# Framing Middle Eastern Ethnic Minorities in the U.S. Press

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The main purpose of this study is to map out how leading newspapers in the U.S. are framing different ethnic groups in the Middle East in their daily reporting. For this analysis, a systematic random sample was drawn from published articles focused on two main ethnic groups in the Arab region, namely, Amazigh "Berbers," and Copts.  There are 391 news stories in *The New York Times* and 408 news stories in *Washington Post* about Berbers and Copts during the last eight years (2011-2019). The study came out with the findings that American newspapers dedicated large spaces to cover the issues of minorities in the Middle East, and there was a greater tendency in the newspapers to cover Coptic minority compared to the Berber minority. The study newspapers heavily relied on minorities sources, both NYT and WP relied on 61% Coptic sources and 67% on Berbers sources.  However, the data showed that Arabic sources were the least cited in stories published about minorities in the Middle East (6% in both NYT and WP). Different frames were used by NYT and WP, while NYT focused more on presenting Copts issues through international frames, WP tends to present Berbers through the cultural frame.

Keywords:  Ethnic and communication, Middle East, framing, Copts, and Berbers

Due to limited time and lack of experience, ordinary citizens have to depend greatly on media in shaping their reality (Lippmann, 1922). Media play a critical role in the public's social construction of reality (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Lippmann, 1922), and this role of the media is especially true for international news. During political conflicts, including social turmoil, ethnic clashes, and election confrontations, media is expected to be an unbiased source of information to people, to inform correctly and truthfully, to enable society members to clarify and interpret events (Das, 2009).

There are many reasons for U.S.-based media outlets to report on events and issues beyond American borders (Horvit, Kriel, Anderson, & Rodriguez, 2007). For example, what happens in other countries may affect the U.S. economy. Additionally, over 250,000 American military personnel are deployed overseas, making families across the country care about what happens in faraway places. Also, the need for international news is highly personalized, with nearly 40 million residents in the U.S. having been born in other nations (Horvit, Gade, & Lance, 2010).

As a result, the press' coverage of a precise country or a group of people largely influences the public's perception and view of that country and its people (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). However, when foreign news coverage about a country or a group is biased and inaccurate, misunderstanding can occur, and people perceptions' about that group or country can be wrong (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

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The Middle East is "home to numerous groups that are distinct from the majority because of their religious beliefs, ethnic roots, cultural identities, and territorial nationalism" (Kumaraswamy, 2003, p. 245). In the Middle East countries, like other countries, minorities can experience discrimination, marginalization, etc. While most of these ethnic minorities are struggling to develop their national identities, "most of the states tended to ignore, belittle or undermine the existence of ethnic, national and religious minorities" (Kumaraswamy, 2003, p. 244). Many ethnic groups are living beside the Arab majority in the Arab region in the Middle East. For example, the Middle East has many religious and ethnicities groups, including: Copts, Maronites, Alawis, Druze, Kurds, Circassians, Turkomans, Jews, Armenians, Assyrians, Circassians, Assyrians, Berbers, Persians, Zoroastrian, Bahai, Shia, Azeris, Gilaki, Mazandarani, orthodox, Balouchis, and Lurs (Kumaraswamy, 2003).

The main purpose of this study is to map out how leading newspapers in the U.S. present different ethnic groups in the Middle East in their daily reporting. The study will provide a better understanding of the patterns and trends of Western media coverage on minority issues in the Middle East. The study will provide a comprehensive view of framing literature, and updated view of the mainframes used to cover minorities in the Middle East, the degree of attention paid to minority issues in the Middle East, and whether the media coverage presents the voices [quoted sources] of these minorities inside the published news stories.

Currently, no study has examined how the Western media portrays minority groups in the Middle East. Most studies on the Middle East have focused on the Arabic issues (e.g., Abunimeh & Masri, 2000; Adams & Heyl, 1981; Asi, 1981; Batrafi, 1997; Ibrahim, 2009; Mousa, 1984). In addition, this study comes as a response to other scholars' calls (e.g., Downing & Husband, 2005) that more studies need to be conducted to explore the roles played by the media in "shaping attitudes and framing understandings of difference in the multi-ethnic world" (Downing & Husband,2005, p. 145). Scholars from different parts of the world bemoan and lament this situation [lack of studies] and call for more research on media and ethnicities around the world. Thus, this study aims to add to the body of literature about ethnic communication, which is "rarely researched," and in respect to which "there is a huge amount of research to be done (Downing & Husband, 2005, p. 51). This study aims to provide scholars in political science, sociology, ethnic communication, journalism, and human rights activists a deep descriptive of non-Arab ethnicities groups that live the Middle East (Bensahel & Byman, 2004).

Amid the dramatic developments of the Arab spring in the Middle East and the Muslims Brotherhood took power in most Arab Spring countries (e.g., Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco), the study expected that the U.S. media would pay much attention to ethnic groups issues in the Middle East. Also, the study expected to see that American newspapers will tend to rely heavily on cultural frames than any other frames.

## Literature Review

The literature review is divided into four main parts. Part one gives an overview of the minority groups under the study [Copts, and Berbers]. Part two reviews Framing theory. Part three discusses how Western media presented Middle Eastern issues in its coverage. Part four addresses interethnic issues in media coverage. Finally, research questions and hypotheses will be presented.

## Non-Arab Ethnic Groups

The Middle East has many groups from different religious backgrounds and ethnic roots that have lived side by the Arabs side for many centuries with Arab (Kumaraswamy, 2003). These ethnic groups have suffered from different kinds of practices by the Arabs, such as ignoring their ethnic identity, forbidding members of these ethnic groups from using their languages in schools, as well as discrimination, marginalization, etc. This study focuses on main ethnic groups in the Middle East: Copts, and Berbers. The following paragraphs shed some light and give an overview of each of these ethnic groups.

*The Berbers.* The Berbers inhabit North Africa, and during the 11th century, they founded the town of Marrakesh as their capital; then the Berbers conquered all the Maghreb from the Gulf of Syrte (Libya) to the Atlantic (Angelfire website, n.d). After the Arabs and the Ottomans invaded North Africa during 16th and 17th century, and then France, who occupied North Africa in the 19th century, they divided it into the current different countries (Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania) (Angelfire website, n.d). After independence, the new regimes in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia were able to reassert their Arabic heritage, fueling an undercurrent of Berber dissatisfaction with Arab hegemony (Angelfire website, n.d).

      Today, the population of Amazigh (Berbers) is estimated to be up to 50 million people (The Phoenician International Research Center, 2013). They make up 40% of the Moroccans populations and about 25% of the Algerian population (BBC, 2012). Amazigh have suffered from different kinds of discriminatory practices related to their culture and ethnic identity. Amazigh have always emphasized their heritage as Berber. They also identified with the African culture, not Arabic (BBC, 2013). The local Arabic governments in these North African countries refused to register Amazigh given names (Human Rights Watch, 2010). In Libya, for example, the Amazigh experienced all forms of repression and marginalization and were deprived of all their rights. Also, in Libya, they were treated as criminals, and the Libyan government did not consider them members of their country (BBC, 2012).

*The Copts.* The Copts are regarded as the largest religious group in the Middle East, and they consist of 10-16% of the population of Egyptians (Zeidan, 1999). While the Coptic Church estimates the people to be 15-18 million, the Egyptian government estimates the Copt population as up to 5 million (Ahram Online, 2012). The roots of the sectarian conflict between Copts and Muslims goes back to the beginning of the 1970s due to the rise of Islamism during the reign of Al Sadat, president of Egypt at that time (Bayat, 2011). Copts during this religious conflict were subjected to various forms of oppression for the Egyptian society, including arresting, burning and destroying their churches, shops, and homes, attacking, and killing (Bayat, 2011; Mahmood, 2011).

      Discrimination and marginalization from Egyptian society are the main grievances of Copts in Egypt (Elsasser, 2010; Mahmood, 2011; Zeidan, 1999). For example, Copts have a feeling that the Egyptians don't consider them as equal citizens, and their patriotism has always been called into question (Bayat, 2011; Elsasser, 2010). Besides discrimination practices, Copts have suffered from some restrictive laws, which are related to their religious issues including the lack of permits for building new churches, marriage affairs and interreligious conversion and confiscation of Coptic Waqf lands for Islamic purposes (Mahmood, 2011; Zeidan, 1999). Giving an overview of these two major ethnic groups in the Middle East leads to a discussion of the importance of framing theory, which will be used to explain how media portray these ethnic groups.

## Framing Theory

Entman (2004) defined framing theory in mass communication as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and solution," (p. 5). In an attempt earlier to define framing, Scheufele (2000) defined the practice of media setting frames for the mass audience as the process of conveying the salience of attributes of issues (p. 298). Scheufele's interpretation for the word "salience" was rooted in Entman's (1993) explanation which said salience in this context means "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to the audience," (p. 53). Paraphrasing Entman (1993) who originally explained what "to frame" means, McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) defined framing as "the selection of a small number of attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed," (p. 704). McCombs et al. also echoed Entman's description that framing theory is the second level of agenda-setting theory, where the public's attention is first drawn to a particular object. Yioutas and Segvic (2003) said, "framing and agenda setting are socio-psychological processes," dealing with how messages are constructed and how they are presented (p. 570).

Framing theory can help researchers understand how international media cover events across the world. The frames used (or not used) will influence how audiences understand events. Also, framing theory highlights whether or not media present the voices of specific groups. In this case, the theory will be used to see whether or not American media present the voices [sources] of these two ethnic groups in their stories by coding the sources that have been quoted in the published news stories. Framing theory leads to talk about the importance of source concept.

*Source-Attribution Frames* Sources are the people who provide journalists with different information (Shoemaker, & Reese, 1996). Sources impact on the content of media when they withhold information or lie or providing usable information(Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The U.S. newspapers depend heavily on government sources during the coverage of the war on Iraq (Dimitrova & Stromback, 2005). Most of the war on Iraq's coverage on CNN, ABC, CBC, and Al Jazeera relied on official governments' representatives more than other sources (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005). Emad and Fahmy (2008) examined the online coverage of the Iraq war in the English and Arabic language Al Jazeera websites by content analyzing prominence of news stories, use of sources, and tone of coverage. They found that the reporting on both sites relied heavily on the U.S. and Iraqi officials' sources in covering the conflict. They found that both news Websites most frequently relied on Iraqi official sources (34%) and the U.S. official sources (28%).

Similarly, Ryan (2004) concluded that the editorial writers relied heavily on official government sources as they constructed their frames; most of them were U.S. government leaders, as well as officials serving in Middle Eastern governments, European governments; however, President Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell, were mentioned more than other officials.

Meanwhile, during the 1980s and 1990s, "terrorism experts" became the predominant category of expert commentators in *The New York Times'* articles about terrorism events, while the months after 9/11 saw a flood of new categories of experts, particularly those drawn from security firms (Stampnitzky, 2005). This study will use a source attribution frame to see to what extent media coverage reflect the voice of these minorities in their daily coverage. Talking about media frames and source attributions lead to discuss what are the most important issues in the Middle East that Western media used to report on in the past.

## Middle East Issues in Western Media

There is a continuous focus on Middle Eastern issues in Western media, including poverty, wars, human rights, and crises, and most media coverage has presented these issues in a negative way, and rarely anything is said about its positive experiences, in terms of development, politics, or society (Jarjour & Chahine, 2007). Many media scholars have studied American news and how it reports issues in the Middle East. Over the last century, Western media have paid much attention to specific issues in the Middle East including the Arab-Israeli conflict, peace settlement with Israel, Islamic fundamentalism, Gulf War, human rights issues, democratic issues in Arab countries, press freedom and expression, Arab unity, Iraq sanction, terrorism and 9/11, and business issues (Abunimeh & Masri, 2000; Adams & Heyl, 1981; Asi, 1981; Bararfi, 1997; Ibrahim, 2009; Mousa, 1984; Suleiman, 1988).

From 1947 to 1971, *New York Times* (NYT) portrayed Arab issues in its coverage, which was found to be limited and negative. In his study, Mousa (1984) analyzed the *Time's* coverage of Arab issues and found that NYT presented people in the Middle East and their issues during this period in a negative way. NYT ignored the fact that Arabs were fighting to get their independence from imperialistic states, and thus, the coverage was distorted and presented from a Western viewpoint. In two different studies, Suleiman (1988) analyzed eight American newspapers, and Bararfi (1997) analyzed the content of three American newspapers about the conflict and violence between Arabs and Israel in the Middle East. Both found that Arab perspectives were ignored and if presented, not fairly and objectively. During the 1970s, the Middle East was presented prominently in the headlines and newscasts in major American media TV networks and newspapers (Adams & Heyl, 1981). Adams and Heyl (1981) analyzed the content of American TV networks during 1972-1980. They found that four events were the focus of the American media at the time, in particular, Saudi's decision of stopping exporting the oil to the west, and the 1973 war between Arab and Israel. Also, they focused on the U.S media at the time on the Iranian-American crisis because of the hostages in the American embassy at Tehran, and the Egyptian President, Mohammed Al Sadat's visit to Israel in that time. However, Asi's (1981) analysis of the content of American TV networks found that Al Sadat's visit to Israel was presented positively before, during, and after the visit. At the same time, the analysis found that other Arab counties were presented negatively. In general, signing a peace agreement with Israel in 1977 resulted in more favorable coverage about Egypt by American media.

Shaheen (1981) investigated the network documentary of portrayal issues about Saudi Arabians in the 1980s. He found that this network presented Saudi society issues in vivid detail as overwhelmingly negative and stereotypical. In this study, the Saudi Arabians were most frequently associated with oil, wealth, and extravagance, and their affluence was framed as a threat to American society. In the same study, Shaheen found that Saudi women were shown as shrouded in black veils and forbidden to drive; images of gas lines in America were followed by commentary about Saudi society still being essentially tribal. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam became the focus of coverage in western media. Islam has viewed as a global threat to the west (Ibrahim, 2009). In their analysis of *The Times* of London, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Detroit Free Press* from 1988 to 1992, Sheikh, Price, and Oshagan (1995) found that coverage was slightly more negative than positive, and the majority of articles about Muslims centered on crises, conflicts, and wars.

Issues such as a Middle East economic decline, the myth of Arab unity, growth of the Islamic extremist groups, lack of democracy, human rights, and a peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinian were the most reported issues in *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* magazine between 1990 and 1993 (Hashem, 1997). The researcher found that the coverage for the first two years was mostly negative for both magazines.

The sanction on Iraq during the 1990s was another issue reported in U.S. media coverage. According to the analysis of leading newspapers for their coverage of Iraq during 1998 to 1999, Abunimeh and Masri (2000) found that the media in its daily coverage underestimated the effects of the western sanction imposed on Iraq for many years. Western media ignored the impacts of this sanction on Iraqi people, and personified Iraq in one person, like Saddam Hussein.

Ghareeb (1983) conducted in-depth interviews with 17 reporters, columnists, foreign correspondents, editors and State Department correspondents, all of whom covered the Middle East and work in leading newspapers in U.S. Most journalists in this study agreed that there was a clear bias against Arab in their media coverage, especially after the oil embargo in 1973. Ghareeb mentioned that cultural bias was the most important reason standing behind journalists' bias against Arabs.

Recently, only a few studies have been published and focused on the role of media, digital, and traditional ones, during the underway events in the Middle East, "The Arab Spring." These researches focused on analyzing the content of media and how these media outlets reported Arab Spring in their coverage, and on the importance of media as a key tool in making a political change (Hamdy & Gomaa 2012). Majdi (2011) analyzed 5,935 news stories from *U.S. Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* from December 2010 to September 2011. He found that the leading American newspapers tend to frame these Arab revolutions positively, and frame Arab protester as pro-democracy defenders. Also, Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) in their analysis of different Egyptian newspapers (semiofficial newspapers, Independent newspapers, and social media posts) found that "social media used a human interest's frame defining protests as a revolution for freedom and social justice" (p. 195).

Overall, the previous studies paid much attention to what issues in the Middle East brought media coverage attention to political, economic, religious, and other social issues. However, no single study pays attention to the situations of minorities or ethnics groups that live in the Middle East. Only Arab issues got the attention of western media. Thus, this study came to fill the gap of other important ethnic issues in the Middle East, namely, non-Arab minorities and how they are presented in the western media. Discussing the importance of ethnic issues in the Middle East leads to discuss the literature on media research on ethnic conflicts.

## Media and Ethnic Conflict

Conflict frame has been used in media coverage about ethnic groups around the world (Adeba, 2011; Raju, Jagadeswari & Dissanayake, 1984; Yani, 2009). Some of these studies tend to present peace and reconciliations solutions (Raju, Jagadeswari, & Dissanayake, 2984), and other used different types of frames, conflict frame was one of them (Adeba, 2011).

Raju, Jagadeswari, and Dissanayake (1984) analyzed the content of different magazines and newspapers from both Indian and Pakistani media and compared their coverage of the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Results show that the newspapers and the magazines under the study tend to adopt a positive tone and expressions and are more oriented to

report peace and reconciliation frames. The findings of the study show that none of these newspapers or magazines on both sides (Pakistan or India) support or prefer to present their governments' hostile policies against each other's government.

In their descriptive analysis study on the amount of media coverage of the ethnic conflict in three Pakistani daily newspapers, Iqbal, Shair, and Saami (2010) found that Pakistani newspapers are aware of the sensitive problems that face the Pakistani society by projecting conflict in its daily coverage. The findings indicate that less than half of the published news stories (45%) were on sectarian conflict, over third (35%) on political conflicts, and about a fifth (20%) on ethnic conflicts.

In Indonesia, Yani (2009) analyzed the content of two leading Indonesian newspapers, [the Kompas and Republika] and how both of them reporting the religious conflict between Christians and Muslims. The results show that both newspapers framed the conflict differently.  While the Republika supported Muslims' interests in its coverage, Kompas defended the Christians' interests. Also, the findings revealed that Kompas tend to emphasize conflict resolution to end the war; Meanwhile, Republika promotes violence trends in its coverage.

Adeba (2011) analyzed 290 published news stories from two Canadian newspapers [the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star] to study how both of them frame of the Darfur conflict in Sudan. In the Globe and Mail, according to the findings, the Darfur conflict was presented in a military frame, while in the Toronto Star, the conflict in Darfur was framed in violent terms. Adeba used six types of frames, including Diplomatic intervention, military, humanitarian, violence, international ambivalence, and Canadian inaction.

In his study, Hussain (2918) sought to analyze how the media narratives of the same events of framed differently by different newspapers, and to investigate the press coverage of the violent incidents in India. The study adopted three framing techniques. The overall coverage patterns clearly indicate the gradual increase of coverage of conflict events in Indian State of Assam by the national and regional press. Also the regional media extensively uses conflict and human-intersts frames as well as attribution of responsibility frame, the national media focus on the conflict and consequences frams the most.

More recently, Kabi and Nayak (2019) in their study which aimed to evaluate the role of media in conflict situation in Northeast of India. The researchers used mixed methods of content analysis backed up with interviews with journalists. The findings indicated that 57% of journalists showed that the newspapers play a onstructive role in reporting conflict; so the role of media in general found to be effective and resonalbe in such conflict situations.

Taken together, this literature on media and ethnic conflict indicates that no single study can tell how international media presented minority groups in the Middle East. However, this study will use some of these variables.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Here are the main questions that will be asked in this study:

**RQ1:** To what extent do the New York Times and Washington Post pay attention to Copts and Berbers' issues in their daily coverage's?

**RQ2:** To what degree media coverage's of the two newspapers reflect the voice of these two ethnics groups?

**RQ3:** What are the dominant frames used to portray these ethnics groups?

**H1:** There are significant differences between study newspapers, and the frames were used in reporting Copts and Berber's topics.

## Method

This study seeks to examine the main trends of the *New York Times* and *the Washington Post* coverage of ethnic groups in the Middle East. The time frame of this analysis includes the written articles appearing in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* since 1st January 2011 to the end of 2018. This time frame witnessed escalations and dramatic developments impact greatly on these two ethnicities groups, for example, Muslims Brotherhood took over the power in Egypt in 2012, and the Amazigh language was recognized to be taught in the Moroccan public schools since 2001 (Ali, 2012).

To answer the above research questions, a content analysis used in this study. For this analysis, the study focused on two main ethnic groups in the Arab region, namely, Amazigh "Berbers," and Copts. These groups were chosen because they are the largest ethnicities groups live for a long time in a region dominated by Arab people. Also, these minorities groups were chosen because they deploy different areas in the Arab region. The Phoenician International Research Center (2013) estimated the population of Amazigh (Berbers) up to 50 million people. Today, the Amazigh are found in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Finally, Copts are regarded as the largest Christian groups in the Middle East (Zeidan, 1999).

Framing content analysis used to answer the research questions. Content analysis is defined as a "research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, p. 120). Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) defined content analysis as "a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure variables" (p. 156). This method, used in journalism and mass communication researches to describe media content, compare media content to the real world, and to assess the image of particular groups in society (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

The *New York Times* and *the Washington Post* were chosen for the analysis because of their prominence as national news sources for the readers, and their reputation as the most reliable and popular news sources for world and domestic events, their great ethnic diversity in their readership, and because their depth coverage of international news (Case, 1998; Cohen, 1961; Davison, 1976; Craber 1980; Weiss, 1974).

Lexis Nexis was searched using the search terms "Berbers," and "Copts." In the beginning, all news stories were read closely to see if they match the sampling of the study. However, repeated news stories were excluded; for example, when there are two news stories with the same headlines and date of publishing, one of them was excluded from the list. Also, briefs news that does not include any details about the events reported on were excluded. As well, irrelevant news stories to the issues of analysis, "minorities." A roster of the stories that meet the sampling criteria was created for each ethnic group and was ordered by date of publishing. Systematic interval random sample was used. During the study period, there are 391 news stories in the *New York Times* distributed, 262 news stories about the Berbers and 129 stories about the Copts. Also in the same period, there are 408 news stories in *Washington Post* 214 of them about the Berbers and 194 about Copts. The researchers decided to draw180 stories from both newspapers (46% of the total stories in NYT and 44% of the total stories in the *Washington Post*). The sample was divided between 100 stories from each newspaper about the Berbers and 80 stories from each newspaper about Copts for analysis purposes. Intercoder reliability was tested by using Holsti formula, and the agreements between coders found high in different variables (frames 0.86, the extent of coverage 1.00, sources 0.92).

## Variables Definitions

The following variables will measure the content of each news story in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post.*

*Frame.* Associates with how/how newspaper represents an object or a situation. This study adapted Jasperson and El-Kikhia (2003)'s frames: Official, and humanitarian. An official frame refers to news frames concerning support for the government and political leaders in a country, including national unity and public support for the government. Humanitarian frame focus on the victims of the civil strife, notably the suffering and damage caused during political unrest against ethnic groups, its people, and their interests (Jasperson & El-Kikhia, 2003). However, the researcher and based on his close reading to some news stories that related to the topic of the study proposed two other frames, International frame, and cultural frame. International frame focuses on world leaders' responses to the situation. Cultural frame refers to a news focus on ethnic groups' identities, arts, languages, weddings, and their customs and traditions. "Mixed" frame used in case the same news story combined more than one frame at the same time. Stories that use frames other than the above four categories were coded "other."

*The extent of coverage.* Will be studied from the size of news items (measured by word count). This variable will have three dimensions: (i) Small coverage when the news story has less than 200 words, (ii) Medium coverage when news story has over 201 and less than 400 words, and (iii) Large coverage when news story has over 401 words.

*Source attribution "voices."* refers to the news sources directly quoted in a news story. To measure this variable, five categories were used: Western sources (are not Copt, Berber or Arab source), Copt source, Berber source, Arab source, and mixed sources. The category of the source here is based on the ethnicity the sources belong to. If two different types of sources have equal frequencies, then the first-mentioned will be considered as the dominant source.

### Results and Discussion

To answer **RQ1**: To what extent do the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* pay attention to Copts and Berbers' issues in their daily coverage's?

Data from Table 1 indicated that the study newspapers paid great attention to the news of minorities in the Middle East. The study newspapers devoted large spaces to publishing topics related to minorities (Copts and Berbers) during the study period. Where the newspapers published a total of 189 journalistic works of which 370 (53%) media articles are a large size (more than 400 words), followed by medium-sized topics 101 (28%), and finally 70 (9%) is a small size. This great interest in covering minority news in the Middle East can be explained by the news value of news about these minorities, and these minorities themselves have been the focus of attention for the international press and media. Practically during the study period, these minorities were living in an area controlled by Arabs and belonging to the Islamic religion, and these minorities were repeatedly targeted during the Arab spring period from other groups in the society in which they live. Several churches belonging to the Coptic sect in Egypt were subjected to several explosions and burning after the fall of the regime of Hosni Mubarak. In Libya, the Berber minority (Tamazight) was subjected to persecution and continued marginalization of their issues in the media of those countries. For examples of these events, during the Arab spring, women from Yazidi

minority live in North of Iraq were taken as sex slaves by Islamic State fighters. Another example, Coptic families were forced for displacement from their homes inside Egypt due to clashes with Muslims in a village against the backdrop of the construction of a church. Thus, the topics such as marginalization, discrimination, persecution, clashes, lack of justice and the sense of non-citizenship suffered by these minorities in the Middle East make them subjects of interest and extensive media coverage.

Table 1. The extent of converging the Copts and Berbers issues in U.S. newspapers

| extent | New York Times-NYT | | Washington Post-WP | | NYT & WP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Berbers | Copts | Berbers | Copts | Berbers | Copts |
| Small | 27 (27%) | 14 (17%) | 23(23%) | 6 (8%) | 50 (25%) | 20 (12%) |
| Medium | 30 (30%) | 19 (24%) | 31(31%) | 21 (26%) | 61(30%) | 40 (25%) |
| large | 43 (43%) | 47 (59%) | 46 (46%) | 53 (66%) | 89(45%) | 100 (63%) |
| Total | 100 | 80 | 100 | 80 | 200 | 160 |

The data show that both study newspapers paid more attention to cover Coptic issues 63% together (66% in Washington Post and 59% in New York Times) more than Berbers topics 54% (43% in NYT and 46% in WP). All in all, In general, the study newspapers dedicated large spaces to cover the issues of minorities in the Middle East, and there was a greater tendency in the newspapers to cover Coptic minority compared to the Berber minority.

Table 2. The voice of Copts in news stories published about Copts issues in U.S newspapers

| Newspaper | Copts | Arabs | Western | mixed | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NYT | 47(59%) | 2(2%) | 24(30%) | 7(9%) | 80 |
| WP | 51(64%) | 5(6%) | 20(25%) | 4(5%) | 80 |
| Total | 98 (61%) | 7 (4%) | 44 (28%) | 11(7%) | 160 |

Table 3. The voice of Berbers in news stories published about Copts issues in U.S newspapers

| Newspaper | Berbers | Arabs | Western | Mixed | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NYT | 61(61%) | 9(9%) | 21(21%) | 3(3%) | 100 |
| WP | 73(73%) | 6(6%) | 25(25%) | 2(2%) | 100 |
| Total | 134 (67%) | 15(7%) | 46 (23%) | 5 (3%) | 200 |

Given the data of Tables 2 and 3, they showed that the study newspapers by 64% gave the minorities the right to express themselves by talking about subjects related to them to the international public opinion.

The study newspapers heavily relied on minorities sources, both NYT and WP relied on 61% Coptic sources and 67% on Berbers sources. However, the data showed that Arabic sources were the least cited in stories published about minorities in the Middle East (6% in both NYT and WP).

When it comes to each newspaper, NYT relied heavily on Copts sources in reporting about their issues (59%) and depended on (64%) on Berbers sources when reporting about their issues. The Western sources come next (30%) in Coptic topics and 21% in Berber's topics, finally, the Arabic sources ranked third, about 2% in the Coptic topics and 9% in Berbers issues. As for the Washington Post coverage, it is also relied heavily on Berbers sources (73%), then on Western sources (21%), and finally on the Arabic sources (6%). The great reliance on minorities as a source of information in American newspapers can be

explained by the fact that these newspapers believe in the principles of social responsibility theory. Journalists in the U.S media believe in the importance of representing the segments of society and minorities in their media coverage, especially the events related to these minorities. The fact is that access to these minorities is part of professional journalism based on objectivity, pluralism, accuracy, and balance. The other possible explanation is that these minorities live in a majority dominated by a large ethnic Arabs, and therefore these minorities suffer from marginalization to address its issues through media run by governments in the Middle East, whether it was an ethnic minority or religious one. Thus, the American media, including NYT and WP, is part of a free media institution which gives voice to the voiceless, including Copts and Berbers groups and other sects around the world.

Table 4. The dominant frames used in U.S coverage of Berbers and Copts

| Frame | *New York Times* NYT | | *Washington Post* WP | | NYT & WP | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Berbers | Copts | Berbers | Copts | Berbers | Copts | Total |
| official | 29 (29%) | 7 (9%) | 31(31%) | 9 (11%) | 60 (30%) | 17 (10%) | 77 (21%) |
| Humanitarian | 11 (11%) | 31 (45%) | 6(6%) | 28 (35%) | 17(8%) | 59 (36%) | 76(22%) |
| International | 14 (14%) | 41 (51%) | 7 (7%) | 37 (46%) | 21(10%) | 78 (49%) | 99(27%) |
| Cultural | 44 (44%) | 1 (3%) | 52 (52%) | 3 (4%) | 96(48% ) | 4(3%) | 100(28%) |
| Others | 2 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (4%) | 3 (4%) | 6 (4%) | 2 (2%) | 8(2%) |
| Total | 100 | 80 | 100 | 80 | 200 | 160 | |

Data from Table 4 indicate that American newspapers tend to present the minorities in the Middle East in its daily coverage from the cultural frame (28%), then the international frame (27%), followed by the humanitarian frame (22%), and the official frame was the least used (21%). However, by examining each newspaper, the Chi-square test shows that there are significant differences between types of frames were used in reporting minorities groups in the Middle between NYT and WP. The calculated *p*-value was less than 0.05 and found at level 0.001 at df = 4; the Chi-square was 7.872. This means that each newspaper used different media frame in reporting each sect group in the study. While NYT tends to present Copts issues through international frame (51% of published stories about Copts in NYT) , then the humanitarian frame (45%), followed by official frame (9%), and finally the least frames were used in NYT in reporting Copts issues was the cultural frame (3%); however, NYT pictured Berbers through the cultural frames (44%), then official (29%), followed by international frame (14%), and finally the humanitarian frame (11%). On the contrary, the WP presented Berbers from cultural frames (52%), then official frames (31%), followed by humanitarian frames (6%). As for Copts in WP, it was framed through international frames (46%), then humanitarian (36%) and finally official (11%).

All in all, different frames were used by NYT and WP, while NYT focused more on presenting Copts issues through international frames, WP tends to present Berbers through the cultural frame. The fact that NYT addressed the Copts issues as political conflict and WP considers Berbers as a cultural identity. This simply of using different frames for different ethnicities in the Middle East by American newspapers shows the differences in media editorial policy among these newspapers.

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