press in hopes of gaining political leverage. The media’s political influence arises from how they respond—from their ability to frame the news in ways that favor one side over another.” (Entman,2004). I will try in this section to explain how CNN and Fox news framed the republicans’ opinions about the US government foreign policies of the Syrian crisis in their news coverage. In my attempt to elaborate the differences between the two media agencies on framing this topic, I will use Bakhtinian utterance (explained in the theory section). I will show how within the process of framing, the two agencies are selecting specific words aka utterances to present and then emphasize or even “let go” potentially hidden messages within the discourses of the main figures of articles. Utterance is looked by Bakhtin as “the space where the mind and the matter of the language intermingle, the force that binds them and the arena where the strength of each is tested.” (Holquist, 1983).

This utterance of language concept is a word or words that are reflective of a humanized center and socially bound aspect of the discourse (Bakhtin,1981, 1986: Bakhtin, M, 1981). By putting side to side the same subject presented by CNN and Fox news, I hope to illustrate the differences.

Here I would refer back to Bakhtin's argument that: “all utterances are heteroglot in that they are a function of a matrix of forces” (Bakhtin,1986). This brings us back to the framing theory and undoubtedly it does intersect with it. The selection and salience of utterance interact with the receiver which is one of the four locations that

the frames have “along with the communicator, the text and the culture” (Entman,1993).

This section of the study aims to show how the Syrian conflict was represented within the inner circuits of the American politics by stating the official position from Syria and then critically analyze the media framing of the republican opposition of that policy.

### ***Brief overview of the chronological changes of Obama’s foreign policy towards Syria***

Before starting to analyze how the two news portals framed the republican reactions and opinions to the US government Syrian foreign policy, I will list key changes of the official treatment of Syria over time. This will help, I think, to make the republican points of views clearer.

Obama's foreign policies in general and towards Syria in particular was under fire by many key republican politicians. America’s foreign policy is specifically a pivotal topic in presidential elections and obviously an important area to cover in daily news. Rove and Gillespie (previous top advisors of president G. W Bush) wrote in Foreign Policy in 2012 an article of “How to Beat Obama ”. In this article they stated that, “The president is far more vulnerable than he thinks on foreign policy” and listed a few pieces of advice to the republican candidates to beat him in the presidential run.

President Obama's early policy towards Syria was directed towards improving the relationship for the greater purpose of stabilizing the neighbor Iraq and to push the Arab- Israeli peace negotiations forward under his presidency. Heavy media coverage of the humanitarian crisis and excessive use of military force against Syrian civilians had led to paramount pressure on the Western world to confront the Assad regime. (7). Obama's frequency of mentioning the Syrian unrest was low in the first five months of the conflict. (8)

Lyse Doucet in an article about Syria and the “CNN Effect” described early Obama thoughts on Syria. Obama described the media pressure derisively as “the Washington Playbook”. He was determined not to use military force in Syria (Doucet,2018).

In August of 2011, Obama called for the Syrian president to step down:

*“For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside.” (9)*

During the announcement of sanctions against the regime, The American president referred to the failure of the Syrian officials to reform and the crimes they committed against the Syrians. Mr. Obama said:

*“The future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Assad is standing in their way. His calls for dialogue and reform have rung hollow while he is imprisoning, torturing, and slaughtering his own people” (Ibid)*

In a response to the news and intelligence of the chemical capability potential of the Syrian regime in early 2012, Obama warned the Assad government of using these weapons setting a redline that if it would be crossed, then there would be American military intervention in Syria. Obama said:

*“We have been very clear to the Assad regime -- but also to other players on the ground -- that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized.” “That would change my calculus; that would change my equation.” (10)*

The Syrian regime did cross that line and used chemical weapons near Damascus about a year after that announcement. The Obama administration shocked the world by doing militarily nothing towards that step and emphasized the hawks' case argument that Obama pursued foreign policy of restraint; which is considered by them inferior to the grand strategy of primacy that was followed by his predecessors (11). Next, I will analyze the media news texts that showed: 1- the republicans' criticism of the official foreign policy 2- The republicans movements (kinetics) within the congress against Obama's foreign policy.

### *The Republican Criticism*

This section gives three examples of articles that emphasized how deeply different the bipartisan considerations are to the American foreign policies regarding the Syrian conflict as framed by CNN and Fox news. The prominent republican senator John McCain was very vocal about many of the internal and external American policies in Obama's era. Nonetheless, two different representations of his opinion in manipulative methods are present by the two news portals. This might be explained by the two different ideologies of CNN and Fox news. CNN mostly has democratic political dominance and Fox News has more conservative republican opinions and background. Entman states that despite the wish that free press would deliver reality as balanced as it comes, "in practice, the relationship between governing elites and news organizations is less distant and more cooperative than the ideal envisions, especially in foreign affairs" (Entman - 2004). Very different approaches to reporting the same events are found. With emphasis on language, the utterance of certain words reported by both media outlets on same events or subjects really reflects on how profoundly the disagreement is on the Syrian matter.

CNN and Fox News which presented the Syrian conflict 2011, have pointed out that Obama's policy does not reflect the American values of protecting democracy and fighting for freedom and against injustice. CNN and Fox News showed similar presentations of the American administration's acts after the refusal of the Syrian officials to reform and the disastrous humanitarian crisis in Syria. The articles gave examples blaming Obama's foreign policies in general and towards Syria in particular. These policies were criticized by many key republican politicians for Obama not being a good leader and his administration indirectly responsible for persistence of the Syrian unrest.

Fox News article titled, "McCain: US inability to help Syria "embarrassing" (Fox News, 2012n) summarizes the republican political discourse against Obama's foreign policy towards the situation in Syria. Very important statements regarding the Obama's foreign policy could be found within the comments of the Republican Sen. John McCain :

*“Last weekend's massacre of dozens of Syrian civilians proved that it's time to act; it's time to give the Syrian opposition the weapons in order to defend themselves.”*

*“A lot of Americans are asking the question, why are we standing by while innocent children are being murdered ... and we use nothing but rhetoric in response”*  
McCain said.

In a very important point, the Fox news shows the disappointment and maybe the anger of the peripheral role of America in the Syrian conflict. Mr. McCain said:

*“It is also embarrassing that the United States of America refuses to show leadership and come to the aid of the Syrian people, ”*

The Fox news then mentions some of the fundamentals of America's values and how Obama’s policy is contradicting them.

This can be seen in what McCain quotes in the Fox news article: McCain said he expects *“significant debate before the presidential election about America's role in the world, about our leadership, about our commitment to the fundamental rights.”*

The main points that Fox news is showing in McCain political discourse are:

- 1- The humanitarian suffering of the people of Syria
- 2- The need for US military action directly and indirectly by arming the opposition
- 3- Drawing a picture of deficient Democratic administration foreign policies through:
  - i. Showing that the no intervention policy is causing worsening of the situation and loss of lives of the innocent
  - ii. Obama’s policy does not reflect the American values of protecting democracy and fighting for freedom and against injustice
  - iii. Stamping the government policy with weakness and immorality
- 4- Taking advantage of the aforementioned weaknesses to the debates at upcoming presidential election around that time

After town of Houla massacre of more than 100 civilians, many of them children, the Republican Sen. John McCain described Obama's foreign policy as incompetent. McCain condemned the American official paralysis toward Syria which he accused of being responsible for allowing Assad's brutal violence against civilians.

The emphasis and the salience of utterances like: embarrassing, Massacre, U.S. refuses to show leadership, does illustrate how language is never neutral (Bakhtin 1981, 1986) and it is used to explain contrasting ideologies of current administration and the party which is engaged in an election to take it down. The Fox news frames it in a way that the receivers (the regular Americans) will comprehend the weakness and incompetence of the current foreign policy and the elegance and strength of the hawks if elected. Fox news heteroglossic voices within the same linguistic domain ask the regular American: why Americans are not doing anything? and: where are the American values of freedom?

Now I want to take you to the same person (Senator McCain) and the same situation (the Obama's Syrian position), but this time as framed and presented by CNN. An article was posted in the CNN with the title "McCain calls for U.S. military leadership on Syria" (CNN Wire Staff, 2012g).

What strikes you in the beginning is the title by itself. The Article title went under reshaping where the sharp edges of McCain opinions were rounded and reframed to look less strong in criticism compared to the title presented earlier by the Fox news. In this article, McCain is shown to ask for military solution of the Syrian matter and that he is "criticizing" the Obama's administration's inadequate response to the Syrian problem. Senator McCain said:

*“The Syrian opposition needs to know that the United States stands with them and that we are willing to take risks to support them when they need it the most, ”*

To show the current and future suffering of the Syrian people, the CNN quotes the following from Mr. McCain:

*“Nearly every Syrian I speak with tells me the same thing: the longer this conflict drags on, the more radicalized it becomes and the more it turns into an escalating civil war. ”*

Senator McCain has argued that the United States should support the Syrian opposition and in the same time launch airstrikes against Syrian military. McCain indicated many American obligations to end Assad's regime as the only way to stop the violence and pave the way for democratic Syria. So clearly, some of the bold language utterances and expressions used in the Fox news are lost and clearly this sends rather softer messages to the reader.

I want to finalize with an example of how Fox News framed the Obama administration in an article about the US government support of Russian company that is arming the Syrian army. In this article, the Fox News framed the Obama's administration as lying to what it is announcing of restricting arming of the Assad regime, and at the same time showing the republican as a defender of Americans against the Russian interests and also standing with the Syrian people against a brutal regime.

### *The Republican Kinetics*

In the Fox News article, "Senator rebukes Pentagon for contract with Russian firm 'arming the Assad regime'" (Fox News, 2012 O). The Republican Senator John Cornyn expressed concerns to the Pentagon over its contract with a Russian firm that was arming the Syrian army. Mr. Cornyn said:

*"I remain deeply troubled that the (Defense Department) would knowingly do business with a firm that has enabled mass atrocities in Syria"*

The fox news then mentions the official reply to this with the Pentagon Spokesperson saying:

*"Washington understood Cornyn's concerns, but it is the only legal method to purchase the military version of the Mi-17 and to provide an appropriate measure of flight safety and airworthiness."*

The article clearly shows that framing by Fox News is trying to send few messages:

1- The Obama administration public messages against the Syrian Assad government is contradicted by its real-world actions supporting the "Russian company" that is arming Assad forces.

2- Placing the US government collaboration with Russia under the microscope: which is the main supporter of the Syrian dictator regime.

Both CNN and Fox news showed the opposition of the Republicans to Obama's Syrian foreign policies. The two media portals illustrated profound differences in the aspects constructed and delivered to the reader. When compared to CNN, the Fox news framed the inappropriate handling of critical foreign policy by the Democratic leadership with contrast to firmer and more adhered to the American values response from the Republicans.

#### *Frame 4: The Fear Politics*

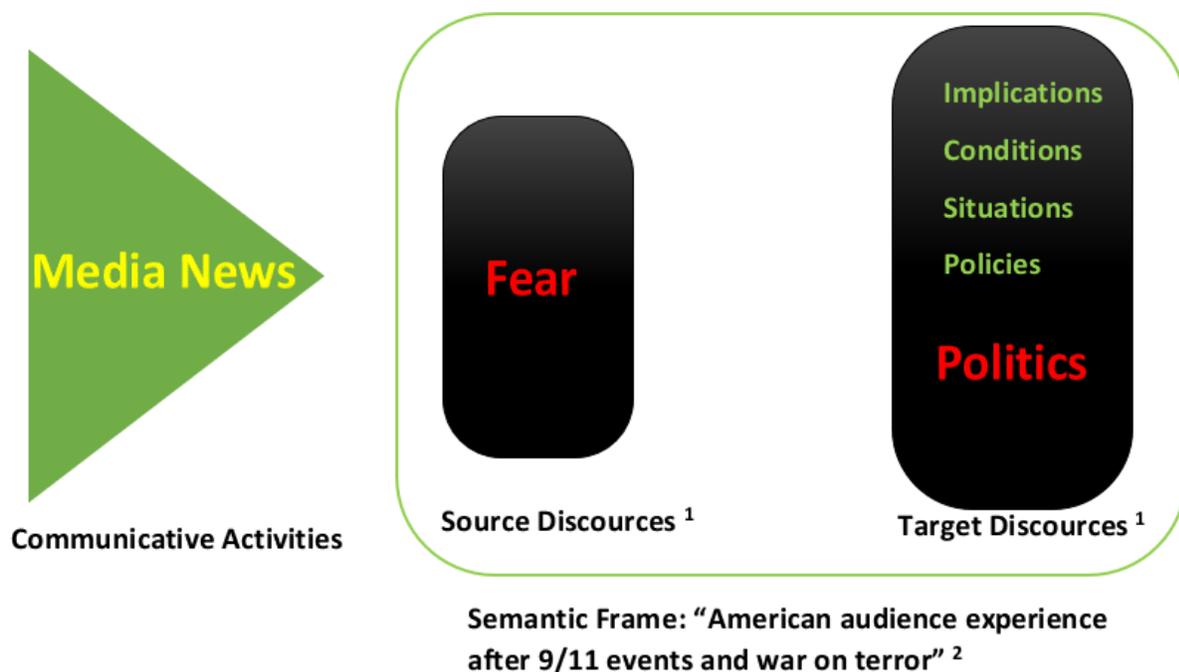
It is critical to understand that what is conveyed to the population as a result of mass communication methods, such as the media, directly and indirectly results from very diverse, and complex but yet interacting factors. The fear of terror, especially Islamic or Middle Eastern related terror dominated the American political and public life for the last two decades. Fear is politically relevant (Waever,1995 & Corey,2003) In this concept the emotion: “fear” was an actor that formed several American politics. In this section, I will attempt to illustrate how the two large media outlets: CNN and Fox News showed the fears of terrorist enemies as a metaphor used by the American government to halt the aid of the Syrian opposition.

Large media corporations like CNN and Fox news always advertise their commitment to neutral and truthful transition of the news to the people. CNN defines itself as “journalists, designers and technologists, united by a mission to inform, engage and empower the world” and describes its staff as “truth-seekers and storytellers” (12). The Fox News cites Suffolk University poll 2019 of being “the most trusted source for television news or commentary in the country” and 2019 Brand Keys Emotion Engagement Brand Analysis survey findings that “among Americans who could name an objective news source, FOX News is the top-cited outlet.” Fox News Website (13).

For purposes of simplicity, I would again define framing theory as the formation of audience understanding on specific issues based on the cognitive process of what and how the journalist had comprehended and visualized these issues (Entman,1993). The journalist ideologies and the media corporation policies are then core players in determining the mass understanding of a political topic. Amazingly, the effect of the culture and the nature of the community (where these discourses or communicative activities are deployed by the media) indirectly plays a role on what matters for the media to deliver. The aftermath of September attacks and the resultant “war on terror” come to the center of the picture when American news is covering conflicts in the Middle East like the Syrian conflict. The fear that accompanied these events was actually behind many Bush administration policies that then carried radical changes to the world like war on Iraq 2003. Many of these politically relevant topics were previously analyzed similar to Fairclough critical analysis of Bush’s national security strategy (Fairclough,2013). Fairhurst and Sarr considered metaphor as one of many framing techniques (Fairhurst & Sarr,1996). Metaphor explains a theoretical idea through the understanding of another more intuitive concept. In cognitive linguistics, the theory of metaphor uses a source frame which could be sensory or direct bodily experiences or emotions and a target domain which contains abstracted

and more complex ideas (Lakoff & Johnson,1980) (Lakoff,1993). The understanding of the merge is performed under semantic frames (Fillmore,1985).

Applying the metaphor theory concepts (that were discussed in the theoretical approaches section) in figure 3, I attempt to illustrate the method of this analysis which relies on framing theory in the lens of cognitive linguistics metaphor theory. The media news are the communicative activities that directly influence emotional experience of fear (source domain) which help us understand the policies and politics based on that fear (target domain). As discussed earlier, politicians use fear from a specific enemy or enemies as a metaphor to generate policies or actions; the results of this can be referred to as “the politics of fear”. In this analysis the American people's previous experiences that resulted after 9/11 and war on terror constitute the semantic frame of this politics of fear metaphor.



1: Lakoff 1993

2: Fillmore 1985

Figure 3: Illustration of the relationship between media as igniting resource of the fear politics metaphor (adapted from the theoretical work of Lakoff and Fillmore)

The media news displayed the Syrian opposition as a source of concern and uncertainty. In the same time the media framed the beginning of Islamist wave of transition amongst the opposition militias which further magnified the Americans fears of supporting such militia. The media showed that there is a potential for dealing and empowering oppositional forces that are radical Muslims who would then form a real danger to the west and its interests in the region. The analysis below will focus on how the media captured the American policy of not supporting the opposition forces through: 1- displaying a picture of vague and separated opposition groups 2- showing the risk potential of radical Islamists within the opposition forces against Assad

### *The fear of ambiguous opposition*

In the first year of the Syrian conflict, there was an unclear method of contextualization the opposition in the western media especially that the concept of peaceful people leading the Arab spring uprisings was the mainstay of the picture.

The received media reports from Syria showed civilians protesting in groups in different geographical locations throughout the country. The media did not clearly explain the political orientations or specific aims of the protesters other than their demands of ending the dictatorship, instilling social justice and initiation of political reform. After few months of the uprising, more journalists started to report on incidents of armed opposition and battles with the Syrian government troops. The media clearly reported the militarization of what appeared at the beginning as a pure peaceful uprising. The opposition groups through the media were predominantly Muslim Sunni groups and they were scattered throughout the map with no unified military or political leadership. Many had concerns over the potential of Assad successors to be Islamists and anti-Western (Inbar, 2012).

As a result of that, the media reflected the worries and concerns that the American government had of arming these groups of opposition. Both CNN and Fox news showed these concerns in the utterance of American officials' speeches.

*“We don't think further militarizing the situation is going to bring peace and stability and a democratic transition to the people of Syria.”* State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland (CNN Wire Staff, 2012h).

CNN reports the military role of the US in Syria but limits it to no benefit of “*further*” militarizing the situation. The discourse emphasizes on different goals of the US administration which are: peace, stability and democratic power transition to the people.

In Fox news, the Syrian opposition was reported to be “*for the most part domestic despite the influence of regional actors*” (Fox News, 2012p).

The Fox News reports Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Dempsey statements during a hearing before the Senate. However, it adds about the vague opposition and the fears from Syrian chemical weapons and military.

Dempsey said the United States does not have “*as clean an understanding of the nature of the opposition, though is working to develop that. Plus, he said, Syria poses a chemical and biological warfare threat and has a very credible military*” (Fox News, 2012p).

Evidently, the ongoing work to understand the nature of the Syrian opposition, was opposed by the threats of facing a capable foreign government in case the US would support this rather unclear opposition forces. With the humanitarian crisis, this troubling equation was posing a real challenge of a moral duty of the US towards liberal forces in Syria against a dictatorial regime and at the same time suggesting difficult consequences and sequela of not finding a real liberal partner that share the same western values.

### *The fear of terrorist fighters*

Historically, authoritarian political regimes in the world were based on their citizens’ fears (Tudor, 2003), therefore, labelling dissidents as terrorists to produce fear in the local and international society is a strategy that authoritarian regimes use to justify extensive military force to stop any unrest. The public’s fear of insecurity will provide legitimization to the actions of these political systems and take the power and criticism from the hands of the people for the price of stability and security. The people find themselves in certain circumstances obligated to exchange freedom for

security (Fromm, 2002). Interestingly Fox News shows the claims of the Assad regime of Islamist radicals leading the uprising against the government.

*“Assad denies that there is a popular will behind the uprising, saying foreign extremists and terrorists are driving the revolt”* (Fox News, 2012q)

Many have argued that early on, there was no Islamic influence among the opposition peaceful protesters. However, in the same time the Syrian government was maybe opened the way for Jihadists entry by its violent repression of peaceful opposition movements thus allowing the radicalization potential (Al-Shishani, 2011). Fox News lists claims of the opposition of no fault:

*“There are no foreign mercenaries in Syria,”* said Rima Fleihan, a Jordan-based Syrian writer and activist.

*“The opposition doesn't need them because people across Syrian provinces have taken to the streets. This is a revolution that is being made by the Syrian people.”*

CNN avoids mentioning the official government claims in the headlines of its stories and instead suggests that the Syrian regime is the one behind the brutal mass killing in Syria during the period of the study. CNN in many of its reports early in the Syrian conflict stated that it, “cannot independently confirm opposition or government reports of casualties or attacks from across Syria because the government has severely restricted the access of international journalists. But a vast majority of reports from inside Syria show a systematic slaughter in an attempt to silence dissidents.” (CNN Wire Staff, 2012i)

### *Fear of the involvement of: Al Qaeda and Iran*

It is certain that the Syrian situation is complex especially with contradicting forces that make alliances with either the Syrian regime or the opposition. Iran has long established strong relations with the Assad family. The regime in Iran is one of the most rigid enemies to the US since the 1970s. The alliance between Iran and Syria was one of the major obstacles that made the US goals of ending Assad rule of Syria a very difficult task.

The news reports from the media showed how Iran was helping drive the brutal crushing of opposition in Syria. Fox news quotes American official who says

*“The visit by Quds Force Commander Ghassem Soleimani provides a concrete example of direct high-level cooperation between Iran and Syria”* (Fox news, 2012R).

In the same time (January 2012) this Fox News article was published accusing Iran of arming the Syrian regime (Fox news, 2012R), CNN published an article that showed Iran denying these allegations (CNN, Ivan Watson& Yesim Comret-2012j).

In an interesting coverage by the Fox news, an article claims of Al Qaeda being helped by Iran in Syria. Fox News quotes the director of American national intelligence (Mr. Clapper) who said:

*“Al Qaeda and the Iranian regime have a shotgun marriage, or marriage of convenience. the usually contradicting forces due to Sunni and Shia different religious backgrounds”* (Fox News 2012s).

The fight against these two enemies remotely in Syria as a preventive measure would mimic the discourses of legitimizing the war on Iraq in 2003 by the Bush administration relating it to Al Qaeda. The fear of Al Qaeda reaching chemical weapons was also a main idea of the media coverage. Fox news emphasized this idea through quoting Mr. Clapper again:

*“Al Qaeda of Iraq is one of Al Qaeda's largest regional affiliates, and it is extending its reach into Syria by infiltrating opposition groups, likely without their knowledge.”*

The American government was then shown by media reports to be fearful of the fall of the Syrian government because that would allow terrorist organizations to control the government arsenal of chemical weapons. Fox News again shows that official argument when reporting what Mr. Clapper said:

*“The lack of a unified opposition group could leave a power vacuum that extremists could if the Syrian government falls, a potential development he called troubling”*

*because Syria has an extensive network of chemical weapons sites”* (Fox News, 2012s).

The politics derived from fear created active policies that modify a lot of the communities and world around them. The news articles analyzed here demonstrated different external, but active actors in the Syrian conflict with potential impact on the American interests which made the approaches of the American foreign policy towards Syria very tenuous. The media reports reflected the American government fear to arm the opposition due to 1) the lack of understanding of the Syrian opposition, 2) the fear of radical Jihadists influence on the opposition forces, and 3) the fear of Iran and Al-Qaeda empowerment and potential control on dangerous chemical weapons if the Syrian government would fall.

## **VIII. Similarities and differences between CNN and Fox News framing**

When applying the theoretical approaches to the analysis, many similarities and differences between CNN and Fox News are recognized. I list these points first then I categorize them in relevance to the theoretical approaches which have been used in the main analysis (see tables 2,3 & 4). In reporting the overall situation in Syria or what was referred to as group one articles, only Fox News reported the official Syrian government story in its headlines in what seems like a positive way. (Fox news,2012q), (14). Fox News showed equal responsibilities between the regime and the opposition forces (15). It also mentioned negative actions of the Syrian oppositions in the headlines (16,17). Noted that both CNN and Fox news reported the bad humanitarian crisis in Syria.

In reporting the political aspects of the conflict or group two articles, the following similarities are noted:

1. Both CNN and Fox News showed a complex situation in Syria and different from the Libyan status prior to American intervention in 2011. Both framed these differences as the basis of why America should not military intervene in Syria.
2. Both reported the American efforts to solve the Syrian issue within the UN
3. Both framed Russia as a protector of the Syrian regime especially in the UNSC
4. Both CNN and Fox news showed the opposition of the Republicans to Obama's Syrian foreign policies
5. Both echoed the concerns of potential involvement of radical fighters within the opposition
6. Both showed the American government fear from the ambiguity of the opposition

The differences between CNN and Fox News as noted from group two articles analyses are:

1. CNN had emphasis on framing Syria as important country to the US (CNN, Ashely Fantz,2012b).
2. CNN more frequently quoted Syrian humans' rights activists
3. CNN avoided to state the reluctance of the White House policies towards Syria, however, Fox News emphasized on that, and had several headlines on this topic (Fox News, Kimberly Schwandt, 2011b), (FoxNews,2011c), (Fox News, 2012d), (Fox News, 2012f).
4. When compared to CNN, the Fox news framed the inappropriate handling of critical foreign policy by the American Democratic party leadership in contrast to firmer and more adhered to the American values response from the republicans.
5. Although both echoed the concerns of potential involvement of radical fighters within the opposition, Fox News showed emphasis on this point and made it in headlines (Fox news,2012q), (Fox News,2012s).
6. Although content from both CNN and Fox News suggested involvement of Iran in smuggling weapons to Syria, Fox News framed this more like a reality suggested in its headline: "*Strong signs Iran is supplying Syria with weapons, US says*" (Fox News,2012R), compared to very different CNN headline that covered the same topic around the same published date (January 2012) "*Iran denies shipping weapons to Syria through Turkey*" (CNN, Ivan Watson& Yesim Comret-2012j).

Tables 2, 3, and 4 compare CNN and Fox News in relation to the coverage of the Syrian conflict categorized by relevance to previously applied theoretical approaches of framing theory, Bakhtinian Utterance, and metaphor theory. Framing theory showed multiple similarities and differences.

Table 2. Comparison based on framing theory

	Similarities		Differences	
	Fox News	CNN	Fox News	CNN
	-Framed complex situation in Syria		1-No emphasis on importance of Syria to US audience	1-Framed Syria as important country to the US
	-Framed different situation compared to Libya		2-Framed reluctant White House (WH) policies	2-Avoided framing WH as reluctant
<b>Framing Theory</b>	-Framed high level of difficulty for potential American military role		3-Framed strong and Americanized republican position	3-Only stated the republican opposition
	-Framed active US diplomatic effort in the UN to resolve the conflict		4-Framed equal responsibilities of regime and opposition	4-Avoided framing opposition as negative
	-Framed Russia as the protector of the Syrian regime			
	-Framed opposing republican position to the official US Syrian policy			

Both CNN and Fox News used the fear metaphor equally when reporting on concerns of radical Islamists and ambiguity of Syrian opposition.

Table 3. Comparison based on metaphor theory

<b>Metaphor Theory</b>	-Both used Fear metaphor with fear of radical Islamist fighters as a source domain and decision of limited Syrian opposition support as a target domain
	-Both used Fear metaphor with fear of ambiguity of opposition as a source domain and decision of limited Syrian opposition support as a target domain

Interestingly, both CNN and Fox News used utterance of quoted key figures in the articles and utterances in the headlines differently.

Table 4. Comparison based on Bakhtinian Utterance

	Differences	
	Fox News	CNN
<b>Bakhtinian Utterance</b>	1- Did not concentrate on quoting rights activists	1- Frequently quoted Syrian rights activists
	2-Headlines utterance emphasized on WH reluctance	2-No headlines emphasis on WH reluctance
	3-Quoted strong opposing utterance of republican leaders in headlines and within articles	3-Did not show similar emphasis on republican leaders' utterances

## **IX. Discussion**

The CNN and Fox News published articles researched in this essay identified the major aspects of how the media reported and framed the situation in Syria as well as the main aspects of the early American policy in that country. This research captures what constituted that policy in the eyes of the American media. The research shows how media described the awful humanitarian crisis, how the media shaped the public realization of the Syrian crisis, and how the media captured the main characteristics of the American diplomacy policy and official position. This research notices that the media captured and represented these characteristics by reporting on the reactions of Obama's government from the crisis, the Russian contradiction, interactions with the republicans' opinions and skepticism, and the fears to support radical opposition.

The analyzed texts from CNN and Fox News articles showed that the early American policy in Syria was not fully successful, as it was not effective in containing the crisis, it did not prevent terror organizations evident by the rise of ISIS, it did not protect the west from terror attacks that were exported from ISIS to the middle of many European capitals, It did not prevent the use of chemical weapons in Syria, It did not prevent refugees crisis, it did not end the misery inside Syria, and it did not end the dictator's regime in Damascus.

By using Framing theory, this study demonstrated how the American media diagnosed what was happening at the forefront of the American government. The media did not have enough prognostic signs in their coverage as they did not warn about what would happen if no active intervention would have happened. In reality, the future of the Syrian conflict was vague and unclear and the catastrophic aftermath was almost impossible to anticipate.

This study showed few similarities and differences between CNN and Fox News in both reporting the situation in Syria and in framing aspects of the American foreign policy. For example, Fox News articles in their headlines emphasized on criticism of the American government's policy towards the Syrian conflict. While CNN showed similar features of the American foreign policy, however, these did not make the CNN headlines. Fox News also showed the Republican criticism as major headlines, also worth mentioning that Fox News had great emphasis on the role of radical Jihadist fighters within the Syrian opposition and the suspicious roles of Al-Qaeda and Iran.

The media framed Syria as an important country to the Americans, and to the tenuously stable Middle East. The media did play a role in opening the eyes of the world and its leaders to the appalling humanitarian situation in Syria. The media demonstrated that the US did not have the intention to intervene militarily in Syria despite many important factors that would have justified such intervention including: 1- The importance of Syria to the United States 2- The miserable humanitarian crisis. The media showed that the American government was not consistent in its way of dealing with Syria as Americans intervened with allies in Libya which had a similar situation in about the same time frame.

The American policy was hesitant and reluctant to take firm positions against the Syrian government. The media displayed the stalemate of the American diplomatic and military efforts in Syria. The media illustrated confused, unsure policy makers especially when deciding to military intervene or at least arm the Syrian opposition effectively. Via the use of metaphor theory, the study showed how fear was utilized as a metaphor. For instance, the fear of the radical Islamists was maybe behind the hesitance of the American administration to arm the Syrian opposition.

The international dimension of the crisis was displayed in the media particularly the opposing efforts and views of the Syrian conflict, regime and opposition between Russia and the US. The media showed the international efforts of American government in the UN and UNSC arenas to be going in slow motion with no frank solid intent to end the Syrian crisis. These efforts enabled the dominance of the Russian diplomacy and later the military dominance in Syria for years to come.

The media displayed the complex and cozy relationships between the Syrian regime historically, militarily, economically and strategically with Russia. The Russians were a very effective shield that ensured the Syrian regime's longevity to date. A valid discussion and a potential future area of research would be if this new resultant and unprecedented diplomatic, political and military dominance of Russia in the Middle East is a direct result of what was viewed as ineffective early American policies from the Syrian unrest. Through the analysis of CNN and Fox news with their known different ideologies, this research demonstrates how the media reflected what the Republican viewed and opposed to the Obama's administration's efforts and how they fought it in public and in congress.

There are many points that show strength in the study. The study focused on various aspects of the Syrian conflict, the American role and decision making, and the international arena of all of this. The study employed different methodological

theories to understand the complexity and the variety of the analyzed data. This research sheds light on the fear as a hidden but potent motor for policy formation and the role of the media in it.

The use of multidisciplinary methods borrowed from social science, politics, linguistics, and cognitive linguistics empowered the analyses with new horizons to answering the characteristics being researched. The utilization of more than one methodology in explaining one topic or idea was extremely beneficial.

Admittedly, this research has some limitations. It is limited by the fact that one cannot ascertain causality between what is framed as an ineffective American position with the latent potential and future consequences of the conflict. Framing theory by itself does not reflect the power of pictures and videos which were very influential through at least social media during Arab spring. One of the limitations is the selection of only two media sources, although it was attempted in the selection to be inclusive of different opinions, ideologies and political directions within the American arenas.

In conclusion, this study clearly shows the main characteristics and aspects of the early US foreign policy in the Syrian unrest through two prominent American media institutions. This policy was ineffective in protecting the interests of the west, and the Syrian people. It potentially enabled the Syrian regime and the Russian dominance of the region.

A multidisciplinary utilization of appropriate methodological approaches within qualitative research of news articles texts is needed and can enrich the literature concerned with the understanding and interpretation of the journalism effects and reporting of major international conflicts.

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## *frame 3*

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-Fox News, (May 17, 2012q) “Syrian leader says terrorists are behind unrest” Last Update December 10, 2015; <https://www.foxnews.com/world/syrian-leader-says-terrorists-are-behind-unrest>

-CNN Wire Staff (January 31, 2012i) “U.N. to consider call for Syrian president to step down” <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/30/world/meast/syria-unrest/index.html>

-CNN, Ivan Watson & Yesim Comert (January 14, 2012j) “Iran denies shipping weapons to Syria through Turkey”; <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/13/world/meast/turkey-iran-arms/index.html>

-Fox News, (January 17, 2012R) “Strong signs Iran is supplying Syria with weapons, US says” Last Update December 22, 2015; <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/strong-signs-iran-is-supplying-syria-with-weapons-us-says>

-Fox News (February 17, 2012s) “Al Qaeda on rise in Syria, has 'marriage of convenience with Iran, US intelligence director says” Last Update December 22, 2015; <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/al-qaeda-on-rise-in-syria-has-marriage-of-convenience-with-iran-us-intelligence-director-says>

## Appendix

**Table A. Literature Review: CNN Articles Relevant to Syrian conflict 2011-2012**

#	Article title	Author	Published Date
1	Al-Assad, Annan talk candidly in Damascus amid fresh violence	CNN Wire Staff	March 11, 2012
2	Annan: Syrians 'want to get on with their lives'	CNN Wire Staff	March 16, 2012
3	Annan's six-point plan for Syria	Joe Sterling, CNN	March 27, 2012
4	Annan, in Syria, calls for accountability	CNN Wire Staff	May 28, 2012
5	Annan to world: Raise pressure to stop Syrian violence	CNN Wire Staff	June 22, 2012
6	China issues framework for settling Syrian crisis	CNN Wire Staff	March 4, 2012
7	China urges the U.S. to tread carefully on 'core interests'	Jaime A. FlorCruz, CNN	March 6, 2012
8	Clashes erupt in Syria, activists say, as leaders meet in Saudi Arabia for talks	CNN Wire Staff	March 31, 2012
9	Clinton calls for tougher U.N. steps against Syria	Elise Labott and Joe Vaccarello, CNN	April 20, 2012
10	Daraa: The spark that lit the Syrian flame	Joe Sterling, CNN	March 1, 2012

11	EU slaps new sanctions on Syria	CNN Wire Staff	May 14, 2012
12	Europe planning new Syria sanctions	David Wilkinson, CNN	January 19, 2012
13	Expert: No end in sight for Syrian crisis	CNN	January 6, 2012
14	Fresh diplomatic efforts target Syria	CNN Wire Staff	February 29, 2012
15	General Assembly passes resolution on Syria as deaths mount	CNN Wire Staff	February 17, 2012
16	In Damascus, street protests and diplomacy	Joe Sterling, CNN	February 19, 2012
17	Iran denies shipping weapons to Syria through Turkey	Ivan Watson and Yesim Comert, CNN	January 14, 2012
18	Killings persist in Syria as Arab League arrives for mission	Mohamed Fadel Fahmy	December 22, 2011
19	Killing continues in Syria, Arab League says	Mohamed Fadel Fahmy, for CNN	January 2, 2012
20	McCain calls for U.S. military leadership on Syria	CNN Wire Staff	June 18, 2012
21	More violence, protests in Syria as U.S., Turkish leaders discuss aiding opposition	CNN Wire Staff	March 25, 2012
22	Nations want 'tsunami wave' of pressure on al-Assad	Elise Labott, CNN	February 25, 2012
23	One year later, Syria still boiling	CNN Wire Staff	March 16, 2012

24	Russia offers new U.N. resolution on Syria	CNN Wire Staff	December 15, 2011
25	Russia, China veto U.N. action on Syria; opposition group calls for strike	CNN Wire Staff	February 5, 2012
26	Should the world intervene in Syria?	Bryony Jones, CNN	December 15, 2011
27	Syrian opposition group: More than 5,800 died in 2011	CNN Wire Staff	January 1, 2012
28	Syria draws U.N. ire as it heads toward 'war'	CNN Wire Staff	February 14, 2012
29	Syria to hold constitutional referendum amid raging violence	CNN Wire Staff	February 26, 2012
30	Syria: How will year-old conflict play out?	Peter Wilkinson, CNN	March 16, 2012
31	Syria: Who would take over after al-Assad?	Holly Yan, CNN	March 27, 2012
32	Syria: Battle for the cities	Ivan Watson, Omar al Muqdad and Shiyar Sayed Mohamed	June 12, 2012
33	Syria exposes cool spots in U.S.-Russia ties	Matt Smith, CNN	June 19, 2012
34	U.N. to consider call for Syrian president to step down	CNN Wire Staff	January 31, 2012
35	U.N. takes another try at Syria resolution	CNN Wire Staff	February 11, 2012

36	U.N. condemns Syrian killings; toll in massacre rises as violence goes on	CNN Wire Staff	May 28, 2012
37	U.S. military chief dubious about arming Syrian rebels	CNN Wire Staff	February 20, 2012
38	Violence rages in Syria despite high-level diplomacy	CNN Wire Staff	April 5, 2012
39	Where is Syria crisis heading?	Nick Thompson, CNN	February 1, 2012
40	Why China, Russia won't condemn Syrian regime	Holly Yan, CNN	February 5, 2012
41	Why Syria should matter to Americans	Ashley Fantz, CNN	April 10, 2012
42	World powers plan to forge aid package for Syria	Elise Labott, CNN	February 23, 2012

**Table B. Literature Review: Fox News Articles Relevant to Syrian conflict 2011-2012**

#	Article title	Author	Published Date
1	Activists Say Dozens Of Bodies Dumped In Syria	Fox News	December 6, 2011
2	Al Qaeda on rise in Syria, has 'marriage of convenience' with Iran, US intelligence director says	Fox News	February 17, 2012
3	Annan calls level of Syria violence 'unacceptable,' diplomats say	Fox News	May 8, 2012
4	Arab efforts to stem Syrian bloodshed in turmoil	Fox News	January 24, 2012

5	Arab League: Syria commits crimes against humanity	Fox News	March 13, 2012
6	Assad says Syria is fighting foreign mercenaries	Fox News	May 16, 2012
7	Both sides in Syria violating cease-fire	Fox News	May 1, 2012
8	Children Among the Dead in Syria Crackdown	Fox News	December 9, 2011
9	China leaves Syrian envoy in place, urges peace	Fox News	May 30, 2012
10	Clinton urges UN to back anti-Assad resolution despite Russian resistance	Fox News	January 31, 2012
11	Clinton calls on Russia to stop arming Assad regime	Judson Berger,   Fox News	June 13, 2012
12	Dempsey: Syria 'much different' from Libya, 'big players' involved in conflict	Fox News	February 14, 2012
13	Head of UN mission in Syria urges halt to violence	Fox news	April 29, 2012
14	How the White House Sees Situation in Syria as Different than Libya	Kimberly Schwandt,   Fox News	April 25, 2011
15	Kofi Annan warns of risk of civil war in Syria	Fox News	May 8, 2012
16	Massacre in Syrian Town, With at Least 100 Killed, Activists Say	Fox News	December 21, 2011
17	McCain: US inability to help Syria 'embarrassing'	Fox News	May 31, 2012

18	Military leaders say US will be ready if needed in Syria but insist diplomacy remains best option	Fox News	April 20, 2012
19	Obama Sending U.S. Ambassador Back to Syria	Fox News	December 6, 2011
20	Obama Administration Seeks to Remove Syria From Human Rights Committee	Ben Evansky,   Fox News	January 6, 2012
21	Obama pledges continued pressure on Assad as regime pounds rebel-held areas in central Syria	Fox News	February 25, 2012
22	Pentagon: 'No silver bullet' for Syrian crisis	Fox News	April 19, 2012
23	Relations worsening between religious groups in Syria, activists say	Fox News	May 13, 2012
24	Russia says it won't intervene militarily in Syria	Fox News	March 14, 2012
25	Russia, China block anti-Assad resolution at UN amid Syria bloodshed	Fox News	February 4, 2012
26	Splits in 'Friends of Syria' group may help embattled leader Assad	Ben Evansky,   Fox News	March 30, 2012
27	Russia's foreign minister says both sides in Syria to blame for massacre	Fox News	May 28, 2012
28	Senator rebukes Pentagon for contract with Russian firm 'arming the Assad regime'	Fox News	June 11, 2012
29	Strong signs Iran is supplying Syria with weapons, US says	Fox News	January 17, 2012

30	Syria Says It Accepts Arab League Observer Request	Fox News	December 5, 2011
31	Syria's President Says He Won't Give Up Power	Fox News	January 10, 2012
32	Syria's President Assad grants amnesty for crimes committed during unrest	Fox News	January 15, 2012
33	Syria rejects new Arab League plan to end violence	Fox News	January 23, 2012
34	Syrian rebels refuse to give 'written guarantees' to Assad regime	Fox News	April 8, 2012
35	Syrian rebels target security officials in capital	Fox News	April 24, 2012
36	Syria holds parliament vote; opposition boycotts	Fox News	May 7, 2012
37	Syrian leader Assad says terrorists are behind unrest	Fox News	May 17, 2012
38	Syrian forces, opposition both abusing children, carrying out unlawful killings, UN panel charges	Fox news	May 25, 2012
39	UN envoy Annan: Syrian crisis can 't be allowed to drag on	Fox News	March 26, 2012
40	UN council reaches tentative agreement on Syria	Fox News	April 20, 2012
41	UN calls for talks to end violence in Syria as Ban Ki-Moon links Al Qaeda to attacks	Fox News	May 18, 2012

42	UN chief cites unacceptable violence in Syria	Fox News	May 25, 2012
43	UN diplomat: Annan deputy appeals for Syria talks	Fox News	May 30, 2012
44	US Ramps Up Criticism of Assad Regime in Syria	Fox News	December 21, 2011
45	US condemns Syria's Assad after dictator vows 'iron hand' to crush protesters	Fox News	January 10, 2012
46	US searches for strategy to halt Syria violence	Fox News	February 8, 2012
47	US preparing plan to vet members of Free Syrian Army to determine if suitable to receive arms transfers	Fox News	May 25, 2012
48	US Syria policy a tacit nod to Assad's firm grip	Fox News	April 19, 2012
49	US, Russia discuss Syria ahead of Geneva talks	Fox News	June 29, 2012
50	Violence Across Syria Kills 25 as Defectors Battle Regime Forces	Fox News	December 3, 2011
51	Violence in Syria spills over into Lebanon	Fox News	May 21, 2012

52	White House acknowledges cease-fire in Syria not working, says time to try another tactic	Fox News	May 4, 2012
53	White House says Syria-led political transition would prevent civil war	Fox News	June 16, 2012
54	White House Toes Fine Line on Syrian Conflict and Russian Relationship	Wes Barrett,   Fox News	June 13, 2012
55	World powers worry Syria sliding to civil war	Fox News	May 30, 2012