



CNN and BBC Shaping the Opinions in Different Countries: A multi-dimensional descriptive commentary related to security, military and diplomacy

Ramazan Safa, Mohammad Barati

¹Fourth Year Ph.D. Candidate of Political Science and Public Administration, department of non-European studies, faculty of political science and journalism, doctoral school of social sciences, Adam Mickiewicz university, Poznan, Poland, Ramsafl@amu.edu.pl ORCID: 0000-0002-1629-5283

²Mohamad Barati, Department of Economics and Management, Islamic Azad University, Naragh branch <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5218-919X>

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Abstract— *The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) are pivotal actors in the global media ecosystem, wielding significant influence on public opinion, political discourse, and international diplomacy. This essay explores their roles as agents of soft power, examining how their coverage shapes global perceptions and aligns with the foreign policy objectives of their home nations. Through case studies such as the Arab Spring, the Hong Kong protests, and the Syrian Civil War, the analysis highlights their capacity to amplify democratic ideals and humanitarian narratives. However, it also critiques their tendency to oversimplify complex geopolitical realities, framing events through dichotomous lenses like democracy versus authoritarianism. Both networks serve as instruments of public diplomacy, projecting cultural and political values to global audiences. The BBC, as a publicly funded entity, reinforces British ideals of fairness and free speech, while CNN, despite its private ownership, often mirrors American democratic values. Their contributions to agenda-setting and narrative framing underscore their dual roles as informers and influencers. However, challenges such as perceived bias and editorial slant raise critical ethical questions. By dissecting their historical and contemporary impact, this discussion elucidates the intricate interplay between media, power, and international relations, emphasizing the need for balanced and nuanced reporting.*



Keywords— *Public Diplomacy, Human Development, News Agency, Public Opinion*

I. INTRODUCTION

The global media landscape is dominated by a handful of influential networks, among which the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) stand as pivotal players. With their extensive reach and robust reputation, these media giants serve as conduits for shaping ideas, influencing political movements, and molding public opinion (Napoli, 1997). The impact of their coverage extends beyond mere reporting; it shapes perceptions, informs international policies, and catalyzes diplomatic actions. This essay delves into the historical significance of

BBC and CNN as agents of influence in major global events, highlighting their roles in framing narratives and projecting soft power.

Throughout history, BBC and CNN have demonstrated their ability to sway international opinion, often through their portrayals of political and social upheavals (Ganzert & Flournoy, 1992). Events such as the Arab Spring, the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, and the Syrian Civil War exemplify their power to amplify voices, legitimize movements, and galvanize international responses. However, their framing of events, often through

dichotomous narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism, raises critical questions about the simplification of complex geopolitical realities. By examining these examples, this essay seeks to uncover the dual-edged nature of their influence: their capacity to inspire action and their propensity to overlook nuanced local contexts.

Furthermore, the essay explores how these networks function as instruments of public diplomacy for their home countries. The BBC, as a publicly funded entity, aligns with British foreign policy objectives, while CNN, a privately owned corporation, inadvertently mirrors American values and geopolitical interests (Powers & Samuel-Azran, 2015). Their roles as purveyors of soft power—a concept introduced by Joseph Nye—underscore their importance in projecting national values, shaping global perceptions, and fostering cultural diplomacy (Nye, 2008). However, their influence is not without challenges, as perceptions of bias and editorial slant have occasionally undermined their credibility.

By dissecting the historical and contemporary roles of BBC and CNN, this essay aims to provide a nuanced understanding of their influence on global discourse. It will assess their contributions to agenda-setting, the promotion of national values, and their alignment with foreign policy objectives, while critically examining the ethical implications of their editorial choices. In doing so, this discussion seeks to illuminate the intricate interplay between media, power, and international relations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted in this field, and in this section, some of the most important ones are introduced, reviewed, and analyzed.

The study examines the causes of the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East and the role of the media in this area. This issue is of particular importance due to its wide-ranging effects on international policymaking. Given that the issue of the decline of American hegemony has led to different opinions, this research seeks to answer the key question of what factors have caused the decline of US hegemony and how this has affected China's policies in the Middle East. The results of this study, which was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and library resources, show

that the decline of American hegemony has been shaped by reasons including the need for multilateralism, the country's financial crisis, and the emergence of new powers such as China. In particular, the decline of American influence has created an opportunity for China to participate more actively in trade and energy in the Middle East than before, concluding numerous oil contracts with important countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. This clearly demonstrates the wider influences that can shape the opinions and perceptions of different nations, including those in the Middle East, regarding global news and developments, and points to the role of media outlets such as CNN and BBC in shaping these opinions in different countries¹.

This study examines the relations between Iran and the United States over the past four decades. In this regard, the role of the media in shaping the opinions of their nations has also been examined. The relationship between the two countries has been important for various reasons, including numerous domestic and regional crises. The foreign relations between Iran and the United States after the Islamic Revolution have been a complex and very turbulent issue. This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the relations between the two countries to provide a clear view of the starting points of all the commotion and tensions between the two countries. In this regard, it has been shown that media such as CNN and BBC have also played an effective role in shaping people's opinions, especially regarding the relations between the two countries². Also, in another study, an analytical study of Iran-US relations after the Islamic Revolution of Iran has been conducted, emphasizing the strongholds and deep faith of the Iranian people. In this regard, the role of the media in the formation of these beliefs and deep faith has been examined. In addition, the historical, ideological and geopolitical characteristics of Iran-US relations over the past few decades have been examined. This study has been carried out with the help of an analysis of the chaotic situation of international and domestic politics. It has been shown that the orientation of media such as CNN has been significant in the public's belief in the need to reduce diplomatic and bilateral relations between the two countries³.

The redefinition of US foreign policy through immigration, security and diplomacy has been examined as the Trump doctrine. This study is based on the analysis of the book *Awakening from the American Dream*. This book examines

¹ Dehnavi, E. A. (2020). The reasons for the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East. *Revista San Gregorio*, (37).

² Dehnavi, E. A. (2020). *Sorry, how can I get to Washington?*. tredition.

³ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024). An Analytical Examination of Iran-USA Relations Post-Islamic Revolution: Extended Scientific Review. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Development (IJHED)*, 6(5), 23-25.

US foreign relations during the Trump presidency, emphasizing the specific pillars of terrorism, immigration and international relations in relation to hostile countries. The role of the media in the formation of US foreign relations has been considered. In this regard, it has been shown that the activities of media such as CNN and BBC, especially after the events of September 11, have been effective in the formation of these relations¹.

The changes and indicators of Trump's new immigration policy program and the role of the media in the formation of these policies have been examined. In this regard, a descriptive-analytical study has been conducted. The results have shown that Trump's immigration policies were adopted very hastily and with regard to the effects of the US electoral environment and the media environment prevailing in this country. The result of this inspiration from the media environment was that the plan faced domestic and international reactions, including legal challenges, because it was contrary to the approvals of Congress. This indicates the significant power of the electoral environment and the media environment, which can easily affect the formation and adoption of major decisions in transitional politics².

Various media, whether news media or literary media, can act like a think tank and play a role in shaping international relations. For example, the impact of *The Captain's Tale* trilogy as a literary work on US foreign policy has been examined and it has been shown that this modern literary work can shape our understanding of global politics. It can also increase awareness, thinking, and a sense of empathy in society. Therefore, it can be said that it can act like components of a global think tank with a dynamic policy-making mechanism on a regular basis. This indicates the significant power of various media in shaping the thoughts of a society³.

The national security strategies adopted by different governments in the United States have been examined in the form of a descriptive-analytical study. In this study, interview-based methods and library sources were used to collect data. The results indicate that each of the American presidents had a national strategy in the aftermath of World War II, and in the post-World War II period, the US National Security Strategy has always had a global approach. One of the important tools for implementing these various

strategies has been the media, including CNN and BBC, which have always aligned themselves with these policies and have worked towards their realization. The efforts of the aforementioned media have made it easier to influence public beliefs in line with the national interests of the United States⁴.

A study examines the domestic economic strategies of the United States and the role of think tanks and the media in shaping these strategies. The US federal government, as the main institution managing various systems, plays an important role in economic policymaking. However, this process is strongly influenced by various political ideologies that affect the way economic issues, including inequality and the effects of technological change, are addressed. Meanwhile, major media outlets such as CNN and the BBC also play a significant role as key tools in shaping public opinion and interpreting events. These media outlets, by covering news and analyzing various economic policies, help to convey ideological ideas and influence public views. For example, in times of economic crisis, the way these media report can affect how people react to federal policies and strategies proposed by think tanks. Hence, a deep understanding of the role of the media in expressing and promoting various political ideas helps us better understand how these influences affect domestic economic policies in the United States as well as the international relations of countries⁵.

As influential institutions in analyzing and reporting on the Middle East, media outlets such as the BBC play a vital role in shaping public and international understanding of the factors behind the rise of authoritarianism and the challenges to democracy in the region. By covering news and analysis of social, political and economic unrest, these outlets can shed light on key factors such as weak civil society, underdevelopment and undemocratic systems, thereby drawing global attention to fundamental challenges such as corruption, unemployment and inequality. Analysis provided by the BBC and others can also shed light on the relationship between religion and democracy and the role of authoritarian regimes in undermining democratic efforts in these countries. In this way, the media can act as a bridge between local realities and global audiences, and provide

¹ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024). The Trump Doctrine: Redefining US Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 26-28.

² Dehnavi, E. A., & Daheshiar, H. (2020b). Changes and indicators of trump's new immigration policy plan. ResearchGate.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Fiedler, R. (2024b). Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in their Foreign Policy:

Manifestation of Think Tanks in a literary work. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 277-281

⁴ Dehnavi, E. A., & Jamal, M. A. (2020a). From containment to Americanism. ResearchGate.

⁵ Dehnavi, E. A., Niafar, M. M., & Ahmadzade, K. (2024a). An Overview Regarding the U.S domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 82-92.

the necessary awareness for international support for democratic processes in the Middle East¹.

A study has been conducted on the analysis and examination of the issue of Iran's proxy strategy in the Middle East and the role of the media in this area. Media such as the BBC play a key role in analyzing and explaining Iran's proxy strategy in the Middle East and act as reliable sources for providing in-depth information and analysis in this field. By comprehensively covering the activities of proxy forces, exerting Iranian influence in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, and examining the complex dimensions of these developments, the BBC can help viewers and readers to better understand the power dynamics in the region and the challenges of deterrence and instability. Also, by providing historical and comparative analysis, this media explains the cultural and political contexts that have led to the formation of these strategies, and can play a vital role in stimulating international dialogues and a global understanding of the effects of this strategy on regional security and international relations. In this way, media outlets like the BBC not only convey information but also contribute to a deeper understanding of complex issues in the Middle East and shape public thinking².

A study was conducted to examine the principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. The role of the media in advancing these positions was also examined. The research method is descriptive-analytical. The method of collecting information is library. The data collection tool is note-taking. The data analysis method is also qualitative. The results have shown that terrorism has always been used as a tool to advance US foreign policy. US foreign policy has been able to fill the foreign policy vacuum that was created with the end of the Cold War by fighting terrorism. This does not mean that terrorism and terrorist groups are not against the interests of the United States. However, this country at least uses the concept of terrorism to label its opponents and in fact supports terrorist groups to advance its interests. The issue of banning the entry of nationals of some countries under the pretext of ensuring the security of the American people, who, ironically, are against US foreign policy, shows that Trump's immigration policies are purely political and aimed at exerting pressure on these countries. Meanwhile, media outlets such as CNN and BBC

have also been very effective in advancing these positions and providing reasons to justify the correctness of these policies³.

A study has been conducted to identify the factors affecting the migration of Iranian elites and the role of the media in this regard. The results have shown that political, economic, social factors, globalization of work, organizational and administrative factors, lack of respect and dignity of elites, lack of hierarchy and elitism are the most important factors in the migration of these people. One of the most important weaknesses of the policy in Iran for the departure of elites is the limited financial support, which is not enough to encourage elites to stay in the country. The lack of meritocracy, official invitations and the failure to attract elites to universities are other weaknesses of the existing policies. On the other hand, media such as the BBC actively encourage Iranian elites to migrate and create the perception that there is a better space for growth and prosperity outside the borders. By reporting positive news about the lives and achievements of Iranian elites in other countries and analyzing the benefits of immigration and the globalization of work, these media outlets are fueling the belief that the current conditions in Iran not only prevent the elites from succeeding, but also push them to leave the country. Overall, this combination of domestic policy weaknesses and effective media propaganda is exacerbating the elite exodus crisis⁴.

A study has been conducted to examine the complexities of the US approach to Iran and to address the numerous challenges of its policies in confronting the Islamic Republic. In this regard, international media outlets such as CNN and BBC play an important role in shaping public perception and international policies. With their detailed coverage of Iran-related news and political analysis, these media outlets not only reflect existing claims and challenges, but also try to portray the effects of US decision-making on Iran and the Middle East through current events. In addition, these media outlets can help create public awareness and support for US government policies towards Iran or, conversely, create pressure for policy change by criticizing official approaches. Therefore, the interaction between the media and US policies facilitates the ability to

¹ Dehnavi, E. A., & Nourmohammadi, M. (2023). Factors of the prevalence of authoritarianism and the push on democratization in the Middle East. ResearchGate.

² Dehnavi, E. A., & Safavipour, A. (2024a). Decoding Iran's proxy strategy: deterrent or destabilization? A review and scientific commentary. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 01–06.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Tabatabaei, S. M. (2021). Principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. *EFFLATOUNIA-Multidisciplinary Journal*, 5(2).

⁴ Fiedler, R. A., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024c). Weaknesses of policy making in Iran to reduce the rate of departure of elites from the country. ResearchGate.

respond to the challenges raised and influences the way international relations are managed¹.

Another study examines the complexity and historical diversity of the Middle East. Studies show that the roots of conflicts and tensions in this region can be traced back to diverse cultural and religious factors. In this context, the media play a key role in shaping and perpetuating the current situation in the Middle East. Through their news coverage and analysis, the media not only present narratives of the region's diverse history and cultures, but can also contribute to creating or reducing tensions. For example, biased or distorted coverage of conflicts can lead to an escalation of conflicts, while committed media can help promote dialogue and mutual understanding between different groups. Therefore, understanding the relationship between the media and the complex history of the Middle East is of particular importance, especially when the goal is to find sustainable ways to create peace and security in this region².

Another study examined the challenges Mexican immigrants face in their quest for American identity and identified the factors that influence it. The results showed that this is influenced by multiple factors and that media outlets such as CNN play a significant role in shaping this issue. By presenting the realities of immigrants' daily lives, CNN provides more space for cultural and social acceptance and engages in conversations about American identity and immigrants' place within it³.

III. A BRIEF HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

Both BBC and CNN are influential global media organizations with extensive reach. They play significant roles in shaping ideas, political movements, and public opinion in the countries where their broadcasts are consumed (Kennedy & Prat, 2018). Though these networks are independent and generally maintain editorial freedom, their influence on public diplomacy stems from how they represent and communicate their home countries' values, policies, and narratives to global audiences.

BBC and CNN played a pivotal role in the international coverage of the Arab Spring, helping to amplify the voices of protesters across the Middle East (Gillespie et al., 2015). Their live reporting showcased the grassroots nature of the uprisings, framing them as democratic movements against

authoritarian regimes. This coverage was vital in increasing global awareness and providing legitimacy to the protesters, which in turn influenced international public opinion and diplomatic responses, especially in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. For example, the protests in Libya gained significant international attention, leading to NATO's intervention against Gaddafi's regime (Harlow & Brown, 2021). However, by consistently framing the movements as purely democratic revolutions, both networks arguably simplified the complex local political landscapes, overlooking the deep-rooted social, economic, and tribal tensions in these countries. This resulted in global support that sometimes underestimated the long-term consequences of toppling established regimes without fully considering the potential for instability.

During Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, BBC and CNN extensively covered the events, particularly highlighting police brutality and the protesters' demands for autonomy from mainland China (Cao, 2021). Their coverage emphasized the struggle for freedom, portraying the protests as a battle between democratic ideals and authoritarian oppression. This framing resonated particularly with Western audiences, leading to increased diplomatic tensions between China and the West. Governments in countries like the United States and the UK imposed sanctions on Chinese officials and expressed public support for the protesters (Tang, 2022). However, China criticized both networks for biased reporting, accusing them of inciting unrest and misrepresenting the situation (Zhang & Shaw, 2020). The networks' focus on democratic values helped frame the protests in a way that aligned with Western foreign policy goals, but it also heightened geopolitical tensions, making a peaceful resolution more difficult.

In the lead-up to the Iraq War, CNN and BBC played critical roles in shaping public opinion as well, particularly in the United States and the UK (Mhamdi, 2017). CNN, in particular, adopted a more pro-government stance, echoing the US government's justification for the war, including the false claims of weapons of mass destruction (WDMs) (Mhamdi, 2017). The networks' coverage, especially early on, helped build public support for the invasion by framing it as a necessary intervention to protect global security. This coverage heavily influenced public opinion, especially in the U.S. and UK, where citizens largely supported the war

¹ Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 109–113.

² Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A review. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(1), 51–56.

³ Dehnavi, E. A., & Mobin, K. (2020). Mexican immigrants challenges for American Identity. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(6), 945-950.

initially (Dutta et al., 2012). However, both networks were later criticized for not sufficiently questioning government motives or critically analyzing the available intelligence, contributing to widespread misinformation. The failure to challenge the narrative of WMDs had long-term consequences, including disillusionment with media credibility once it became clear that the war was based on faulty intelligence.

Another example would be the Ukrainian revolution in 2013-2014. During the revolution, BBC and CNN framed the ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich as a battle between pro-European democratic aspirations and Russian-backed authoritarianism (Kamyanskyi, 2021). This framing helped shape the international response, particularly in the West, where governments and institutions were quick to impose sanctions on Russia following its annexation of Crimea. The networks' focus on the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian protesters aligned with broader Western foreign policy interests in limiting Russian influence in Eastern Europe (Wilderom, 2020). However, by framing the situation as a clear dichotomy between democracy and authoritarianism, the networks sometimes overlooked the internal divisions within Ukraine, particularly the ethnic and political complexities that contributed to the country's instability.

Also, the coverage of the Syrian Civil War by both BBC and CNN heavily focused on the humanitarian disaster and the brutal tactics used by the Assad regime, including the use of chemical weapons and other human rights abuses (Zhang & Luther, 2019). This coverage helped garner international support for interventions, as Western audiences were moved by the images of suffering civilians and the widespread destruction. The networks also frequently highlighted Western-backed rebel groups, framing them as the legitimate opposition to Assad's authoritarian rule (Baden & Stalpuskaya, 2020). However, this approach tended to downplay the involvement of extremist factions like ISIS, which complicated the conflict and the international community's response. By focusing on the humanitarian aspect and portraying Assad as the primary antagonist, the networks sometimes oversimplified the conflict, making it harder for viewers to grasp the full scope of the war, including the roles of foreign powers and the fractured opposition forces.

In addition, CNN's reporting on Venezuela's political and economic crisis under Nicolás Maduro heavily influenced global perceptions of the country's descent into authoritarianism and economic collapse (Fredricks & Phillips, 2021). CNN focused on the suffering of Venezuelan citizens, particularly the mass migration crisis and the shortage of basic goods (Charner, 2023). This

coverage helped shape international views, contributing to the widespread perception of Venezuela as a failed state. By highlighting the humanitarian crisis, CNN helped bolster international diplomatic pressure and sanctions against Maduro's regime, aligning with the stance of Western governments that supported opposition leader Juan Guaidó (Pozzebón & Hu, 2021). The network's emphasis on Venezuela's plight also fueled political movements within Latin America and beyond, pushing for democratic reforms and international intervention.

BBC coverage of the Cyprus dispute often geopolitical interests of the UK, especially concerning its military bases on the island. While the UK government has historically supported the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, it also maintains strategic interests in the British Sovereign Base Areas (Hadjigeorgiou & Skoutaris, 2019). For instance, during discussions about military interventions or regional security matters, such as airstrikes against ISIS, Cyprus has shown alignment with UK policies, underscoring the strategic partnership between the two nations. The UK government has consistently maintained a policy of non-recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as an independent state, which has contributed to the ongoing international isolation of the TRNC (Safa, 2024).

BBC and CNN have considerable influence in shaping political movements and ideas through their global reach and extensive coverage. Their reporting on major global events such as the Arab Spring, Hong Kong protests, Iraq War, and the Syrian Civil War demonstrates their power in shaping public opinion, influencing international policies, and legitimizing protest movements. However, their framing of events, especially the tendency to simplify complex situations into narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism, often influences public perceptions in ways that can have far-reaching consequences. While BBC is known for its more neutral and balanced reporting, it is not immune to criticism, especially on issues related to nationalism and sovereignty. CNN, with its more immediate and often polarized approach, also plays a key role in influencing global discourse, especially on international conflicts and civil rights issues. They are crucial in shaping contemporary global politics, but their influence must be understood within the context of the narratives they promote and the international interests they serve.

IV. AS A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOL

BBC and CNN play significant roles in public diplomacy and serve as tools for their respective governments to exert international influence while also shaping ideologies within their own countries as well. During the Cold War, the BBC

World Service was utilized as a counterweight to Soviet propaganda, broadcasting unbiased news to Eastern Europe (Johnston & Robertson, 2019). In the contemporary landscape, the BBC continues to broadcast in multiple languages, acting as a source of independent news in regions where media freedom is restricted. This effort promotes the UK's reputation as a defender of free speech and human rights.

Also, as a UK-based broadcaster, the BBC provided extensive coverage of Brexit, often emphasizing the economic and political risks while striving for neutrality (Greenslade, 2019). Its thorough analysis of Brexit's consequences significantly shaped public discourse. However, critics argue that in its pursuit of impartiality, the BBC may have given undue weight to fringe arguments or unsubstantiated claims from the Leave campaign, which contributed to the polarization of public opinion. While the BBC aimed for neutrality, its coverage was sometimes accused of fostering a "false balance," treating both sides of the debate equally, even when one was less substantiated (Randy & Witarti, 2021). This approach may have led to public confusion regarding the actual economic impacts of Brexit. The British government acknowledges the BBC World Service's role in public diplomacy by providing funding (Gov.UK, 2023). The World Service has been expanded or maintained in strategic regions where the UK seeks to exert influence, such as Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. In these areas, the BBC is often perceived as a reliable source of information, potentially countering authoritarian narratives. For instance, in regions like Iran and Afghanistan, where local media may be controlled or heavily censored, the BBC broadcasts in local languages, offering audiences an alternative to state-run propaganda and aligning with UK goals of supporting democratic movements and human rights (Sharma & Naresh, 2022).

The BBC also plays a vital role in shaping international perceptions of the UK's response to global crises, ranging from humanitarian aid to military interventions. Its portrayal of the UK's involvement in international aid during crises, such as famine or natural disasters, can reflect positively on the British government. For example, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the BBC's coverage of the UK's aid efforts helped project an image of the UK as a compassionate global leader, aligning with the British government's foreign policy objectives of enhancing influence through humanitarian assistance (Duru, 2020).

CNN also plays a pivotal role in U.S. public diplomacy, leveraging its global reach to promote American cultural values and soft power, despite being a privately funded entity. CNN International broadcasts to millions worldwide, effectively representing ideals such as democracy, freedom

of the press, and individual rights (Robertson, 2012). Its coverage of U.S. policies and social movements serves as a form of cultural diplomacy that showcases the vibrancy and openness of American society. For instance, CNN's reporting on significant events like movements, particularly the Black Lives Matter protests, emphasizes democratic processes and public discourse (Henn & Posegga, 2023). This transparency, even when critical of U.S. policies, reinforces global perceptions of America as a nation that values free speech and political engagement. CNN and other media outlets extensively covered the Black Lives Matter protests following the death of George Floyd. The framing of these protests highlighted systemic racism and police brutality, which helped elevate the movement to international prominence and inspired discussions about racial justice globally.

While CNN operates independently, its coverage often aligns with U.S. foreign policy interests, particularly during conflicts. During the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003, CNN's comprehensive reporting, including live broadcasts from Baghdad, shaped global opinion regarding U.S. military actions (Mhamdi, 2017). The network's portrayal of U.S. objectives, such as promoting democracy or removing dictators, resonated with government narratives during those periods (Dutta et al., 2012). CNN's coverage of international crises highlights U.S. humanitarian efforts, portraying the country as a global leader. For example, its extensive reporting on the U.S. response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake showcased military and civilian aid efforts, contributing to a favorable view of American engagement in international affairs (Walk et al., 2012). In the U.S., CNN has been increasingly viewed as aligned with specific ideological perspectives, particularly during the Trump administration, where it was often critical of the president (Lazer et al., 2017). This perception has led to accusations that CNN acts as a counterpoint to conservative media, rather than a neutral diplomatic tool. Nonetheless, during times of bipartisan consensus, such as anti-terrorism efforts, CNN can still function as a promoter of U.S. values abroad.

V. SOFT POWER AS A TOOL

Soft power, a concept introduced by Joseph Nye, refers to a nation's capacity to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion (Nye, 2008). Media outlets like the BBC and CNN serve as critical tools for projecting soft power on a global scale (Joseph, 2014). By disseminating information, shaping narratives, and reflecting the values of their respective countries, these networks exert significant influence over international audiences. Their function transcends mere news reporting;

they act as cultural ambassadors, shaping global perceptions of the UK and the US (Loomis, 2009). This analysis examines how the BBC and CNN contribute to soft power through agenda-setting, promoting national values, and aligning with foreign policy objectives.

One of the most potent tools of media is its ability to set agendas and control global narratives, significantly impacting international perceptions (Wright et al., 2020). Both the BBC and CNN, as global broadcasters with extensive reach, shape how international events are understood. By setting the agenda, these networks influence what international audiences focus on and how they interpret global events, amplifying stories related to political movements, social justice, and human rights. Promoting national values is a key component of soft power, making a country more appealing on the world stage. Both the BBC and CNN, whether intentionally or not, function as cultural ambassadors for their home nations. As the UK's public broadcaster, the BBC embodies British values of democracy, fairness, and free speech (Seaton, 2020). Through its World Service, funded by the UK government, the BBC acts as a conduit for British soft power by providing news to audiences in regions where media freedom may be restricted. Although both networks maintain editorial independence, their global reach often aligns with their governments' foreign policy objectives, especially during conflicts (Wright et al., 2020). The BBC also supports UK foreign policy through its World Service, which has historically provided accurate information in regions with state-controlled media. These media outlets serve as indirect diplomatic tools, helping their governments project narratives that resonate with geopolitical interests without engaging in overt propaganda.

However, both networks face challenges related to perceptions of bias and editorial independence. Critics argue that CNN's coverage of US politics was polarized, potentially diminishing its credibility among international viewers (Gilboa, 2005). Similarly, the BBC has faced accusations of favoring governmental perspectives during events like the Falklands War or the Brexit debate, leading to concerns about bias. Such perceptions can undermine the effectiveness of media as a tool for soft power by eroding trust in its objectivity.

In conclusion, the BBC and CNN, as global media giants, are potent instruments of soft power for the UK and the US,

respectively. Through agenda-setting, they shape global narratives that align with democratic values and foreign policy objectives. Their extensive reach and reputation as credible news sources enable them to project national values and influence international perceptions, making them vital players in the soft power strategies of their home countries. While challenges related to bias exist, their overall contribution to shaping public diplomacy and international discourse remains substantial.

VI. MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC OPINION ACROSS CULTURES

Language, cultural differences, and regional reporting play key roles in shaping public perceptions of events. Language not only conveys the content of information, but also instills specific mindsets and emotions in audiences. Cultural differences can influence how audiences perceive news, as each culture may view events from different perspectives¹. Regional reporting can also tailor information to local priorities and concerns, which can lead people to respond differently to global issues.

CNN and BBC often report on world events with different frames, influenced by their political leanings and cultural perspectives. For example, in covering topics such as international crises or wars, the BBC may focus more on the human and social dimensions of the issues, while CNN may pay more attention to the political and security aspects. This difference in framing can lead to different public perceptions among the two media audiences, influencing their opinions about a particular event².

Studying specific cases such as the coverage of the Iraq War, the 9/11 attacks, Brexit, or the Syrian refugee crisis clearly shows how different framings can influence public opinion in different countries. For example, media coverage of the 9/11 attacks in the United States had a greater emphasis on national security and subsequent military action, while other countries may have focused more on the humanitarian impact and global consequences. These types of different approaches can influence public views and local policies³.

The global credibility of CNN and the BBC is strongly influenced by public beliefs and trust in government institutions and the media in different countries⁴. In some countries, such as the United States, CNN may be seen as a reliable news source, while in others, especially in regions

¹ Maddux, W. W., & Yuki, M. (2006). The "ripple effect": Cultural differences in perceptions of the consequences of events. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 32(5), 669-683.

² Banerjee, M. (2001). Comparative analysis of Asian News on BBC and CNN. *Media Asia*, 28(1), 37-53.

³ Karaman, Y., Akdeniz, F., Savaş, B. K., & Becerikli, Y. (2022, October). A comparative analysis of svm, lstm and cnn-rnn models for the bbc news classification. In *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Smart City Applications* (pp. 473-483). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

⁴ Mao, X. (2003). BBC and CNN Television News: Their credibility among viewers in Malta. *Unpublished Master's Thesis*.

with authoritarian governments, it may be subject to criticism and distrust. On the other hand, the BBC is generally seen as an independent and reliable media outlet globally, although this credibility may also decline in certain countries due to political and social developments. Therefore, understanding these regional changes helps to better understand the impact of the media on public opinion.

VII. CONCLUSION

BBC and CNN are far more than news organizations; they are powerful agents of influence in global politics, diplomacy, and public opinion. This essay has highlighted how their extensive reach and credibility enable them to frame narratives that resonate with international audiences and align, intentionally or not, with the foreign policy objectives of their home countries. From the Arab Spring to the Syrian Civil War, from Brexit to the Black Lives Matter movement, their coverage has shaped public discourse, legitimized movements, and informed global diplomatic responses.

However, their influence is a double-edged sword. While their reporting often amplifies democratic ideals and humanitarian values, the simplification of complex geopolitical realities into dichotomous narratives of democracy versus authoritarianism can distort public understanding and escalate tensions. The ethical implications of such framing call for a deeper examination of their editorial choices and the potential biases that arise from their roles as instruments of soft power. Both networks exemplify the concept of media as tools of public diplomacy, projecting the cultural and political values of their respective nations while fostering global perceptions of their credibility. Yet, challenges to their neutrality and accusations of bias underscore the need for balanced reporting that respects the intricacies of global events.

In conclusion, the BBC and CNN wield immense influence in the global media landscape. Their ability to shape agendas and frame narratives makes them indispensable players in the interplay between media, power, and international relations. Understanding their dual role as both informers and influencers is crucial for critically engaging with the content they produce and the broader impact they have on shaping global discourse.

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