A Framing Analysis of News Coverage Regarding Iran's Nuclear Deal:

The Case of CNN and Fox News on Iran post-JCPOA (2015-2018)

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Abstract

This paper intends to examine the way in which major American media have framed Iran's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the JCPOA). Following the nuclear agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the 5+1 powers in Vienna, the event was significantly depicted on the two major mainstream media outlets of the United States, namely CNN and Fox News. The study examines these media through framing as its theoretical approach. Framing, which is a prominent theory in communication and media studies, is concerned with the presentation of an issue in media. Using framing analysis, the study is based on data collected thorough an analysis of the JCPOA relevant transcripts broadcasted on CNN and Fox News during four strategic events within a three-year period, starting from July 14, 2015. The collected data was analyzed by ATLAS.TI software to classify and place the selected frames into respective tables. By analyzing approximately 1200 deconstructed themes, the findings reveal the main coding-news of CNN and Fox News as Iranophobia, Iran's containment, Advocates vs. Opponents, US approach towards JCPOA, Iran's nuclear program, Iran's economy, Role of Israel as well as the JCPOA achievements. The present paper concludes that under the impact of politicized frames in the US outlets, Iran's nuclear program has been distorted, framed and consequently represented to the audience.

Keywords: CNN, Fox News, Framing, IAEA, Iran Nuclear Agreement, JCPOA, Media Skills, Nuclear Deal, Nuclear Program

1. Introduction

As the world watched Iran's nuclear negotiations with the 5+1 powers (the permanent Security Council members including the US, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany) in Vienna, the Palais Coburg hotel turned into the worldwide newsroom to transmit the breaking news on Iran's nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015. The JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) was the culmination of years of controversy and diplomatic activities regarding Iran's nuclear program. Upon the agreement, Iran agreed to gradually eliminate its supply of enriched uranium to reduce nuclear activities as well as to cut approximately two-thirds of its centrifuges for 13 years to receive relief from the US, European Union, and United Nations Security Council nuclear-related sanctions (Dahl, 2013). The Islamic Republic of Iran has long insisted that its nuclear program is civil, legitimate, legal, and authorized in the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which upholds its members the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The achievement was believed to pave the way to the normalization of international relations with Iran and the West Asian countries, and create new chapters of cooperation between Iran, the EU, and the US. The legitimacy of Iran's nuclear program seemed therefore to have been recognized by the West, which profoundly impacted the previous allegedly threatening concerns attributed to the country.

Convening the leaders in Vienna to address Iran's controversial nuclear issue, and significantly covering the event in in the US media were aimed at promoting Washington policies in shaping the audience's views. As a subset of the US policy toward Iran, the JCPOA is closely related to public opinion, particularly within the Western critical view of Iran's nuclear controversies and allegations. However, regarding the significance of the JCPOA

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achievement, framing theory has been best applied to investigate how JCPOA developments are viewed, produced, shaped, and broadcast in the two most-watched US outlets, the CNN and Fox News.

Media, as a developed mean of human communication, has played a significant role in the process of power formation. In the modern world, the identification, interpretation and evaluation of socio-political factors is heavily influenced by media; in fact, media is believed to be a powerful element in shaping the legitimation or de-legitimation of powers in political science. The development of information and communication technologies has become more salient in this concern. Marshall Mac Luhan, the Canadian communications theorist, pioneered to use the term media as communication channels (as cited in Roncallo-Dow, 2016). According to scholars in the field of media, by using various media effects, certain attitudes, mentalities and visions contributing to legitimation or de-legitimation of special political events could be constructed. Lukyanova argues "by using framing in their reports, mass media, autonomously or together with political actors, are able to shape their own political reality, manipulate public opinion and influence political power" (2018, p. 1). Lasswell (1927) believes that the framing model could operate like a needle or bullet, which targets its audience or viewers to leave an impact on them; these impacts may be immediate, persuasive, physically or behaviorally evident. Robinson (2019) investigates the way in which media framing could manipulate socio-political developments, and refers to the magic bullet theory to demonstrate the power of media effects.

Using framing analysis, this paper intends to examine the JCPOA developments in the US media. The study investigates the

underlying factors regarding the use of certain frames by CNN and Fox News for shaping the mentality of their audience and transmitting their perceived framed messages to the public. More importantly, under the impact of hostile US-Iran relations in recent decades, depicted by framing analysis findings, the theory helps in analyzing the media skills and procedures through which the two leading US outlets have framed Iran and the JCPOA developments to impact the audience at home and abroad.

Generally, framing could be considered a significant media technique to make the various dimensions of the targeted issue salient to the audience; it would be more controversial when media skills come to challenging political issues such as Iran's nuclear conflict. Literature review of related content reveals a considerable number of academic articles on the ways in which framing techniques have been used in the media coverage of particular events. Houston, Pfefferbaum & Elle (2012) employ various semantic framing terms to explore the ways in which the repetition of certain words would unconsciously convey certain messages, purposes or interpretations of various issues to the audience. To disclose the real image of terrorist groups in the media, Smith (2016) has conducted a research on "Framing Daesh Failures and Consequences" and found differences between American public opinions and the present administration attitudes on ISIS. Anne Armstrong, Krasny & Schuldt (2018) discuss the different aspects of framing (wording, equivalency, emphasis, metaphor) on climate change messages followed by threatening natural hazards and crucial natural disasters to deeply influence readers' mental implication and interpretation.

In addition, a significant number of academic studies have focused on the use of framing on the media coverage of Iran's politics and society. Robert Entman (1991) uses framing analysis

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on the US coverage of international news by contrasting narratives of the KAL (Korean Air Flight 858) and Iran Air incidents. Johannes Scherling (2016), reviews more than a dozen articles and editorials published/broadcasted in British and American news sources about Iran's nuclear program, and provides an analysis on the way in which the nuclear conflict between the western countries and Iran has been framed in the Western press. Farideh Dada (2007) examines the framing analysis of Iran in three major American newspapers and magazines i.e., *Newsweek, Time*, and *The New York Times*. Tom-Jakob Röker (2017) investigates the media framing of Iran during the 2003-2015 nuclear crisis by analyzing media framing of Iran in *Der Spiegel* and *Time Magazine*. Finally, Zia, Batool *et al*. have conducted a framing analysis of US Print media on the nuclear ambiguity of Israel vs. Iran (2017) by evaluating the coverage of Israeli and Iranian nuclear issue in the US print media.

While it has been long assumed that the JCPOA has been framed in CNN and Fox News - representing the US Democrats and Republicans policies respectively- the study attempts to decode the process that media employed to frame Iran's nuclear agreement. Table 1 illustrates the main events that were selected to examine the framing of Iran after the nuclear deal, as broadcasted in CNN and Fox News coverages.

Table 1: Main Events

No	Date	Events
1	14 July 2015	JCPOA, signed in Vienna
2	20 Jan 2017	President Donald Trump elected
3	19 May 2017	President Hassan Rouhani re-elected
4	8 May 2018	US withdrawal of JCPOA

Using framing as both the theoretical foundation and method of analysis, this paper attempts to provide empirical responses to address the ways in which the JCPOA has been framed in the US media.

To examine the motives and reasons triggering the media manipulation process, this research intends to deconstruct the framing constituents of CNN and Fox News under the political influence of the Republicans and Democrats and the ways in which they have focused on Iran's nuclear agreement within the framework of specific events over a particular period of time, as depicted. Thus, the present article addresses the following questions:

RQ1. How do CNN and Fox New depict and frame Iran in general, and Iran's nuclear deal in particular through their daily news coverage from 2015 to 2018?

RQ2. What are the major framings of CNN and Fox News when depicting Iran in the post-nuclear deal period?

RQ3. Are there similarities/ differences in the framing of Iran after the nuclear deal in CNN and Fox News?

2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Framing theory has been approved as an academic and systemic mean to investigate communication and media studies. It involves the social construction of a social phenomenon – by mass media sources, political or social movements, political leaders, or other actors and organizations. Broadly defined, framing refers to the ways in which mass media organize and present issues and events in terms of "patterns of presentation, selection, emphasis, and exclusion" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Frames are used to influence the

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perception of news by various audience. The underlying belief is that participation in any discursive community necessarily influences an individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. The concept of framing was first introduced by Erving Goffman (1974) in his *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of the Experience*, where he defined frame as "schemata of interpretation" employed "to locate, perceive, identify and label" instances and incidents (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). For him, framing is the means of (de)constructing the meaning; it is not limited to communications, but can be used in various fields such as psychology, sociology, and political science (Benford R. &., 2000). Goffman's understanding of framing is similar to that of Reese's, who considers frames as "organizing principles" in a culturally shared context that utilizes the persisting symbols overtime to "meaningfully structure" the worldview in a society (Reese, 2001, p. 11). Elsewhere, Reese and Lewis define frames as, "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (2007, p. 150).

In social sciences, "framing comprises concepts and theoretical perspectives on how individuals, groups, and societies organize, perceive, and communicate about reality" (Druckman, 2001). Robert Entman (1993) argues that framing is defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected and given greater emphasis or importance. The problem is then addressed, its causes are identified, moral judgments are proposed, and appropriate solutions and actions are raised (Brantner & Lobinger, 2013). Leading media strategies are therefore used to systemize a series of proposed selective frames to lead the messages to influence the public and individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior.

Sheafer and Gabay define framing as, "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and solution" (2009, p. 26). Neuman, Just, and Crigler give a general definition based on a constructivist perspective: "They give the story a 'spin'... Considering their organizational and morality constraints, professional judgments, and certain judgments about the audience" (as cited in Scheufele D. , 1999).

Moreover, framing is attributed to agenda-setting and helps expand research to focus on the essence of the available issues rather than on a specific topic. News media emphasize a certain attribute of an object/topic/event, which has a particular resonance with the public, and provides people with cues to modify their perceived salience of the object that possess the attribute (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). News media can not only shape the perceived importance of attributes and objects, but also bunch an object with attribute(s) and make them salient in the public's mind at the same time (Chyi & McCombs, 2004, p.257)

The framing theory investigates the media attention to particular events and then situates them within a framework of meaning. Framing considers an important issue since it can leave a significant impact, and therefore, the concept of framing is promoted to establishments. Goffman in "Frame Analysis" discusses that people usually are interested in commenting on what is going to happen in their world through what is regarded as the "primary framework" (1974, p. 21-22). He argues that there are two priorities within primary frameworks: natural and social (p. 22), both of which play the role of helping individuals interpret data. In this way, achievements can be identified in a more developed social context. The difference between the two is functional (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2). According to certain sociologists,

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the social construction of collective action frames involves "public discourse, that is, the interface of media discourse and interpersonal interaction; persuasive communication during mobilization campaigns by movement organizations, their opponents and countermovement organizations; and consciousness-raising during episodes of collective action" (Klandermans, 1997, p. 45).

The media industry is professionally assigned to cover impartial reports from around the world; as argued by Wilkins, "the media constructs the news within the boundaries of a particular viewpoint (frame)" which may cause the perception of a news report to change depending on the source (2015, p.62). Since the US media news impacts the audience's mindset, framing is represented as a theory that highlights the way in which media strategists and actors make some aspects of the situation, individuals, comments, images, and developments salient, and, consequently underestimate the other points.

2. 1. Data collecting process

To analyze the media coverage of Iran's nuclear agreement, which is commonly known as the JCPOA in CNN and Fox News, framing analysis functions as both theory and method. Using framing as our methodology, the present study examines the JCPOA coverage of the two US outlets affiliated with the two rival political orientations. Inevitably, the analysis involves the compare-contrast schemata of the Democrats and Republicans' points of view on the JCPOA**.** The data for the paper is collected through a narrow selection of the related news on the given dates and events from both outlets. To establish a more inclusively holistic view of the main events, the article has extended the period of analysis of each event to fifteen days: one week before and one week after the

event**.** The archives of the two sites were therefore investigated on the related news in the given time period.

Due to the low frequency of the term the JCPOA – as the most significant keyword- to identify the relevant transcripts, other keywords such as "Iran deal", "Iran agreement" or "Iran nuclear negotiations" were searched. Obviously, when the keyword is too broad to cover the targeted news, many other irrelevant subjects, words and headlines are expected to come up. Finally, by searching "Iran" as the keyword, out of 1,037 total news, 419 pieces of news relevant to the JCPOA were found. This includes 145 cases for CNN and 274 for Fox news as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Primary Data Frequency

No	Date	Event	CNN			Fox News		
			TN	TP	TSN	TN	TP	TSN
1	14 July 2015	JCPOA, signed in Vienna	148	88	48	322	176	138
2	19 May 2017	President Donald Trump elected	29	29	16	64	29	28
3	19 May 2017	President Hassan Rouhani re-elected	21	18	12	79	32	28
4	8 May 2018	US withdrawal from JCPOA	173	83	69	201	65	80
Total			371	218	145	666	302	274
Total news: 1,037			371			666		
Total pages: 520			218			302		
Total selected news: 419			145			274		

TN= Total news

TP=Total pages

TSN=Total selected news

To support the argument, the process began with searching the related news about the JCPOA on the given dates. In the following steps, the texts were extracted, coded, sorted , based on a data-based framework. Finally, the main part of the analysis, which is the framing process of an array of data including the headlines of the newscasts and complete scripts of the news releases were be performed.

To analyze the data, a software was required to systematically locate, code, and annotate findings, to weigh and evaluate their importance, and to visualize complex relations between them. ATLAS.ti Software was selected as a suitable medium, which is mostly, but not exclusively, used for quantitative data analysis. The data was analyzed through a qualitative analysis, which needs extreme engagement with the text in order to obtain a holistic view of the data, which that eventually enables the researcher to identify frames.

Compared to other methods of quantitative analysis- which often focus only on the repetition of certain keywords, phrases, or metaphors- the present study identified frames based on both implicit and explicit meanings of messages (Tankard, Jr., 2001). The paper also used Baldwin Van Gorp's (2010) methodological approach to framing analysis. According to Van Gorp, what makes a "piece of news a frame is its wide circulation and its consistent consumption in different places and circumstances" (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 94). Van Gorp bases his analysis on an inductive coding process with three coding procedures: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. First, in open coding, with no "pre-defined coding instrument", the choices that the journalist has made to manufacture the news narrative or the "reasoning devices" he used to frame an issue are extracted by the researcher. The researcher is not expected, thus, to explore the subject of the News, nor to

examine the factuality of its data or scientific standards (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 95).

Second, to draw the axial coding, the researcher collected and organized the open codes. The obtained codes were rather diverse and scattered. It was therefore essential to determine the axial patterns and the primary categories of ideas around which the logical and argumentation devices have taken shape. Finally, to draw the axial coding, the researcher collected and organized the open codes. The obtained codes were rather diverse and scattered. So, it is essential to find out the axial patterns and the primary categories of ideas around which the logical and argumentation devices have taken shape. Finally, at the level of the selective coding, through a constant comparative method, which focused on the similarities and differences among the identified codes and categories, a number of mutually exclusive "frame packages" were be developed. The ultimate product of this analytical process was to find frame packages that were shared by the selected texts and demonstrations.

3. Frames and Codes

The data collected in the present study reveal the ways in which the two leading US outlets have framed Iran's nuclear agreement under the effects of US major political ideologies in order to shape the public opinion at home and abroad. While there are diverse approaches for deriving frames, the present paper used an inductive approach to derive the list of frames from the corpus of analysis. In an inductive approach, the corpus is analyzed- either quantitatively or qualitatively- to develop discrete frames. The frames used for analysis are identified, described and characterized, and then subjected to further examination (through coding).

The present study thus, derived frames based on the frequency of the themes related to Iran's nuclear deal in the two media under study. Choosing frames based on their frequency reflects the political media attitudes of the US main stream media, either Democrats and Republicans, toward Iran in general and Iran's nuclear agreement in particular. Therefore, based on the highest frequency of different themes, the following frames were eventually determined, as illustrated in Table 3:

Table 3: Main News Categories

No	News Categories
1	Iranophobia
2	Iran's containment
3	Advocates vs. Opponents
4	US approach towards JCPOA
5	Iran's nuclear program
6	Iran's economy
7	Role of Israel
8	JCPOA achievements

It should be noted that frame describes the cogent " context" wherein an issue is presented, and thus any communicative text includes a frame that contextualizes the issue. According to Entman (1993), in order to categorize a text into frames, the researcher

should look for references that implicitly or explicitly refer to the same issue with different wordings (codes). Following Gamson and Modigliani (1987), anything in a text that contributes to one coherent interpretation of the focal issue would be considered as part of the frame. Thus, codes are created based on latent and manifested meanings, through which all the words that refer to a specific frame are counted. Table 4 depicts the news categories of frames (selected based on frequency) and codes (including both latent and manifest meanings) in Fox News and CNN.

Table 4: News Categories

CNN			News Categories	Fox News	
No	C	F		F	C
1	231	10	Iranophobia	9	151
2	154	10	Iran's containment	9	114
3	122	6	Advocates vs. Opponents	6	92
4	107	5	US approach towards JCPOA	3	43
5	67	6	Iran's nuclear program	4	37
6	50	5	Iran's economy	4	26
7	30	4	Role of Israel	23	4
8	26	4	JCPOA achievements	0	0
__	787	50	Total	58	467

F= Frame

C= Code

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3. 1. Iranophobia

The most frequent coding term reflects anti- Iranian sentiments and refers to feelings and expression of hostility, hatred, discrimination, or prejudice towards Iran and its culture. The US media portrayal of Iran's nuclear agreement or the JCPOA has been framed from different political, economic, social, and security points of view / aspects. The framing process has been constructed in a way to induce an implicit skepticism in the public opinion.

CNN covers an emotional report on a Baha'i woman in prison, for whom poetry was [a] best friend in the Iranian jail; it attempts to convey the message that minorities, especially Baha'i people's condition in Iran should be considered as violations of human rights, freedom of beliefs and religious minorities. The reporter adds that "She had been arrested, interrogated and tortured for her faith, a religion the Islamic Republic of Iran considers heresy" (Basu, 2017). Emphatically, Fox News under the limpid title of " Crackdown on Christianity: Iran sentences 18 to prison over faith" resonates frames of " faith" "ideology" and " suppression" to remind the viewers of "prisoner of conscious" in Iran (Weinthal, 2015).

Iranophobia, which includes dozens of manipulated frequencies, is itself categorized into some major frames attributed to Iran, including "concealment", "human rights abuses", "IRGC provocations", "world threat", "terrorism", "Israel threat" and anti-US interests., The US media frequently employs Iranophobia to demonize Iran, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Iranophobia

No	Major Frames	CNN	FOX NEWS
1	Anti-US interests	14	13
2	Concealment	11	9
3	Human rights abuses**:** Minority groups: Bahai's, Kurds, Sunnis Prisoners: Journalists, activists, dissidents, critics Suppression: political activists, freedom and social movements	10	0
4	Influence**:** Military**:** Advisory assistance, training Financial**:** Shia militants beef up Ideology**:** Media, broadcasting, extremism	29	5
5	IRGC Provocations**:** Provocative moves**:** US naval bullying, extortion	30	28
6	Israel threatening**:** Nuclear ambitions, Shia militants, Warmongering	53	25
7	Untrustworthiness	14	19
8	Terrorism**:** International and state-sponsored terrorism Rogue state	16	23
9	Violence and Expansionism**:** Sectarian conflicts**:** Houthis, Iraqi militants	35	21
10	World threat	19	8
	Total	231	161

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3. 2. Iran Containment

"Iran Containment" is the second news category, on which both outlets have relatively equal coverage. Containment, along with engagement are considered as an important strategy in the US foreign policy. The strategy of "containment" is best known as a major US foreign policy during the Cold War to prevent the spread of communism after the end of the World War II. Using the term "containment" for policies related to Iran hints the audience to perceive the country as defiant: in order to prevent Iran's provocative actions, the US is justifiably entitled to contain it. By frequent use of "Iran containment" in the news as a major frame , CNN depicts the presence and even the use of military force in the region as a justifiable act. For instance, the news states, "with latest airstrikes, US signals to Iran: Containment is back" (Hassan, 2017).

Similar to CNN, Fox News, which represents conservative views of the US administration, clearly zooms on the frame of "containment" to pretend the way in which the strategy would effectively deter Iran from nuclear ambitions as "the Trump administration has a strategy to deal with geopolitical challengers … especially those who want nuclear weapons… It's called containment" (Kazianis, 2018b). Elsewhere, CNN highlights an "Anti-Iran coalition" framing by putting Iran on one side and " Israel and Arab world" on the other, stating that "He [Trump] will travel to Jerusalem and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where he is expected to reassure Israel and America's Sunni Gulf allies that his administration is committed to containing and deterring Iran" (Weiss & Hassan, 2017). This statement could be characterized as a multi-frame combination and considered as the most challenging issue in a holistic account of the corpus data analysis. The issue semantically implies a string of justified measures mostly

determined by US officials against Iran. The definition metaphorically manipulates the audience to view Iran as a rogue state that has to be blamed by the hegemonic powers due to its US-claimed atrocities. Additionally, containment is one of the most frequent frames (in terms of quantity and quality), which includes the longest cluster of codes and sub-codes. This implies that through persuasive effects, the US administration attempts to influence public opinions, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Iran containment

No	Major Frames	CNN	FOX NEWS
1	Anti-Iran coalition: Israel pressure Arab world: Saudi Arabia EU: UK, France	7	5
2	Arms embargo: Unconventional weapons Nuclear weapons development Iran-backed militants	4	9
3	Maximized pressure policy: Arms & ballistic missiles Oil sale Militants finance: aiding Bashar Assad Foreign firms limit: Western Companies sanction Discouragement	19	12
4	Carrot and Stick: Leverage tools policy	3	0

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No	Major Frames	CNN	FOX NEWS
5	Isolation: Deal withdrawal Gas pipeline permission denied International trade constrained	17	6
6	Nuclear inspections: IAEA verifications Regular access: Surveillance system Uranium mining tracking	16	15
7	Psycho war: Extremism ideology: Al-Qaida,11/9 US-Israel destruction Iran demonizing: labelling & accusations	9	9
8	Sanctions: Entity-legal legal entities, individuals Travel restrictions IRGC blacklist Oil sale Industries Industrial products Assets blockade	47	32
9	US monitoring	22	17
10	US warning: US-interests: US-marine threats Militant beef up build-up	10	9
	Total	154	114

3. 3. Advocates vs. Opponents of the JCPOA

"Advocates vs. opponents" as the third news category, had been deconstructed from different angles. It describes the different actors of the JCPOA through a compare-contrast model: those who are in favor or against the deal The framing construction will become more salient once one recognizes the way in which the friends and foes of Iran's nuclear agreement have been framed through the US media. CNN, considered as a liberal media, implies the consensus on the JCPOA, stating that, "the US to move forward with the international community to implement the agreement to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon" (Barrett, Raju, Walsh, & Lobi, 2015).

Fox News, which represents the US Republicans' opposition towards the JCPOA, warns about Iran's potential threats and reports, "Iran will likely continue its efforts to blackmail the international community, pocketing concessions without altering the malign behavior that spurred the crisis in the first place" (Heinonen, 2018). The majority of the US Republicans would call the deal a mishap as they had already framed Iran as untrustworthy for possessing a nuclear program.

This analysis indicates that the JCPOA does not move to establish peace and security in the region; on the contrary, it pushes Iran to become more violent against American interests and those of its allies. Fox News believes that, "Iran's seeking many billions of dollars in ransom to free US hostages" (Kredo, 2016). Contrary to these hawkish stances, CNN, as the pacifier dovish, rather states, "Iran unleash" as "Democrats -- and some Republicans -- unhappy with Trump's decision to withdraw from Iran deal" (Diaz & Fox, 2018). The resulting figures of the major frames of the two media on the "JCPOA advocates vs. opponents" are relatively equal, as outlined in Table 7:

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Table 7: Advocates vs. Opponents

No	Major Frames	CNN	FOX NEWS
1	JCPOA advocates**:** US**:** No alternative deal Nuclear war prevention Iran under control Democrat's win Trade targets Regional stability Iran**:** Socio-economy stability Political victory Regional de-escalating concerns	46	12
2	IAEA Reacts: No diversion Compliance & Verification US nuclear watchdog	12	18
3	Trump withdrawal mistake**:** Destabilizing in region Peace and security Necessity to monitor Iran	15	12
4	Europeans oppose withdrawal	5	16
5	Deal opponents: US: Iran cash oppose**:** quid pro quo, ransom Hawkish Republicans Appeasement policy Lift opposition**:** bullying Iran**:** Hardliners**:** principles violation**:** US hegemony Israel**:** diabolic intentions**:** Iran unleash Saudi Arabia**:** reluctance UAE**:** skeptical	31	21
6	GOP vs. Democratic Party	13	13
	Total	122	92

3. 4. US Approach towards the JCPOA

The "US approach toward the JCPOA" as the fourth major frame, focuses on analyzing the characteristics in which the US attitude toward Iran nuclear agreement has framed up. The agreement's construction formation and concession were initiated and achieved in the US administration of Democrats, but its foremost second half was consequently overwhelmed by the Republicans led by hawkish US President Donald Trump. In spite of the fact that the majority of Democrats are advocates of the JCPOA, a few of them feel worried about Iran's intentions, as CNN says "while the Islamic Republic claims it is only interested in developing nuclear power for peaceful purposes, its behavior points to its desire to keep its options open to develop atomic bombs" (Heinonen, 2018). Democrats still raised major concerns -- namely over the way in which Iranian nuclear sites could be inspected, and the way in which other countries would react if the U.S. walked away from the deal and whether rolling back sanctions against Iran would empower the country and threaten Israel.

Influenced by Trump's critical statements, Fox News focuses on "bad deal" as the most frequent fame resonated by the US president. In reporting news related to Iran's nuclear agreement, Fox News, under the effects of hawkish conservatives' approach, is strongly critical of the agreement and calls it a grave loss.

While CNN says "there is no other better way to prevent Iran from moving covertly to build a nuclear weapon" (Collinson, 2015), Fox News portrays Iran as "a rouge country in pursuit of possessing nuclear power […] firing missiles into American locations [….] terrorist acts in the Middle East, and threatening Israel (Weber, 2018). Table 8 illustrates the US approach toward the JCPOA in CNN and Fox News.

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Table 8: US Approach toward the JCPOA

No	Major Frames	CNN	Fox News
1	Pro-US interest	5	0
2	Sectarian conflicts: Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia Trump's support for Sunnis Shia militants labelling	8	4
3	JCPOA withdrawal Bad deal: Obama's bad legacy One-sided deal US loss Iran alleged state terrorism Iran threating Israel & US allies	26	20
4	US Concerns: Close allies divide Iran markets constrained Iran nuclear power	39	0
5	Hostile stances: Trump Shiite phobia Trump provocative acts	29	19
	Total	107	43

3. 5. Iran's nuclear program

"Iran's nuclear program," the fifth news categorization and a significant motif, is constructed of different components, each playing a vital role in making the news and shaping the views. By framing "access to Atomic bomb," Fox News argues "Tehran made easily reversible concessions on its nuclear program that allow it to shorten the timeline to a nuclear bomb" (Fleitz, 2016).

Elsewhere, Fox News underscores that the agreement is designed to slow or halt any attempt by Iran to "produce nuclear weapons", in exchange for the lifting of economic and other

sanctions by the United States and other countries. The analytical framing indicates that despite the fact that the agreement is assumed to be a win-win deal by most of the US Democrats, one could still hear and find many opponents and hostile voices in the US foundations institutions to consider it as blackmail granted to Iran. Once the audience is manipulated with the framing impacts, the media can claim that the mission of shaping the public views is accomplished. Under the effects of negative framings about Iran and its nuclear activities, public opinions might get skeptical that the JCPOA is a real threat that would consequently result in the development of an atomic war. In a conclusive bipartisan analysis, which is politically constructed from the two sides, CNN believes, "to debate on Iran, one side was a strikingly broad consensus of nearly the entire arms control community on the opposing side, the Iran hawk community, is finding ways to isolate and ultimately destroy Iran's clerical regime, by military force if necessary, nuclear program or not" (Logan, 2015). As portrayed in the US leading media, the issue of the JCPOA has been framed in a way that the diplomatic approach should be based on explicit incentives and threats to stop the deadly destruction of nuclear proliferation. Fox News believes that "the Iran deal is dead -- Iran killed it" (Timmerman, 2018). Generally, Iran's nuclear program has been framed relatively through the impacts of framings as "access to the atomic bomb," "ballistic missiles," "nuclear threat," and "nuclear weapon." Table 9 illustrates the above-mentioned arguments:

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Table 9: Iran's Nuclear Program

No.	Major Frames	CNN	Fox News
1	Access to Atomic bomb: Uranium stockpile exceed Inspector's rejection Israel allegations Lack of transparency	24	14
2	Ballistic missiles: US-interests-based threats Long-distance targets	9	9
3	Enrichment Uranium: Nuclear missiles and bombs	12	6
4	Nuclear threats: Atomic power Shi'ism sensations	7	8
5	Nuclear weapons: Nuclear weapons prevention Brain and Business vs. Nuke	9	0
	Total	67	37

3. 6. Iran Economy

This news category unveils another significant frame titled "Iran's economy", which has been placed at the sixth place among the frames extracted in this paper. In fact, frames "reside in the news narrative's specific properties," such as the keywords, symbols, metaphors, and images that inspire those thinking about an event to perceive and understand it in a particular way (Entman, 1991). Therefore, the titles under the sub-framing of "business restrictions", "economy boost and relief" as well as "financial incomes and problems" overwhelm the triumph of the JCPOA by using "trade interaction" and warning of "sanction" to once again maintain the policy of "carrot and sticks" as a mean for threatening the future of the pact. According to Fox News, "European powers say the Islamic Republic 'not meeting' terms, threaten more sanctions" (Norman, 2018). To pacify the nuclear debates over Iran's agreement, CNN underscores "essential idea behind the deal is that in exchange for limits on its nuclear activities, Iran would get relief from "sanctions" while being allowed to "continue its atomic program for peaceful purposes" (Rocha & Wagner, 2018). Generally, the major frame under "Iran's economy" is expected to analyze the issue from different points of view, especially in the framework of motivational themes that have constructed the economic perspectives of the JCPOA. Additionally, CNN takes the bright side of the agreement to frame "optimism as Iran nuclear deal framework announced" (Labott, 2015). Fox News refers to Iran's challenging economy, reporting that "their economy can be held back in isolation for years – perhaps decades as they won't be able to get rich selling oil or gas" (Kazianis, 2018a).

This major frame of "Iran's economy" formulates specific determinants, which are displayed in table 10:

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Table 10: Iran Economy

NO	Major Frames	CNN	Fox News
1	Business restrictions: JCPOA collapse US warning companies EU concerns	4	0
2	Economy boost: Tourism Trade interaction	16	10
3	Economic crises relief: Export benefits Foreign companies	15	4
4	Financial incomes	2	5
5	Financial problems: Banking rules US sanctions US tough rules	13	7
	Total	50	26

3. 7. Role of Israel

The role of Israel is considered as the seventh major categorization that outlines the Israeli leaders' malicious intentions against Iran's nuclear agreement. Undoubtedly, Israel has been among the fiercest opponents of the nuclear talks, claiming that the world was making unreasonable concessions without getting enough in return from the Islamic Republic, who seeks what is claimed as overt belligerent intentions.

Fox News, influenced by explosive allegations of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, casts doubt on the agreement to argue that Tehran might have lied about its nuclear program and adherence to the deal (Pappas, 2018). Meanwhile, CNN cautiously attempts to frame Israel's worries over possible secret nuclear activities attributed to Iran, as it reports "after presenting what he called evidence of Iran's lies about its nuclear weapons program, Israel Prime Minister said he is sure President Trump will do the right thing over the next few days when it comes to the nuclear deal" (Ries & Rocha, 2018). Aligned with some of the Arab States, Netanyahu, who had been given the cold shoulder from the Obama administration, on the verge of wrapping up the nuclear deal with Iran, declares that he has to force the Jewish state to "defend itself, by itself" (Sultan, 2015). Connotatively, focusing on Netanyahu's hostile comment, it implies, as if the Jewish state has been under attack or aggression by Iran, to indicate that he is enforced to publicly claim that from now on, the state has to "defend" itself by itself and no longer is dependent on the US and probably the European leaders who convened to agree upon the JCPOA. Fox News announces "the Iran deal is likely doomed -- and that's good news for the US and Israel" (Kazianis, 2018a). The US media representing the two political ideologies have almost shared their common perspectives about Israel's approach toward Iran's nuclear agreement, which is constructed on the scope of several main themes including "hostility", "Israel destruction", nuclear weapon", "terrorism" as well as "distrust" on Iran, as illustrated in Table 11.

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Table 11: Role of Israel

NO	Major Frames	CNN	Fox News
1	Israel allegations	6	6
2	Israel concerns	6	9
3	Israel hostility	14	4
4	Israel provocations	4	4
	Total	30	23

3. 8. The JCPOA achievements

This analytical data framing is the eighth and last news category that is exclusively framed to explore the benefits of the agreement in Iran and abroad.

As displayed in the main themes, the JCPOA was believed to have gained achievements in de-escalating tensions, and promoting regional cooperation, and US-Iran rapprochement. Based on the previously mentioned achievements, CNN, in a conclusive approach to the JCPOA and the attributed successes argues, "a strikingly broad consensus of nearly the entire arms control community, recognizes what the deal can achieve in terms of nonproliferation and regional stability" (Logan, 2015). The media goes on to reveal the other major benefit of the Iran nuclear agreement as "On the opposing side is the Iran hawk community, which focused less on the nuclear issue than on finding ways to isolate and ultimately destroy Iran's clerical regime, by military force if necessary, nuclear program or not" (Justin, 2015).

From the former US administration's point of view, by framing

"legacy," Democrats intended to approve Obama administration's shuttle diplomacy, which could eventually lead to winning a major political achievement in the history of the United States; nevertheless, the US media still feels reluctant to waive "sanction" framing. Elsewhere in the former US president's comments, the term "achievement" is emphatically framed to recall Obama's word to the audience that the United States would "extend a hand if it's traditional foes willing to unclench their fist". Additionally, the code of "change" has also been frequently framed according to CNN quotes. The media will approve that the central promise of Obama's presidential campaign has undeniably come true following Iran's nuclear agreement; as CNN underscores, "the deal means that in exchange for limits on its nuclear activities, Iran would get relief from sanctions while being allowed to continue its atomic program for peaceful purposes" (Liptak, 2015). The collected data indicates that the issue of "the JCPOA achievements" is outlined into four main categories, as depicted in Table 12:

Table 12: JCPOA achievement

No.	Major Frames	CNN	Fox News
1	De-escalating tensions	4	0
2	Promoting regional cooperation	4	0
3	Promoting US JCPOA achievements: Diplomacy Democrats win Obama legacy	16	0
4	Promoting US-Iran rapprochement	2	0
	Total	26	0

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4. Conclusion

Using framing as the study's methodological and theoretical framework, the paper analyses CNN and Fox News's approach toward the JCPOA within four major events during the period from July 14, 2015 to May 8, 2018. This paper addresses three major questions with regard to framing Iran after the JCPOA. In order to answer the first research question regarding the ways in which CNN and Fox New depicted/framed Iran in general, and Iran's nuclear deal in particular, an inductive approach was used to derive the list of frames from the corpus of analysis. Eight frames (i.e., Iranophobia, Iran's containment, advocates vs. opponents, US approach toward the JCPOA, Iran's nuclear program, Iran's economy, the role of Israel, JCPOA's achievements) were derived based on the frequency of the themes in CNN and Fox News, which reflect the two media's political attitudes toward Iran in general and Iran's nuclear agreement in particular.

To answer the second and third research questions on the major framings of CNN and Fox News, and whether there are similarities/ differences in framing Iran in the two News Agencies' framings, the researcher analyzed the extracted frames and compared/contrasted the data. On the frame of "Iranophobia" there seems to exist a consensus in perceiving Iran as a threat in both media; however, contrary to expectations, CNN's content is significantly more Iranophobic compared to that of Fox News, especially regarding , ethe issue of Iran's negative "influence" in the region and Iran's expansionism. Iranophobia is used by CNN to justify Obama administration's decision for coming to the negotiation table and consequently claiming that his administration has made the world safer through the agreement with Iran.

On the frame of Iran containment, there seems to be a more

significant divergence of opinion on the maximizing pressure policy, the US gradual isolation in sanctioning Iran and the effectiveness of the sanctions. Similar to the "Iranophobia" frame, CNN, in line with the Obama administration policy, tries to show that US could no longer continue pressuring Iran and that the US is isolated on sanctioning Iran even among its own allies. While both news media have consensus over the issue of Iran containment, CNN maintains that Iran's threat is more contained with the nuclear deal, while Fox News maintains that lifting sanctions will embolden Iran in pursuing its regional ambitions.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, the major difference between CNN and Fox News lies in the frame concerning the JCPOA's achievement. While CNN perceives the deal as an achievement and a de-escalation act, and a step toward regional cooperation, Fox News has no frame with these wordings. Fox News considers the deal as a rapprochement toward Iran and a concession that would have negative consequences for the United states and its allies.

Overall, one could argue that the US media approach, regardless of the political inclinations of the Republican and Democrat parties, is united in falsifying Iran's global image by misusing the construction of news making process for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In both media, Iran is not considered as respectable and equal partner in negotiations. It is regarded as an entity that needs to be disciplined and constrained by the US. As illustrated in the above tables, significant emphasis is placed on describing Iran's policies through negative attributes and thus constructing Iran as villain and untrustworthy. Notably, among over the 1,200 analyzed samples from CNN and Fox News, Iran is generally represented to the Western audience through the following politicized frames: IRGC tyrannies, untrustworthiness, military support, Shia expansion, human rights abuse, and minority suppression.

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The US media outlets is also inclined to represent Israel and other US allies as peace-seeker, and Iran a warmonger. Therefore, regardless of their political approaches, CNN and Fox News commonly endeavor to promote the idea of Iranophobia, Iran containment, the necessity of sanctions, and the need for maximize pressure on Iran. In other words, Washington uses media manipulation against Iran to justify the US aggressive policy toward the country, which is consequently represented in framing Iran's JCPOA both conceptually and strategically.

Iran's nuclear agreement has been represented to the Western audience by frequently exploiting a large number of expressive skills including metaphors, epithets, comparisons, litotes, and hyperboles. To achieve the maximum impact, techniques such as parceling, sarcasm and irony are also used.

Based on the facts and figures, as previously argued, the issue of Iran's nuclear agreement, which was agreed and signed by the world leaders, is biased, distorted, manipulated and framed by the CNN and Fox News. Obviously, to misinterpret and falsify the present reality of Iran's developments, the US outlets have rallied round the flag to demonize the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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