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#### MLA Citation

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The American University in Cairo  
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**VISUAL MESSAGES OF CONFLICT REPORTING ON TWITTER:  
VISUAL FRAMES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

A Thesis Submitted by

**Hasan Karademir**

to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication

under the supervision of

**Professor Shahira Fahmy**

(May 2021)

*I would like to dedicate my study to the victims of the forgotten war in Yemen, especially the child victims whose childhood and dreams were taken away from them. Every child deserves a childhood where they can listen to the laughter of their family instead of the sounds of bombs destroying their neighborhood.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A lot of different things happened during the three-year journey of my master's degree. Honestly, when I started graduate school, I did not expect my life to change that much. But I'm happy with this change which made me stronger. I would like to thank all the wonderful people and friends I met in Cairo who changed my life for the better.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Shahira Fahmy, who has always been supportive and believed in my capabilities throughout my entire journey at AUC from my exchange to my masters. Without her support, it would have been so difficult for me to reach this level. I always felt lucky to be one of her students. Also, I would like to give special thanks to her for sparing her time for the brainstorming where this project started.

My deepest gratitude and love go to my family, especially to my mother Nurgül and my father Kemal, who allowed their son to pursue a master's degree abroad even though it was so difficult for them. Thank you so much for always supporting my crazy ideas and strange life. It is an honor for me to have a family that has a very pure heart and always thinks of what is best for everyone.

## ABSTRACT

This comparative study employs the theoretical frameworks of framing and hierarchy of influences model to analyze the ethical forces affecting journalists on Twitter and simultaneously their visual frames constructed in their images on Twitter. It investigates the portrayal of the Yemen conflict in the personal Twitter accounts of Yemeni journalists who were affiliated with the United States (US) and Qatari news organizations. Several studies have pointed out the graphic war coverage of Arab news organizations whereas scholars argue that US news organizations provide sanitized coverage on war zones (Johnson & Fahmy, 2007; Silcock, Schwalbe, & Keith, 2008; Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). This study makes an important contribution to the literature of conflict reporting by adopting a comparative perspective to analyze the Yemeni war-related images of journalists affiliated with different news organizations on social media. Employing a content analysis over a time frame between 2014 and 2019, a total of 1272 Yemen-related tweet images were examined. Results showed differences in the graphic nature and visual narratives of the coverage on Twitter. The findings showed that Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news agencies visually portrayed the Yemen conflict by placing a large focus on the humanitarian consequences of the war. On the other hand, the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies framed the Yemen conflict from diverse perspectives, including demonstrations and official meetings. Further, results indicated that journalists, who were affiliated with US news agencies, were more likely to share a graphic visual on Twitter than journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies. Overall, the current study reveals that individual-level influences might be more powerful than organizational-level influences with regard to journalists' ethics-related decisions of showing graphic visuals on social media platforms.

Keywords: *Visual Communication, Conflict Reporting, Digital Journalism, Social Media, Foreign Affairs, Yemen Conflict, Framing Analysis, Content Analysis*

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

The journalism codes of ethics include truthfulness, objectivity, fairness, impartiality, accountability, integrity, editorial independence, and minimization of harm (Bucholtz, 2019; Society of Professional Journalists 2014). In this regard, Hanitzsch et al. (2011) showed that there is common international support among journalists for codes related to impartiality, reliability, and factuality from a comparative survey of 1,800 journalists from 18 separate countries. Despite the overlap, a review of the literature suggests that there is no single international subset of media ethics that universally applies to journalists. Many scholars, for example, maintain additional ethical boundaries for journalistic practices. Among these are freedom of expression, the freedom of displaying violent visual content (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007) and the protection of privacy (Hafez, 2002). This situation makes the study of journalism ethics and standards across countries more difficult for researchers.

The examination of ethical standards of journalists becomes more complicated when it comes to journalists' online reporting. Social media platforms are considered to be less constrained from traditional news values such as ethical codes and fact-reporters. Additionally, journalists can decide whether to follow the code of ethics applied by traditional media or choose to set their own ethical standards as much as social media permits. This creates a complex dynamic whereby journalists have the power to determine their own set of rules, which further raises moral dilemmas.

Furthermore, journalism ethics include "visual ethics", as images possess the ability to convey meaning and information to the audience. Visual ethics involve a complicated interplay between several different ethical forces, a process that lasts from the point of shooting the image,

right up until the presentation of the image to the audience (Shields, 2014). Further, several ongoing controversies related to ethics and war-related visuals exist. Media scholars claim that ethical standards, when it comes to war coverage, are ill-defined and ambiguous (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). Fahmy (2005a) attests that there are few professional rules to supervise photojournalists' and photo editors' selection of violent images.

Thanks to social media, journalists can directly communicate with their audience in the world of journalism today, simultaneously bypassing traditional media rules and obligations. However, as discussed above, this new development raises many questions related to journalism ethics. Additionally, most news organizations do not have clear-cut guidelines for their professionals regarding their image ethics on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Examples of some of the questions that come to the fore are: should journalists be held to the same ethical standards as non-journalists, or does a different set of standards apply to journalists in relation to their social media posting? Does the code of ethics pertain only to written text on social media, or is image sharing also included in this bracket? What kind of ethical standards and rules should journalists follow on social media, and why? Without a doubt, these aforementioned questions do not solely include the journalists' text, but also the phenomenon of image sharing. As Fahmy et al. (2014) noted, the rise of new technologies has made visual information far more accessible than traditional media. The masses use the internet as one of their main sources of information and most of the content that they communicate with each other through is visual. Journalists rely on visual information, and harness it to a great effect, to enhance the potency of their reporting on social media. However, there is scant academic literature on journalistic practices when it comes to using visuals on digital platforms

including Twitter (Pantti, 2019). By the same token, there is limited research on the ethical standards of how journalists communicate visual information on social media platforms.

This study analyzes Yemen conflict visuals posted by journalists on Twitter. The journalists' Twitter accounts were selected using the following criteria; the journalist's affiliations with news organizations from (the United States and Qatar) and the journalist's national background (Yemeni or Non-Yemeni). The study focuses on Twitter images used to report on the Yemen war to investigate journalists' visual portrayals and their image ethics for three reasons: First, war coverage offers diverse visuals, some of which might be ethically controversial; second, that the ethical boundaries of war coverage are not clearly defined (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). And lastly, the study focuses on the Yemen war because it has killed thousands of people and caused one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of the 21st century (Guterres, 2018). Overall, Yemen conflict visuals of journalists on Twitter presents itself as a relevant subject for the analysis of journalists' ethical standards and visual framing on social media.

The conflict in Yemen has evolved into a proxy and civil war between Saudi Arabia and Iran (Juneau, 2016). As a result, multiple countries, directly or indirectly involved in the politics or the armed conflict, have maintained their interests in the region. Since the beginning of the civil war, the United States has supported the Saudi-led coalition with arms deliveries and diplomacy against the Houthis backed by Iran (Allen & Riedel, 2020). On the other hand, Qatar was an active member of the Saudi-led coalition from the beginning of the conflict, until a political dispute arose between Qatar and several Arab countries from the coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Qatar was suspended from the coalition in 2017, after the coalition accused the country of supporting the Houthis and Yemen-based groups (BBC,

2017). Since then, Qatar has been pursuing a political agenda of trying to extend its control over the country's internal affairs and taking advantage of political turbulence in the country, by implementing a policy of balancing close ties with different sides in the Yemen conflict (Ramani, 2018). Thus, one can conclude that journalists affiliated with US news agencies would adopt different political agendas in comparison with journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies while covering the Yemeni conflict. The political backdrop could result in journalists demonstrating different agendas, which can manifest itself in the use of photos on their Twitter accounts.

Moreover, there is a rich literature showing the difference between the media in the United States and Qatar as presenting two contrasting opinions and attitudes in terms of depicting graphic visuals. News organizations affiliated with Qatar, especially Al-Jazeera, have been criticized several times for their graphic coverages of wars (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007) while editors of Al-Jazeera defend themselves by saying that graphic visuals, unlike sanitized visuals, depict the reality of war or conflict (Seib, 2008). On the other hand, the US media has been criticized for its sanitized visual coverage of wars, especially those where the United States is involved (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). The photojournalists and photo editors working for US news agencies claim that graphic visuals would be shocking and harmful for the audience. Yet, no study investigated the ethical boundaries of journalists who work for news organizations affiliated with the US and Qatar. This study bridges a gap in visual narratives created by journalists on Twitter and their ethical standards to deal with war-related images on the social media platform, comparing between journalists who were affiliated with US and Qatari news agencies.

From a theoretical perspective, this research uses both framing and the hierarchy of influences model to highlight the ethical boundaries and visual portrayals (frames) used by journalists. These theories fit well with the aims of this study. The visual framing theory was used to detect visual frames in the journalists' Twitter accounts regarding the Yemen conflict. The selection of images involves the eliciting of visual frames, centering certain aspects of the conflict whilst omitting others (Fahmy, 2010). Further, the media content including ethical standards and political context are influenced by five levels of the hierarchy of influences: social systems, social institutions, media organizations, routine practices, and individuals (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). These five-levels of influence play a role in the image-sharing of journalists on Twitter.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Ethical Guidelines and Journalism Ethics**

Journalism ethics is a term that is often mentioned or discussed, especially these days whereby politicians accuse journalists of being the disseminators of fake news. The ethical guidelines of any news organization appear as a milestone in statements commonly seen on their news website or in their building entrance. Yet, what exactly is journalism ethics? What do these ethical guidelines mean for journalists? Which ethics should guide journalists? In the 21st century, one of the main challenges facing journalism is what kind of ethical standards should guide the making of news (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014). This ethics inquiry is crucial for journalists and their organizations since it helps journalists to fully grasp their responsibilities and rights (Keeble, 2009).

The ethical foundation for media organizations to gather and disseminate information hails from two main principles: people's right to know and the journalists' responsibility to serve as a watchdog for society's interest and fulfill the public's need for information (Gauthier, 1999). Yet, the journalists' responsibility for the public's right to know cannot extend to all types of information (Montague, 1997). Therefore, it is crucial to the existence of some norms and guidelines for leading journalists while they are gathering and disseminating information (Gordon, 1999). These norms and guidelines in a news organization form a basis for the boundaries of journalistic ethics and standards. This subset of rules and guidelines is often coined as journalism's professional code of ethics (Czarnecki, 2017). Professional journalism associations or news organizations often formulate their code of ethics for their journalists and reporters (Mazumdar, 2016). Some scholars and journalists also propose implementing a



personal code of journalistic ethics (Keeble, 2009: 7). For example, the US media theologian John C. Merrill (1999) claims that journalists should seek their own ethics rather than comply with the ethical guidelines of organizations, commissions, or councils. Nevertheless, all of them believe that one ethical guideline should set boundaries in the journalistic end product.

These guidelines commonly apply to all members of a news organization (including editors, editorial writers, photographers, picture editors, and graphics editors), whose work directly affects the reported information. By setting rules and standards, journalism's code of ethics is a design to assure reliability and strengthen the quality of reported information. The guidelines assist journalists in their work environment by offering a pattern of self-monitoring and self-correction; "It [the code of ethics] is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment." (The Guardian Editorial Code, 2020). By the same token, scholars emphasize the importance of the existence of the code of ethics in a media organization to avoid individuals setting their values and rules. In other words, the code of ethics can provide an ideal pattern where media professionals can evaluate their performance both at an organizational level and at an individual level as well (Gordon et al., 1999). Further, codes of ethics provide a guideline for journalists to classify and deal with ethical dilemmas (The New York Times Ethical Journalism, 2018).

In a nutshell, the main goal of professional ethics is to provide a framework about what professionals can and cannot do. However, as seen in other professions, journalism ethics advises journalists what morality demands of them in a given locality. Ethical guidelines serve the social, political, and cultural values of a particular country (Hossain & Aucoin, 2018). Thus, the understanding and application of ethical guidelines between journalists generally differ based on the professionals involved, organization, country, and which era the event took place (Rao &

Wasserman, 2015). Despite these influencing factors, ethical guidelines of professional journalism associations and news organizations usually share similar codes such as impartiality, reliability, and factual reliability (Hanitzsch et al., 2011).

### **Influences on Journalists: Ethics and Decision-Making**

Generally, studies revealed the culture and normative expectations of a news organization as a key element that defines different ethical decisions (Voakes, 1997; Cotter, 2011). Cultural heterogeneity and diverse social norms are other explanations as well, highlighted by scholars, for the different ethical-related decisions among journalists (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). For example, Hanitzsch and et al. (2011) found different ethical views from a comparative survey of 1800 journalists from 18 countries. Their study reports that western journalists adhere more to universal ethical standards in their decisions whereas journalists from non-western contexts are more likely to be more flexible in their ethical views. In a similar vein, Limor and Himelboim (2006) reveal significant differences between 242 codes of media ethics from 94 countries across the globe. Moreover, Joseph and Boczkowski (2012) argued the expansion of media ethics research with the combination of two approaches: media ethics and newsroom sociology. This aims to help us better understand the most prevalent and common ethical challenges in the media news environment and to reach a consensus related to the objects of media ethics scholarship.

While considering the factors shaping the journalists' ethical decision-making, one of the foremost questions between media ethics scholars is also the possibility of universal media ethics and what kind of framework it could have (Wasserman, 2010). Because of the differences such as on the individual or organizational level, this leads to separate ethical decisions and discussions across news organizations and journalists. These differences would be minimized with global ethics journalism. However, few scholars were able to promote a universal ethics

code for journalists that can be applied under all conditions (Steiner & Okrusch, 2006; Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). One of the reasons for this challenge is the existence of competition between local and regional perspectives to prevail in shaping global media ethics. Further, the inclusion of diverse ethical perspectives, while at the same time trying to avoid cultural relativism, is a further reason as to why this debate is so complicated (Wasserman, 2011).

### **National vs. Universal Codes of Ethics in Journalism**

The term “ethics” derives its etymology from the Greek word "ethos ". This can subsequently be defined as character, practice, habit, or custom (BBC Ethics). The word “morals” differs from the word “ethics” in meaning as it is generally perceived as having a logical process, where settled principles are applied when two opposing moral obligations have a conflict. However, ethics do not always have one correct and straightforward answer. Between two conflicting morals, it is impossible to reach a general consensus. In this case, ethics is more likely to seek a balance of opposing correctness with a reflection of a society's assumptions about being right or wrong, and defining virtue and vice (Day, 2006: 3). Yet, when it comes to global media ethics, the role of ethics in setting a balance gets unsteady since there are many diverse opinions and different societal norms and customs regarding the “correct” ethics.

Scholars have explained that common media ethic codes across countries recognize the principles, at least denotatively: media freedom, impartiality, independence, and responsibility (Christians, Rao, Ward, & Wasserman, 2008; Hanitzsch et al., 2011). For example, Hafez (2002) in his comparison of ethics codes in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Muslim Asia, reported that there is a common trend that truth-telling and objectivity are seen as fundamental values of journalism. Similarly, Hanitzsch et al. (2011) indicated that common international support among journalists for codes related to impartiality, reliability, and factuality. Despite all

these similarities between ethics codes across countries, scholars also pointed out the inter-cultural differences as well among codes of ethics (Hafez, 2002; Wasserman, 2011; Hanitzsch et al., 2011). So, studies focus on a universal ethics code of journalism that serves as a melting pot with the inclusion of these local differences (Wasserman, 2011). Many academic and professional debates indicated a need for a universal code of journalism ethics that can be applied under all conditions. However, the views of scholars on the construction of a universal ethics code for journalists and media professionals are divided (Hossain & Aucoin, 2018).

For instance, Ward (2013) offered a contractual approach to form a universal ethical code of journalism, which advises journalists to be truth-telling as long as they respect the public interest and support democracy. This approach would be the case for journalists working in countries such as western countries where democracy and democratic incentives are supported. But not all countries support a political culture favorable to the thriving of democratic principles. As a response to this concept, Rao and Wasserman (2015) referred to a postcolonial theory that a real universal ethical code can only be formed by considerations and additions of all sides, not only values of Western people about what establishes good and ethical. Hossain et al. (2018) criticized this approach because the method becomes problematic when domestic values impose new forms of segregation. Aside from this, Couldry (2013) proposed a neo-Aristotelian approach that refuses to set global values. Instead, he centered the virtues and right-doing towards a center. To sum up, as seen in different approaches, there is no common consensus, among ethics scholars, of an accepted way that can form a universal ethics code for journalists all around the world. On the contrary, local perspectives or national ethics tend to be competing to put global ethics into the final form, which makes global journalism controversial or undesirable (Wasserman, 2011). For example, Alnajjar (2011) analyzed Al-Jazeera's coverage of the war on

Gaza and the coverage of Egyptian journalists in the football match with Algeria. She found a profound appreciation of the sense of patriotism among Arab journalists, especially during conflicts and wars. Many Arab journalists appreciate the importance of adopting global ethical journalistic principles such as impartiality and objectivity. Nevertheless, they may not show a full commitment to these values where they need to actively support their country or the pan-Arab region (Al-Najjar, 2011), which can be seen in journalists from other countries. Social norms and cultural differences challenge the idea of forming a universal ethical code of journalism that can be applied under all circumstances. Although media ethics scholars and media professionals have put forward many different approaches for forming global journalism ethics, it still seems challenging for forming a consensus and full commitment from journalists across different countries and organizations. Furthermore, this difficulty affects all extent of the ethics code including the image ethics. Therefore, media ethics scholars and media professionals debate also a universal ethical code of the selection of visuals used by journalists and news organizations, which can be applied on both online and offline media platforms. Similarly, regional and local perspectives on image ethics of journalism dispute the formulation of a universal image ethical code. So, the standards and editorial guidelines for the selection of visuals differ based on the individual involved, news organization, country, and time.

### **Image Ethics in Journalism**

The literature on image ethics generally concentrates on four areas: digital alteration of photos, ethical decisions regarding the shooting images, ethical decisions regarding the dissemination of images, and how codes of ethics address images and photographers (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006). Here, it can be said that there are three levels in these categories, which are ethical forces affecting shooting the image, ethical forces affecting publication of the

image, and lastly how the ethics code addresses two levels. This study will discuss image ethics in journalism based on these three levels.

### Ethical Forces Affecting Shooting the Image

In journalism ethics, photographers are the responsible parties for ethical decision-making due to their visual records of news stories for news agencies. Principally, their ethical dilemmas focus on authentic reporting (Shields, 2014) and reporting of violence and tragedy (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006).

Shields (2014) investigates authentic reporting in the following four criteria: accuracy and truthfulness of representing the scene, presenting the comprehensive context (telling a news story accurately and completely), manipulation, and comparative news value (importance, timeliness, proximity, and emotional appeal). Photographers should seek to shoot a photo that is accurate, truthful, and comprehensive in the representation of a scene. Along with that, photographers should avoid presenting stereotyping a photo to any individuals or groups (NPPA Codes of ethics, 2017). For instance, some journalists criticized the authenticity of some photos circulated in the U.S. media regarding the fall of the statue of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and Iraqis who gathered around it. Because most of the photos do not give a comprehensive context about the actual number of Iraqi people, who gathered around the toppling. Only a few U.S. news outlets highlighted how small the gathering of Iraqi people was (Fahmy, 2007). Similarly, Aday et al. (2005) noted that other U.S. news organizations chose to display the visuals that were commonly close-ups shots, which does not give a sense of the crowd's size. Instead, these close-up shots give the sense that the toppling of the statue was attended by droves of Iraqis (Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005) whereas long-shot images expose the reality with a crowd of around 200 people in attendance (Major & Perlmutter, 2005). Furthermore, digital manipulation of photos is

analyzed in the scope of authentic reporting. For the manipulation of photos, the National Press Photographers Association's (NPPA) code of ethics explains that "Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter the sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects." (NPPA Codes of ethics, 2017). In General, photo manipulation in news organizations or associations' code of ethics refers to change or digital manipulation of the content of a photograph, which may mislead readers and misrepresent subjects (NPPA Codes of ethics, 2017; Centre international du photojournalisme, 2017; Associated Press, 2019). Centre International du Photojournalisme (Perpignan) describes criteria for photojournalists to avoid photo manipulation as follows;

- *Do not add, remove, rearrange or flip things or people in the image.*
- *Do not modify colors.*
- *Do not crop a picture by deleting elements.*
- *Do not heighten the density, contrast or saturation for the purpose of removing elements or people, or over-dramatize a situation. (10)*

Additionally, reporting of violence and tragedy are other challenges that affect photographers' shooting an image in ethical situations. The literature reveals the key role of photographers in deciding and forming to report tragedy and violence (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006). Photographers often face ethical decisions while recording violence and tragedy. Therefore, some of them prefer to sanitize their war recording, (Howe, 2002) whereas others strongly believe that photographers should show the full reality of war without covering tragedy and violence (Fahmy, 2005b). In this regard, the literature also argues that the ethical line of photographs taken portraying suffering and pleading for help. This brings into question whether photographers should record the scene or attend to rescue (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006).

Kevin Carter's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph taken in Sudan in 1993, portraying a starving toddler on the dry ground with a vulture, waiting for the child to die, caused various debates about Carter's lack of duty to help save the child, bringing up once again the ethical dilemmas of such photographic practice (Fehrenbach & Rodogno, 2015). For photojournalistic perspectives and humanitarian reasons, it still remains an ethical dilemma as to whether one should distribute images of victims in the news media. Recently, Nilüfer Demir's photos of two drowned Syrian brothers (Alan and Galip Kurdi) on a beach in Turkey sparked a similar ethical discussion about how to record injured or dead people considering the dignity and respect of both victims and audience (Mattus, 2020). Photographer Nilüfer Demir said that "There was nothing left to do for him. There was nothing left to bring him back to life...I thought this is the only way I can express the scream of his silent body." Regarding this ethical discussion, Ron Haviv (2002), an American photojournalist who covers conflicts, also inferred a similar view with Nilufer Demir. The photographer's sole duty is to record the news story with the purpose of informing the public about the victims and the reality, in which case intervention would be dangerous. In short, the opinions of photographers are divided to record violence and tragedy. By the same token, ethical considerations are still unsettled about the way photographers address the violence and tragedy due to the dignity and respect of the victims and the audience.

#### Ethical Forces Affecting Publication of the Image

After the photos are captured, the choice of deciding whether to disseminate them to the audience or not comes to the fore. On one level, editors and producers take an active role in deciding what kind of pictures will be used. Several ethical forces impact their decision on image selection. Different concerns related to image ethics come up in the editorial rooms of news agencies; the tolerance of audience and readers, the subject's privacy, the impact of government



editorial censorship (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006), political sensitivity, and personal ethics (Fahmy, 2005b). At this point, the literature generally focuses on the ethical decisions of producers and editors related to the image of violence and tragedy (Fahmy, 2005b; Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006; McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). But, the publication of other types of images can be analyzed as well from the image ethics perspective. For example, images that are questionable in terms of social norms and culture can fit into this category. Producers and editors may not want to disseminate visuals that conflict with the social norms and culture of the country where they publish. Keith et al. (2006) noted that the major concern for the publication of tragic and violent images is related to audience tolerance. The decisions of producers and editors are concerned with the protection of viewers from disturbing and shocking reactions (Fishman, 2003; McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). Fahmy and Kim (2008) found that the visual coverage of the Iraq War in the U.S. and British press reported very few pictures portraying casualties. Similarly, other studies note that corpses were rarely shown by the U.S. offline and online media in their visual coverage of wars (Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005; Griffin, 2004; Griffin & Lee, 1995). Here, it is said that the general tendency of editors in the news media environment is not to publish such images of violence and tragedy that may not be tolerated by viewers (Fishman & Marvin, 2003).

Moreover, war photographs have a critical influence on public opinion. In this sense, governments tend to control the flow of images that come from war zones. The rich literature pointed out the controls of governments against the flow of images of injured and dead soldiers from war zones (Ottosen, 1992; Huppaufl, 1997; Howe, 2002). For instance, the US government's efforts were historically noted to shape public opinion by controlling or limiting the flow of war-related images (Perlmutter, 2005). Besides this restriction, the subject's privacy should be considered in the process of the publication of any image (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006).

Ethic codes generally address the privacy-related issues under the umbrella of lessening harm and fairness (Whitehouse, 2010). NPPA's ethics code (20017) makes a more specific explanation of how privacy is regarded in the visual reporting; "Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see." Political orientation, personal beliefs, and views have also been a consideration of whether the publication of a graphic photo is ethical or good. In the process of graphic visuals publication, personal opinions related to explicitness and political orientation take an active role in the visual gatekeeping of newsrooms, which makes this process subjective (Bissell, 2000). Further, past studies showed the relationship between political orientation and personal views for visual gatekeeping in the publication of ethically controversial visuals (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Fahmy, 2005b; Pfau et al., 2006; McKinley & Fahmy, 2011).

### Influences of Ethical Codes

Although few scholars have examined the effectiveness of news media codes of image ethics over media professionals (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006), Fahmy's (2005b) surveys carried out with photojournalists and photo editors reveal the struggle they feel when it comes to drawing a line for images, especially showing violence and tragedy considering whether a news professional would ethically agree on the visual content or not. For example, they might tend to run violent and tragic images in particular situations such as war reporting even though journalists normally do not agree on the circulation of these visuals that have the potential of disrupting social norms (Fahmy, 2005b). As a reason for this situation, some scholars point to the complexity of practicing ethical journalism while a few ethical judgments are explicit (Hulteng, 1985). Differently, others argued that external factors might have more influence on shaping the

ethical content than the formulated codes in the visual gatekeeping process (Fahmy, 2005b). In both scenarios, media scholars showed ethical codes are not viewed as crucial when making a decision related to image ethics.

To summarize, image ethics involves the complicated relation of many different ethical forces from shooting the image until conveying it to the audience. The literature revealed the process is not a simple evaluation of images with ethics codes. Moreover, the process has become more complicated after rich visual information started to appear on online platforms. Unlike in the past, journalists can now publish images on digital platforms for their audience without depending on any news organizations. The ethics of these images shared by journalists reveals a new ethical dilemma, especially when the journalists can easily publish graphic visuals on social platforms rather than traditional media. Moreover, most organizations do not have clear-cut guidelines for their professionals regarding their image ethics on digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

### Online Image Ethics

Digital media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook enabled journalists can share pictures and videos at any moment with their audience. Past studies show that images enhance content interaction more than posts without images on social media platforms (Ulloa, Mora, Pros, & Tarrida, 2015). In the same vein, journalists and news organizations rely on visuals (images, videos, memes) on social platforms to increase engagement with their audience. For example, Pantti (2019) noted that tweets with visuals often receive enhanced engagement, higher shareability rate, and better articulation, which makes visual sharing on Twitter more inviting for journalists. Visual tweets are often used to enrich conflict reporting from zones. However, this situation has prompted discussions regarding which ethics codes should be applied

to these types of images shared by journalists. Plus, most ethics codes still neglect a clear guideline for online journalistic practices. Segado-Boj and Díaz-Campo (2015) found that only nine of 99 ethic codes were applied across countries such as Norway, Canada, and the UK involving references to the Internet and ICTs. When it comes to the ethics of images that are circulating on social platforms, there is a lack of clarity for their ethics-related issues (Ward, *Digital Media Ethics*). The ethical discussions concentrate on two matters. First, visuals can easily be manipulated by third parties on social media platforms (Friend & Singer, 2007). Some concerns were raised related to the convergence of traditional photojournalism principles with digital platforms since new technologies enabling citizens to edit and enhance images with ease (Ward, *Digital Media Ethics*). It is still not clearly defined by newsrooms as to where to draw an ethical line for the usage of visuals that comes from citizens. Second, is the concern related to the ease of transmission of tragic and violent visuals on digital platforms. As a recent example, most of the digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Reddit, and Twitter had roles in publicizing the violent Christ church attack videos and, subsequently the hateful ideology behind it. The shooting videos become available rapidly across different platforms that failed to delete footnotes before spreading. Further, this situation once again sparked controversies about the role of social platforms in spreading hateful and violent content (Timberg, Harwell, Shaban, Tran & Fung, 2019; Fahmy, Karademir & Taha, 2020).

### **Ethics of War-related Visual Coverage**

Research points out those visuals are more influential than written text to affect war policy views and attitudes (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). The photographs taken in a war zone convey different information and impressions on the audience depending on their context. That is

why, these diverse messages of war images can produce different public opinions on the war (Graber 1966), which makes these images crucial.

Further, the literature reveals photographers and editors have authority over whether and how to display the tragedy and violence of a war or conflict (Tomlinson, 1991; Fahmy, 2005). Some of the photographers and editors choose pictures of a war displaying destroyed buildings, streets, and poor people, while others focus on injured victims and the deceased. According to Graber (1990), presenting these two aspects of war has a separate effect. Other scholars supported these different reactions of the audience depending on the context of a war photograph; graphic versus non-graphic (McEntee, 2015). Former Pulitzer war photographer winner Sue O'Brien (1993) outlines this distinction: "photos run for shock value and shocking photos run to tell an important story" (p. 71). In this context, it is said that there are two trends of presenting a war: to fully inform the audience (graphic) or rather to ensure not traumatizing or disturbing the audience (non-graphic). To clarify, Potter and Smith (2000) codify this violent graphicness by "shockingly depict[ing] physical harm to the victims" (p. 302) and other elements in particular that increase this graphicness, such as close-ups. The line of visual gatekeeping between graphic and non-graphic war photographs ranges from choosing non-graphic images of war to the aggressive and sensible use of tragic images (Shields, 2014). Here, the often-used term of "the breakfast test" for war images, a phenomenon defined as whether or not a graphic image would be too obscene for viewing whilst having breakfast (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). In this sense, graphic news photographs, which may not pass "the breakfast test", would disturb the audience inviting criticisms. Due to this, editors are generally reluctant to run graphic pictures of war in the news sector (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). This tendency of editors' attitude is exposed in the studies of the war coverage in the 20th century as well, with the media rarely publishing

images of corpses (Fishman & Marvin, 2003). On the other hand, news organizations would draw criticism for not exposing the stark reality of war if they do not run graphic news images (Emmett, 2010; McKinley & Fahmy, 2011; DeGhett, 2020). In a nutshell, some audiences may feel uncomfortable seeing shocking images whereas others might think the reality of war is veiled. This is especially true if the pictures are sanitized from the true violence of war and conflict when deemed ready to pass "the breakfast test" (Hamill, 2004). Additionally, the editing choices as to whether to sanitize war photographs might cause to change public opinion negatively or positively toward the war effort (McEntee, 2015).

Since the selection of war photographs is such an important and complicated issue, the question that poses itself here is which rules or ethical guidelines should play a role in the visual gatekeeping of graphic and non-graphic images for conflict reporting? The literature principally points out the subjective nature of visual gatekeeping for war-related-to images, instead of exact formulas to apply ethical decisions for those images (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). Fahmy (2005a) outlines: "when dealing with graphic photographs, the context of the news, self-censorship, personal ethics, and audience expectations are active ingredients in the selection process" (p.152). Some of these factors may even trump strict adherence to codes of ethics for selecting graphic images. So, it would be said that all of these put-together factors help editors to set the balance between what the audience wants to see and what they need to see from a war zone. Furthermore, from a journalism ethics perspective, media scholars explain that the ethical boundaries of war coverage are not well-defined in general (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). In times of war or conflict reporting, journalism ethics naturally becomes unclear and vague (Mohl, 2003). In a similar vein, image ethics in war reporting reflect the same trend on its visuals. Crisis and military conflicts unsettle the ethical guidelines for image selection for their reporting. In

this regard, Fahmy (2005b) explains that there are few professional rules to supervise photojournalists' and photo editors' selection of violent images. In general, decisions for graphic war visuals are conceived on a case-by-case basis by visual editors (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006). So, having said that there is the complexity of factors affecting decision-making, (whether to display graphic or non-graphic images of war) (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Housley, 2008) and no precise ethical rules for choosing the 'right' war photographs (Fahmy, 2005b), it is an arduous task searching for global image ethics of war reporting applied by all news organizations and journalists. In this regard, there is scant available literature on global image ethics of war coverage. Therefore, country-by-country analysis of image ethics of war reporting makes this investigation a feasible research area.

#### Ethics of War-related Visual Coverage in US Media

Some Western countries have formed image ethics concerning the broadcasting of the dead and injured people (especially citizens of the country developing the codes of ethics). Similarly, editors in the United States look for a balance between journalistic responsibilities and their audience taste (O'Brien, 1993). Even some critics dispute the widespread conservatism in the general media atmosphere of the US (Robertson, 2004; Fahmy, 2005b; Fahmy, 2007). It can be perceived that the media are getting more conservative day by day, displaying more and more graphic visuals to hook the audience as there seems to be a correlating link between graphic photos and user interaction (Robertson, 2004; Fahmy, 2005b; Fahmy, 2007). Rainie and Fallows (2004) found that Americans disapprove of the showing of graphic war-related images on the Internet. Here, it is said that the American audience followed wars in the past with a sanitized visual coverage without exposing deaths and injured people (Bennett & Paletz, 1994), and similar visual frames have been followed for the recent wars as well. Studies revealed that US

news organizations were unwilling to display graphic images for their coverage related to the Vietnam War (Zelizer, 2005). Similar visual frames were noted to report on the Iraq war, which has been displayed in the American traditional media with sanitized visuals (Silcock, Schwalbe, & Keith, 2008). As an example of this, the corpses were distinctly missing from visual coverage of the U.S. traditional media for the Iraq War (Griffin, 2004; Aday, 2015). Fishman (2003) outlined photo editors limited the graphic images of dead people to protect the audience from shocking or damaging reactions. The American critic, Philip Kennicott (2003) concluded this: "For American news organizations, which have refrained from showing all but glimpses of the footage [the images of dead American soldiers], it was far from simple. It was a matter of taste, ethics, professional standards and responsibility to a complex web of constituents: viewers, families of the soldiers, the government, and news organizations' often vaguely defined sense of journalistic mission and responsibility."

Moreover, scholars exhibit that US news organizations, compared to other international news organizations are more likely to cover the graphic visuals of wars in which U.S. troops are involved (Fahmy & Kim, 2008). Zelizer (2004) stated that American media organizations seldom display images of dead or injured American or failed military actions. Some of the U.S. news media were criticized for their assumed role in backing military interests by their coverage patterns (Scharrer & Blackburn, 2015) such as using a negative tone for antiwar demonstrators (Luther & Miller, 2005), promoting official sources (Fahmy, 2007), and endorsing the U.S. government's justifications for war (Fried, 2005). Further, their image ethics of the U.S. media becomes elusive when it comes to foreign casualties. This manner is prevalent as well for the use of dead terrorists' images that are served by the U.S. military to raise national morale (Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). For example, Tal Samuel-Azran and his colleagues (2014)



examined the 1,380 images of Gaddafi's last days from five international news networks; CNN, FOX (the U.S. leading news channels), BBC, Al-Jazeera English, and CH1 (Channel 1 News, Israeli news network). They found that CNN and FOX showed highly horrific images, related to Gaddafi's death, more so than Al-Jazeera and British news network.

Scholars explain that different reasons regarding whether U.S. media uses sanitized graphic images depend on the situation. Some media scholars described it as the consideration of the American audience's taste (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011). Peterson and Spratt (2005) noted that visual editors commonly considered audience sensitivity while avoiding graphic images because these images would disturb or shock the audience. On the other hand, others explain that the U.S. government's attempts to control public opinion by controlling the flow of war images (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006) or the abstention of the news industry in the U.S. (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011) since they can have an important effect on people's attitudes and perceptions.

Shortly, the news networks in the U.S. may trump adherence to professional ethics when they have clear political motives to use graphic images (Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). Besides, the photo editors in the U.S. media frequently avoid using graphic images, especially from war zones, with the following considerations: the audience's taste, the so-called "breakfast test" (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011), and protecting the audience from physiologically damaging experiences (Fishman, 2003). Past studies supported this point by describing the degree of tolerance for showing ethically-discussable images with a balance of situational conditions and the organization's political agenda (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Here, it would be said that the lack of strict ethical boundaries regarding graphic images appearing in the U.S. media (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011) enables the photo editors to take incentives to arrange this balance in their media organizations.

However, the literature here concentrates largely on the understanding and applications of news organizations for the war-related images, not the opinions and the personal attitudes of journalists related to image ethics of war-related visuals. In the 21st century, journalists can practice their work on social media without relying on any media organization. They can also share war-related visuals from a conflict or war to inform people. This direct interaction of journalists with the audience allows researchers to inquire about their individual journalism ethics, outside the confines of their organizations. There are studies that either survey or interview journalists, who work for U.S. news organizations, about the ethics of war-related visuals (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011; Hanitzsch et al., 2011). However, scholars frequently advise investigating the image ethics of their news organization or general media environment. These studies overlook journalists' individual image ethics implications in digital platforms while providing visual information. There is little research about how journalists practice their work through images online through social media platforms such as Twitter (Pantti, 2017). The same applies to the image ethics of journalists on the war-related images that are then shared on digital platforms to inform people. The ethical questions that should, in fact, be asked with regards to image usage on social media, since journalists practice their journalism by providing visual information about war zones. This study analyses the Twitter images of the journalists who worked for U.S. news organizations. All visuals were shared on Twitter to inform people about the Yemen conflict or Yemen as a whole. This will be an important addition to the literature for understanding how image ethics has been shaped in the 21st century by journalists. To understand this better, and by studying these journalists' Twitter accounts, this study will analyze images of journalists on Twitter, who either work for or contribute to Al-Jazeera.

## Ethics of War-related Visual Coverage in Arab Media

Many studies point out that graphic images of dead and injured people are more tolerable in non-Western media, compared to the U.S. and other media outlets (Robertson, 2004; Himelboim & Limor, 2008). For example, scholars agree that Arab viewers are more likely to see graphic images from conflict areas due to these graphic images' role in giving the full picture of war (Fahmy & Johnson, 2007). Many studies have been carried out, comparing graphic images between western news outlets and Al-Jazeera, amongst the most-watched satellite station in the Arab world (Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). The literature explains that Al-Jazeera is more likely to report personal suffering, injured bodies, and dead people from conflict areas (Ayish, 2001). Jaspersen and El-Kikhia (2003) report that casualties and human sufferings were highlighted on Al-Jazeera TV's coverage to report on the Afghan war.

In a similar vein, Ayish (2002) states that visual frames of Al-Jazeera TV emphasize deaths and injuries and were presented for reporting conflicts in Iraq and Palestine. The statements of Al-Jazeera officials support this literature as well. Faisal Bodi (14,2003), senior editor for Al-Jazeera's Web site, talking on the Iraq War, said: "Of all the major global networks, al-Jazeera has been alone in proceeding from the premise that this war should be viewed as an illegal enterprise. It has broadcast the horror of the bombing campaign, the blown-out brains, the blood-spattered pavements, the screaming infants, and the corpses. Its team of on-the-ground, unembedded correspondents has provided a corrective to the official line that the campaign is, barring occasional resistance, going to plan." (Seib, 2008:107).

On the other hand, Al-Jazeera has been criticized for image ethics because of promoting graphic visuals from conflict areas in the Middle East (Figenschou, 2011). It has been accused of neglecting image ethics for graphic visuals, reporting on the Afghan and Iraq Wars and the

Palestinian uprising (Intifada). For example, the British media condemned Al-Jazeera's decision to screen a 30-second video clip of two dead British soldiers (Bodi, 2003). Referring to the footage Al-Jazeera's former editor-in-chief, Ibrahim Hilal, he defended his organization saying "what we are doing is showing the reality. We didn't invent the bodies, we didn't make them in the graphics unit... We have to show that there are people killed in this war. The viewer has to judge whether war is the most suitable way to solve problems. If I hide shots of British or American people being killed, it is misleading to the British and American audience. It is misleading to the Arab audience if they imagine that the only victims of this war are the children and women of Iraq. They have to know that there are victims from both sides" (Seib, 2008:108).

In summary, many issues can be brought into question regarding Al-Jazeera's journalistic values and their reporting taste and ethical standards due to their excessive use of graphic images from conflict areas, especially in the Middle East (Seib, 2008). Here, another set of questions should be analyzed: what does the code of ethics Al-Jazeera implement regarding the use of visuals from conflict areas? What should they be, and should they be the same as Western journalism ethics? In general, Al-Jazeera Network's Code of Ethics (2014) declares, similar to the journalism ethics in western countries, that it will '...adhere to the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political over professional consideration'. With regards to image ethics, there are no open sources for researchers to examine but the image ethics can be analyzed in the same way with the above codes of ethics. However, based on the statements of Al-Jazeera officials and previous rich literature about their extensive use of graphic images, it is said that the Al-Jazeera network does not perceive graphic visuals in conflict areas as unethical since they are part of the 'real' realities of the war. Therefore, the network does not prefer to broadcast majorly

sanitized war-related visuals, which are generally chosen in the US media (McKinley & Fahmy, 2011).

In order to enrich the research area to understand why Al-Jazeera has different ethical standards for image journalism compared to Western media, there should be more studies done, examining not only Al-Jazeera's perspective but also the views of its audience and journalists on image ethics. Regarding this, Fahmy and Johnson (2007) present a unique investigation with their focus on Al-Jazeera's audience demands for the type of war-related visuals. Following the survey with viewers of Al-Jazeera, they report that nine in ten respondents favored the use of graphic imagery, stating that visual aids help inform the readers. Besides this study, unfortunately, there is little to no literature focusing on the ethics of Al-Jazeera's war-related use of imagery, neither from the audience nor the Al-Jazeera journalists' perspective.

### **The Conflict in Yemen**

The conflict in Yemen is an ongoing, and multi-sided civil war, affecting thousands of people since 2014. According to the United Nations refugee agency report (2020), the war had displaced more than three million people, and approximately twenty-four million people are in desperate need. The United Nations refers to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen as "the worst in the world" (UN News, 2019).

### Background

The protests of the Arab Spring uprising spread to Yemen in 2011. Thousands of people protested against the authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, demanding his resignation from office. Following increasing domestic and international pressures, Ali Abdullah Saleh left the presidential office to his vice president Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi as interim president in a transition brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional organization based in

Saudi Arabia, and supported by the United States. During this transitional period, economic uncertainties and political disturbances brought forth the rise of several groups claiming to constitute an official government in Yemen (Robinson, 2021). Amongst these groups, the Shia-Houthi movement, backed by Iran, had become one of the most serious threats to the Hadi-Government (Salisbury, 2020) and took control of the largest city, Sana'a, demanding a new government and cheaper fuel prices. President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government were forced to resign when the rebels captured the presidential palace in January 2015. A coalition of the Gulf States led by Saudi Arabia launched military operations and sanctions to reassemble the former Yemeni government with U.S indirect support (Robinson, 2021). Following these operations, Hadi returned to Aden in September 2015. Since then, the conflict between the two parties has continued with their supporters and allies still at odds. Both the Hadi-government and the Houthis claim to hold legal authorization to form an official government in Yemen (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Their fight has been seen as the expansion of the Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy conflict in the region, (Juneau, 2016) even though Iran denied its intervention in Yemen (BBC News, 2020). Iran is the only country to accept the Houthi government and is the most influential country to support the Houthi's capital, Sana'a (Allen & Riedel, 2020). Moreover, the political turbulence within Yemen has led to the emergence of other groups such as the Southern Transitional Council (Forster, 2017), which took the control of some parts of Yemen by claiming to be the real representative government of the Yemeni people. Experts point to the political saga and the fragmented society of Yemen as the main reasons hindering long-term stability for the region (Orkbay, 2019).

### The US position on Yemen

Since the beginning of the conflict, the U.S. has backed the Saudi-led coalition with arms deliveries and diplomacy (Allen & Riedel, 2020). A host of western countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have also provided similar services (Robinson, 2021). After the allegations of civilian deaths in coalition air attacks, Western countries and the U.S. decided to limit their weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the U.S. continues to be one of Saudi Arabia's most important arms suppliers (Salisbury, 2020). During the Trump administration, the U.S. continued its support although there were international criticisms and he did not receive any congressional support (Allen & Riedel, 2020). Following the decision of the Trump administration, the U.S. clearly stated its position on the conflict in this ongoing proxy war. In January 2021, the Trump administration decided to label the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization, which put pressure on countries that have active ties within Yemen and with the Houthis (Allen & Riedel, 2020). Although Houthi insurgents do not create a direct threat to the U.S., their battle against Saudi Arabia impedes the interests of the United States in the region (Demirjian, 2018).

### The Qatari position on Yemen

At the beginning of the conflict, Qatar was a member of the Saudi-led coalition. Some of Qatar's activities in Yemen highlighted its key membership in the coalition as well; having cease-fire meetings before 2011, humanitarian conferences in Doha, its large aid to Yemen, and the supportive coverage for the coalition's actions in its affiliated media outlets (Baron, 2017). Yet, Qatar had been criticized by the countries in the coalition over its ties to the political Islamists and Iran. Mainly these reasons led the coalition to decide to end Qatar's intervention in Yemen (Gambrel, 2017). Some countries in the coalition(Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and

Bahrain) had already blocked the news websites affiliated with Qatar such as Al-Jazeera before this decision as a result of the comments that shared in Qatari media, allegedly by Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani criticizing Saudi Arabia (BBC News, 2017). Afterward, Kuwaiti mediators flew to Saudi Arabia and conveyed a list of Saudi Arabia's demands to Qatar. These included shutting down the Al-Jazeera network because of its "interfering" in foreign countries' affairs and terminating any type of support to terrorist organizations (McKernan, 2017).

Following the crisis between Qatar and the four Arab countries, the Yemeni government showed its support to the Saudi-led coalition by cutting its ties with Qatar while the crisis weakened the Saudi-led coalition for supporting Yemen's government against the Houthis (El Yaakoubi, 2017). Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who has appeared many times on Al-Jazeera as a guest, blamed Al-Jazeera for being a medium for disseminating terrorist propaganda (Baron, 2017). Further, the Saudi-led coalition expelled Qatar from its alliance, accusing the country of supporting the Houthis and Yemen-based radical groups (BBC News, 2017). Since then, Qatar has been attempting to increase its control over the country's internal affairs and take advantage of political turbulence in the country with a policy of balancing close ties with the Houthis and Islah factions of the Yemeni government (Ramani, 2018).

#### Reporting on Yemen Online and Offline

*“The media workers are more dangerous to our country than the nationalist and warring mercenaries”.*

The leader of Houthi rebels, Abdelmalek al-Houthi, said in a televised speech in 2016

(Nasser, 2017)



Many reports highlighted difficulties journalists faced wanting to report on the Yemen conflict in the field (Economic Media, 2019; Freedom House, 2019). Journalists in Yemen witnessed violations involving the wounding, kidnapping, harassment, and assault of those working in media organizations (Sayed, 2019). Many countries such as the U.S. and France called on Yemen to provide the general safety and protection of journalists operating in the country (Human Rights Council, 2019). The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that 17 journalists were killed in Yemen because of their work between 2014 and 2018 (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2021). Furthermore, the report of the U.N. Human Rights Council (2018) underlined the pressures and threats on journalists coming from all warring parties in Yemen on journalists (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2020). As a result of this tightly controlled and unsafe work environment for journalists, there are very few foreign journalists in Yemen (Nasser, 2017). Journalist Charlene Rodrigues (2015), who worked as a journalist in Yemen, describes the situation as follows: "Yemen's war is not only a forgotten war, for many it is also unknown". Instead of sending foreign correspondents, international news organizations expanded their network with local Yemeni journalists to get more information from the conflict area (Sinjab, 2017). That is why there are large numbers of Yemeni journalists working inside and outside Yemen for media organizations that are affiliated with different countries and opinions.

Moreover, Yemeni journalists working in Yemen face a crackdown in the traditional media landscape, which exists in both the north and south of Yemen. The polarized media outlets force Yemeni journalists to abide by propagandistic coverage (Nasser, 2017). Under these circumstances, Twitter provides an opportunity for journalists in Yemen to escape from this hindered and biased media landscape (Noman, Faris, & Kelly, 2018). Further, Noman and his colleagues (2018) note that government efforts in Yemen to suppress Twitter users with biased

media content in favor of them do not work even though local filters hinder access to some content. On Twitter, users find a way to get information from the sources those users feel more socially and politically affiliated with. In fact, this is not a unique case in Yemen. Twitter served a similar role during the Gezi Park protests in Turkey by providing rich visual and text content about the protests where the media had been silenced under the authoritarian regime (Tufekci, 2021). Similar cases can be traced back to the Arab Spring (Bossio, 2014) or the 2018 Iranian protests. Here, it is said that journalists can convey more freely their textual and visual information to their audience on Twitter, especially in countries where authoritarian regimes crackdown on media outlets (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). By the same token, Twitter has also been stocking up on significant visual and textual information about the Yemen conflict with the tweets of journalists and media outlets.

Based on the above, it is clear that Twitter provides an important space for journalists to report conflicts. Accordingly, in the case here, the focus is on the Twitter accounts of journalists to analyze their conflict reporting on the social media platform.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employs the theoretical frameworks of framing and hierarchy of influences model to analyze the ethical forces affecting journalists on Twitter and simultaneously their visual frames constructed in their Twitter images.

#### **Framing**

Despite the kind of medium to report a conflict or war, interactions between sources and journalists lead to start a framing process for news stories (Entman, 1993). Framing can be seen in any news story in a way that journalists and news media professionals select and highlight some pieces of reality while neglecting others, causing different judgments and mindsets in the mind of the audience (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Entman's (1993) definition is often cited in the literature, defining framing as: "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). Perceptions of societies towards news stories are made through an interaction of their own beliefs and values with those presented in the media even if the effect of framing in the news is not as strong to form a public opinion for a specific matter (Gordon & Miller 2004: 72).

The media plays an important role when people express their opinions and beliefs. Therefore, public opinion and journalism are perceived as inextricable by many media scholars. Consequently, politicians are expected to compete with each other and with journalists to impose the frame of the reality represented in the media, which will serve their benefits most on the news (Entman, 1991). The attempts of politicians to limit the activities of journalists and people on Twitter in authoritarian countries support this point. For example, Twitter was blocked

numerous times in Turkey by the court order to apply "protection measures" (BBC News, 2014; Reuters, 2016)

A common tool used by journalists is that they rely on visuals to report on global crises (Zelizer, 2002). Some visuals, such as Alan Kurdi's photo, showcase severe conditions of human suffering, which play a critical role in shaping the public's opinion and help to build cumulative public attention (Hellmueller & Zhang, 2019). In the 21st century, social media has become an important medium to fulfill people's need for visual and textual information. Similarly, people seek a deeper understanding of conflicts and wars from social media tools especially Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (Mis, 2016). In this way, Twitter serves as one of the key channels to convey large visual information from war zones for journalists and news organizations. Twitter allows journalists to report a bigger picture of the region where the conflict exists by extensive coverage and depicting daily life. Traditional media commonly is not able to separate extensive and comprehensive coverage of conflict reporting happening abroad due to their need to cover all forms of news coverage. On the other hand, Twitter provides an open space with a limitless textual and visual storage option to journalists for conflict reporting, depending on which areas interest them. Regardless of the vast opportunities that Twitter provides to journalists, this does not mean the framing process comes to an abrupt end.

As Entman (1993) noted, the framing process starts with the first interactions between sources and journalists for the breaking news. Accordingly, the framing process has indications also for Twitter while journalists are reporting on a conflict through their personal Twitter accounts. This is because journalists share information on Twitter with their followers after they engage with a source related to a conflict. They also select and highlight some aspects of a perceived reality for the conflict on Twitter. Moreover, this framing process can be detected in

not only written tweets but also Twitter images of journalists and news organizations. It can be said with gumption that journalists highlight and select some aspects of perceived reality through their Twitter images when they visually inform their followers on Twitter. In addition, this situation leads to the creation of a visual framing process in the interaction between journalists and the audience on Twitter.

Visual framing can be established by emphasizing or omitting certain photos evoking particular opinions in the audience's minds. Previous studies have revealed that a major element of visual framing is the repetition and frequency of visual depictions eliciting similar opinions (Fahmy, 2007: 148). For instance, one of Schwalbe's studies unveiled the visual narrative that was used to portray the first 16 months of the Iraqi war by U.S. News & World Report, Newsweek, and TIME. Images cemented the visual frames of 'heroic troops' and modern arms, which reinforces a government-promoted viewpoint and public support (Schwalbe, 2013: 254). Here, it may be recalled that the way in which war is depicted can evoke sympathy or, on the contrary, insight apathy and impassivity among the audience (Sontag, 2003). Therefore, emphasizing some aspects of a perceived reality while ignoring others through the selection and repetition of particular photos can affect public opinion (Graber, 1984; Iyengar & Simon, 1997).

This research will principally focus on the visual framing constructed by Twitter images of the journalists who were affiliated with Qatari and US news agencies. Previous studies concerning visual framing explain several complicated forces at play with regard to these visuals. Visual framing concerns the selection and repetition of particular aspects of a perceived reality and their accentuation by visual stimuli (Brantner, Lobinger, & Wetzstein, 2011). As previous studies have noted, visuals are highly influential tools for framing (Fahmy, 2010; Hellmueller & Zhang, 2019), disseminating ideological messages (Messaris & Abraham, 2001), and thus

shaping public opinion (Fahmy & Wanta, 2007) due to visuals' distinctive qualities. Photos have the ability to be processed quicker than words (Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015), appeal, and memory enhancement, with interpretation easy and accessible (Graber, 1996).

Moreover, Twitter images remain a significant research area for visual framing. Having previously asserted that journalists report visually on a conflict with Twitter images, this study examines different journalists' images on Twitter related to the Yemen conflict by employing visual framing as a theoretical framework. Thus, this study will explore the visual narratives used by journalists, which reference certain ideas while omitting others. There is a rich literature that a key element of visual framing is the recurrence of similar visual depictions (Fahmy, 2007). Scholars explain this highlighting and emphasizing through echoing visual frames, as a framing tool that renders ideas more noticeable and longer-lasting, more so than other views (Fahmy, 2005a). Therefore, repeating and highlighting visual stimuli can rationalize the viewpoint of news organizations and journalists on their news coverage. By the same token, a corresponding logic that too can be applied to journalists' images on Twitter reporting on a conflict. Considering the limited research in the field of visual frames of journalists' images on Twitter, this research adds a significant value to the literature. Furthermore, by adding journalists from different news agencies affiliated with different countries, this study provides a broad comprehension of visual framing on Twitter images.

### **The Hierarchy of Influences**

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) explained a hierarchy-of-influence model which takes into consideration both macro and micro-level forces influencing the news-making process. Their model demonstrates the link between the framing process with individuals, organizations, or institutions (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This hierarchy of influences model organized what has

been designed as several theoretical frameworks to explain the different effects of media content. They summarized influencers on the media content with five main levels from the micro to macro forcers; individuals, routine practices, media organizations, social institutions, and social systems (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

### Individual-level Influences

At the individual level, the hierarchy of influences model focuses on the determinants that affect media content, coming from individual communicator's characteristics on both the personal and professional level. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) described demographic as “the most basic and visible background profile of a profession” (p. 211). Besides the demographic characteristics, the individual level is also related to subjective preferences of a selection of news. Journalists select or reject news stories based on their particular decisions or personal beliefs (Snider, 1967). Therefore, media content is influenced by the mix of the whole personal background: gender, nationality, religious belief, political and cultural orientation, opinions (e.g. ethical standards), education, and professional roles.

### News Media Routines Influence

News media routines have been defined as “repeated practices, forms, and rules that media workers use to do their jobs” (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014: 165). For instance, deadline pressure, convenient news hole, and evaluation of newsworthiness can be assessed at this level (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001). Further, the medium type such as print and television plays a role in gatekeeping decisions for the characters of news stories depending on the respective medium (Kim, 2010). Rely et al. (2015) found differences in professional role perceptions of Iraqi Kurdish journalists across media platforms such as print, news agency, and the internet. Along with medium type, studies also pointed out the differences in the news media

routines across countries. Here, it can be said that the influences of news media routines differ across organizations and countries.

### Organizational-level Influences

At the organizational level, the selection of news is influenced by direct and indirect forces both within and among news organizations. Some of these forces can be described as follows: organizational policy, professional roles, how the media organization is structured, organizational size, and the type of media ownership (Relly, Zanger, & Fahmy, 2014). For example, bigger news organizations tend to investigate more influential stories than smaller news organizations due to the capacity of sources and available staff (Whitney, 1981). Further, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) focus on editorial policies within the newsrooms and how the media enterprise is structured at the organizational level. All these forces play a role in the distribution of media content at an organizational level.

### Social Institutions and Social Systems Influencers

Forces at the social-institutional level affecting media content come from outside of news organizations (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) such as audience demands, advertisers, market conditions, interests groups, regulations, and governments (Relly, Zanger, & Fahmy, 2014; Bogart, 2018).

The social-institutional level encompasses the relations of media organizations with powerful institutions. Lastly, the hierarchy of influencers model explains the influencers of social systems on the media content. This level includes how ideological forces in the macro-level influence media content (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). It is often examined with comparative studies across countries. Following Weaver and Willnat (2015), they observed many differences among journalists from the 31 countries, concluding: "many of them seem to reflect societal



influences, especially cultural and political systems differences, more than the influences of media organizations, journalism education, and professional norms." (p. 544). On the other hand, studies also found that journalists from different cultural and political backgrounds share similar news values, partly rooted in their usage of the same international news network services (Kim, 2010). Shortly, the news content must be harmonious with prevailing social norms, values, and traditions as well as political forces and organizational pressures.

As seen in the hierarchy of influencers model, news content is influenced by both macro and micro-level forces. In a similar vein, the ethical standards and values reflected in news stories are formed by similar macro and micro forces since the news content included its ethical standards. Considering Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchy of influences model, Voakes (1997) developed a new model on ethical decision making of journalists. Voakes' ethical model consisted of seven levels of social influence: individual, small group, organizational, competitive, occupational, extra-media, and legal. The individual-level influences involve each person's addition to journalistic practices from personal opinions and beliefs in decision-making processes related to ethical considerations. Further, Voakes defined two main roots that shape the individual level; personal moral reasoning and personal views and values. The small-group level focuses on the interaction of ethical decision-makers with social structures. The organizational level is more concentrated on the media organization's culture, values, and goals. According to Voakes, along with these internal influences, journalists' ethical decision-making is shaped by external factors as well: competitive (the organization's relationship with its competitors in the news market), occupational (professional rules and standards in journalism), extra- media (sources of information and audience reaction), and legal (legal obligations to the making of an ethical decision). His theoretical model underlines that diverse social factors can act together to

influence any given ethical decision-making of journalists. However, he reported that the individual level is the weakest influence on ethical decision-making, whereas small-group and organizational levels are considered to play a critical role in shaping the final decision in traditional media outlets.

To sum up, the framework of the hierarchy influences model presents a way to comprehend the inextricable connection between media contents and their links with influences affecting journalists' ethics-related decisions (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Journalists have been affected by both macro and micro forces in their news content (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Moreover, Voakes (1997) developed a model to explain social influences on journalists' decision-making in ethical situations. Considering both models, it can be recalled that the individual-level, media routines, and organizational-level can be considered as an authority to shape and influence the media content and ethical boundaries of journalists in any medium that they convey their message to the audience. In the same vein, this situation also includes the textual and visual content of journalists on Twitter while informing people about conflict. And, more specifically, it can be said that macro and micro-level forces affect journalists' ethical decisions on Twitter whether or not to share a graphic image tweet.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Research Questions**

This study investigates how journalists on social media platforms deal with violent and tragic visual content. Some media experts underline that a code of ethics is one of the leading determinants that differentiates professional journalists from other people when it comes to online journalism (Meyer, 2011). Correspondingly, this study attempts to answer whether journalists follow the same ethical code for images on their private social media accounts and their journalistic practices at work and whether organizational influences are at play. This inquiry is important for a several reasons. First, there is an ongoing discussion about how journalists should be treated on social media platforms: whether as a journalist or a normal citizen. When journalists share a post on Twitter, it raises the question of whether this tweet should be interpreted as reflecting either their personal view or that of their news organization, or both. Further, online journalistic practices led to several inquiries of ethical implications of journalism (Mazumdar, 2016). This investigation explains a succession of these controversies with the scope of journalists' conflict reporting through images.

Second, this study attempts to investigate whether journalists apply their news organizations' ethical standards into their private social media accounts. There is a rich literature examining the practices of news organizations such as CNN, FOX, and Al-Jazeera on depicting graphic visuals (Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). However, journalists can now publish graphic images on their private social media accounts without depending on any news organizations to visually inform their audience about conflicts. Nevertheless, there is scant academic literature on journalistic practices on social media platforms including Twitter (Pantti,

2019). Therefore, there is a need to investigate journalists' practices of showing graphic visuals on social media.

To fill the gap in the literature, this study will analyze the Yemen conflict visuals of journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations. These two news organizations hold a separate organizational culture on the transmission of graphic visuals from war zones; US news organizations seek to protect the audience from harmful and shocking effects, while Qatari news organizations seek to show the whole details. This situation will be helpful to clearly examine journalists' image ethics and their relationship with their news organizations.

Regarding this investigation, Twitter provides an opportune research area to analyze the image ethics of journalists because ethical implications of news organizations are not necessary to apply to private Twitter accounts of their journalists. Based on the above literature review and theoretical frameworks, this study will attempt to investigate the following:

**RQ1:** How did the Yemeni journalists affiliated with a) US news agencies and b) Qatari news agencies, visually frame the Yemeni conflict in their private Twitter accounts?

**RQ2:** What were the a) similarities and b) differences in these visuals?

**RQ3:** Which Yemeni journalists (those affiliated with US news agencies or those affiliated with Qatari news agencies) showed more graphic visuals of the conflict on Twitter?

RQ1 provides an overview of the visual frames of the Yemeni journalists on Twitter based on their news organizations' affiliation with the United States and Qatar. RQ2 examines the similarities and differences in these visuals. Similarly, based on country affiliations of the journalists' news organizations, RQ3 examines the journalists' ethical standards reflected in their dissemination of graphic visuals.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Methodology**

Twitter allows people to share an image on their accounts and this image sharing is named as a Twitter image. This study uses quantitative content analysis to examine Twitter images of the Yemeni journalists who are working for news organizations affiliated with the United States (US) and Qatar. This approach will be useful to examine the highly visible content (Neuendorf, 2017), and, above all, the ethical standards used in the images posted on Twitter. Moreover, the literature supports the notion that researchers employ quantitative content analysis to reveal the denotative meanings in the images (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011; Rose, 2016; Bowe, Gosen, & Fahmy, 2019) and their ethical boundaries (Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014).

In this comparative study, Twitter images of journalists reporting on Yemen with affiliations to US and Qatari news organizations, were analyzed. All Twitter images in the journalists' Twitter accounts were related to Yemen. Although there are many warring parties in Yemen such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Southern Transitional Council, the war in Yemen began in 2014 essentially between the two sides: Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi-led Yemeni government (supported by Saudi-led coalition and Western allies) and the Houthis-led armed movement (supported by Iran) along with their allies and supporters. The Yemeni conflict subsequently became a proxy war between Iran-Saudi Arabia, many countries involved in the conflict directly or indirectly to keep their interest in the region. Since the beginning of the conflict, the United States supported the Saudi-led coalition and, accordingly, the Hadi-led Yemeni government. Further, the U.S. cemented its position in this proxy war with the Trump administration's decision to label the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization. On the other

hand, the Saudi-led coalition decided to put an end to Qatar's intervention in Yemen because of Qatar's ties with political Islamists and Iran, including other disputes between Qatar and some coalition countries. After the dispute broke out between Qatar and the coalition, the Hadi-led Yemeni government gave its support to the Saudi-led coalition by cutting its ties with Qatar. Since then, Qatar has been involved in the Yemeni conflict to enhance its influence over the country by maintaining close ties with the Houthis. Thus, it can be said that Qatar and the US represent distinct sides that have different interests and allies for the Yemen conflict.

The US media for its coverage of a conflict or war tends to have an agenda supporting the US foreign policies (Aday, 2014). Similarly, the biggest Qatari international network, Al-Jazeera reflects the Qatari foreign policy perspectives in its coverage (Pourhamzavi & Pherguson, 2015). Therefore, this study makes a similar assumption that the political agenda of Qatari and US news organizations for Yemen have conflicting journalistic reporting. These news agencies may have different coverage of the Yemeni conflict since the U.S. and Qatar have an opposed policy for Yemen and support the opposite warring parties. Besides separate political agendas (as shown in the literature review), Qatari and US news agencies also have different standpoints when displaying graphic visuals in their conflict coverage. The literature points out that they tend to apply different ethical policy for war-related visuals (Ayish, 2001; Robertson, 2004; Fahmy & Johnson, 2007; Himelboim & Limor, 2008; Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014). The editors of Al-Jazeera argue showing the graphic visuals tells the whole graphic truth of a conflict (Seib, 2008), whereas the editors in the U.S. argue that graphic visuals are too shocking and harmful for the audience (Fahmy, 2005b; Silcock, Schwalbe, & Keith, 2008).

This study, therefore, investigated the visual frames and graphic visual coverage posted on Twitter. It aimed to examine whether these journalists share a similar outlook. In this regard,

Twitter gave a feasible research area to examine journalists' political and ethical opinions on their personal social media accounts and assess organizational influences (country affiliation) versus individual-level influences (journalists' nationality) at play.

### **Sampling**

The researcher purposefully selected a sample of four Yemeni journalists who worked with US and Qatari news organizations. Two Yemeni journalists were chosen from each side with the following procedures: their impact on Twitter (considering the number of followers and their engagement influence on the followers) and the visual content quantity of Yemeni war coverage on their Twitter accounts (considering the number of Twitter images related to Yemen). These considerations fit the aims of this study. It was found that the visibility and influence in Twitter accounts of the chosen journalists were considerably prominent compared to their peers.

The journalists' nationality was ascertained from their Twitter profile. Failing that, if there was not enough information on the Twitter profile, their profile was checked in published articles and the news organizations that they worked for. If the journalist held dual nationality and one of which was Yemeni, the journalist was considered as Yemeni.

The journalists' affiliation with news organizations was discovered through several academic articles, their published works, and news stories about them (Pulitzer Center; Nasser, 2020; Sultan, 2019; Al-Jazeera, 2016). Each journalist's work experience unearthed an affiliation with a particular side. Table 1 presents a list of the selected Yemeni journalists and their affiliations with the corresponding news organizations (See Appendix II).

**Table 1.** A list of the chosen journalists reporting on the Yemen conflict on Twitter (N=4)

<b>Contributors to US News Agencies</b>	<b>Twitter Account</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Position</b>
Shuaib M. Almosawa	@Shuaibalmosawa	Yemeni	Freelance journalist who wrote for The New York Times, Foreign Policy, and The Intercept (Columbia Journalism Review)
Maad Alzekri	@MaadAlzekri	Yemeni	Freelance video journalist at AP (Twitter Profile & The Pulitzer Center)
<b>Contributors to Qatari News Agencies</b>			
Afrah Nasser	@Afrahnasser	Yemeni	Contributor to Al Jazeera
Abdulaziz Al-Sabri	@abdulazizasabri	Yemeni	Photographer who worked for Al Jazeera.

## **Data Collection**

After selecting the Yemeni journalists' Twitter accounts and defining their organizational affiliations (whether it be US or Qatari news organizations), all Twitter images were collected from these accounts within the timeframe January 1, 2014 to November 11, 2019. The Yemeni war began in 2014 mainly between two warring parties; the Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi-led Yemeni government and the Houthi-armed movement, when Houthi armed forces took the control of Sana'a, the former capital of Hadi-led Yemeni government. From then onward, each side of the Yemeni war claimed itself as a legitimate institution to constitute the official government of Yemen. Therefore, the timeframe of this study started from 2014. Next, an extended period between 2014 and 2019 was applied to reveal different visual narratives from journalists' accounts used for portraying Yemen. Another consideration was that the conflict intensified during this time period among warring parties. The intense violent atmosphere of the conflict during this time period enabled the journalists to better decide whether to show graphic images from the Yemen conflict. After 2019, the violence of the war started to decrease. The



treaties between the warring parties and the intervention of international organizations played a role in this. Considering the time constraint and the purposes of this study, the researcher employed this relatively large time period to give a more representative idea of the content.

Overall, a total of 2952 Twitter images were drawn by using a Google Chrome extension for bulk image downloads. The data set included only original tweets, excluding retweets with the consideration that original tweets provide a more precise date set pertaining to visual frames and ethical standards of journalists.

The Google Chrome extension provided the relevant information about the Twitter images such as tweet URLs, shared dates, captions, replies, and likes. Following 2952 Twitter images drawing, keywords related to the Yemen conflict were identified in both English and Arabic to detect relevant images. These keywords were as follows: Yemen, Yemeni, Aden, Sana'a, Taiz, Amran, Houthi, and Houthis. The researcher employed keywords to examine through the captions and hashtags of the all downloaded images. If images did not include defined keywords, the researcher manually examined the image to filter out irrelevant ones. In this case, the visual content, captions and hashtags were considered as to whether the image tweet was related to Yemen or not. This process yielded 1272 Twitter images.

### **Data Analysis**

All of the 1272 Twitter images were coded with the unit of analysis being a single image tweet and a detailed set of categories was developed (See Appendix I). These categories were formulated with a consideration to previous literature and the current context of this study. The coding was based on the variables as follows:

#### Visual/Textual Elements of Image

This variable classified the visual and textual elements of images. Tweet images were coded as text elements only, visual elements only, visual-textual (including memes), map, and caricature. Twitter images that included purely textual elements were coded as text elements only. Twitter images in this category did not depict any visual content (For example, see Figure 1). To be coded as visual elements only, Twitter images needed not to contain any text and relied solely on visuals. Images that included any type of text along with visual elements were coded in the visual-textual category (For example, see Figure 2). The visual-textual category relies on text and visual in communicating the message. So, Twitter images that included any textual information and visuals together, coded as a visual-textual category (For example, see Figure 3). Memes were included in this category because their communicating message depends on textual information and visuals (Bowe, Gosen, & Fahmy, 2019). Twitter images showing maps of Yemen were coded as a map regardless if they included textual information (For example, see Figure 4). Lastly, the Twitter images were coded as a caricature if the communicating message included an exaggerated drawing (Sarigül, 2009) (For example, see Figure 5).

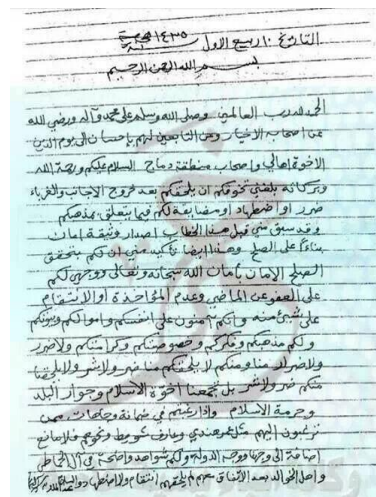


Figure 1. A tweet image using textual elements only



Figure 2. A tweet image using visual elements only



Figure 3. A tweet image using visual-textual elements

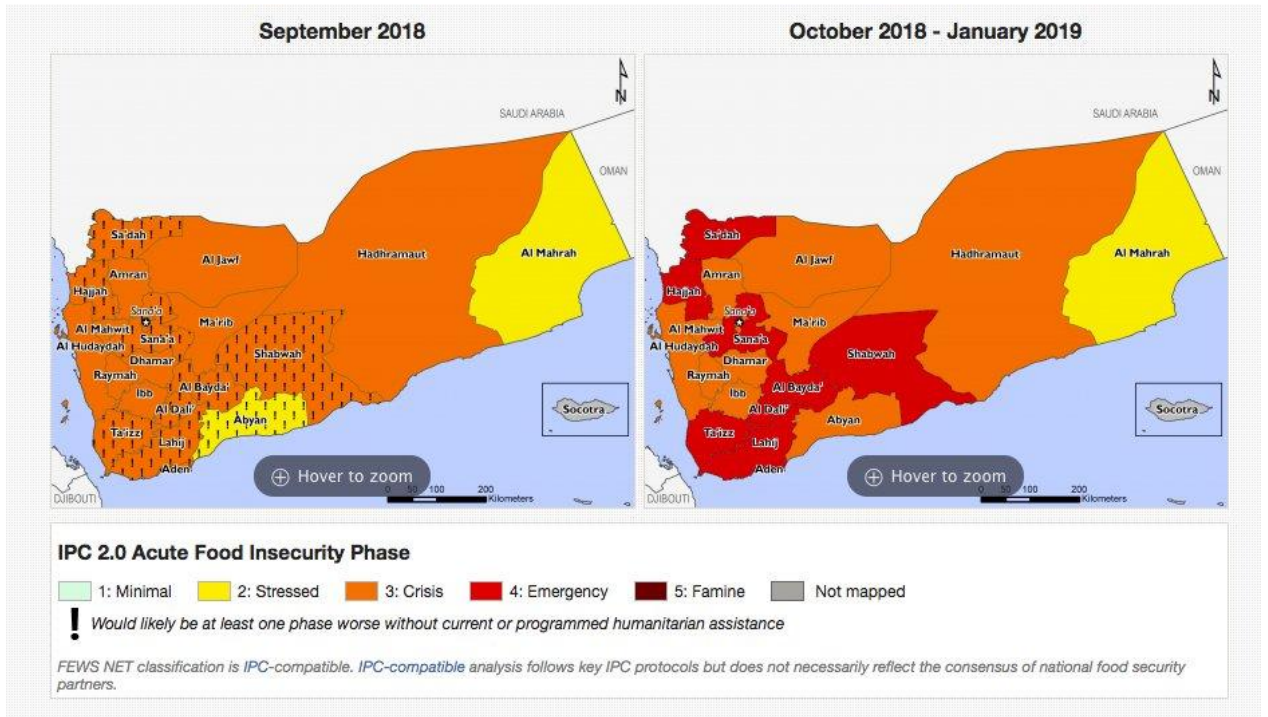


Figure 4. A tweet image is an example of the map category

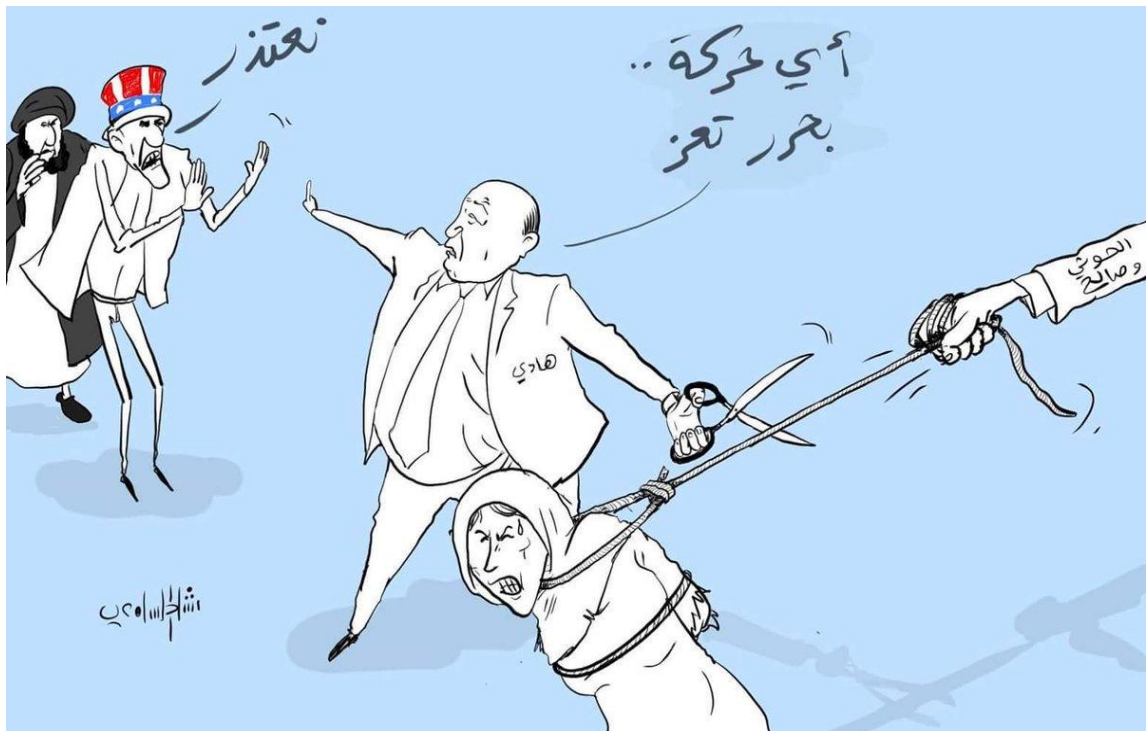


Figure 5. A tweet image is an example of the caricature category

## Focal themes

Regarding this variable, the categories were adapted from a study conducted by Pantti (2019), tackling the Twitter use of journalists during the Ukraine conflict by analyzing their Twitter images. The categories of this variable were as follows: armed conflict, international politics, conflict violence, everyday life, and journalistic work. The current context of this study led the researcher to add another category named as demonstrations. To be classified in the category of armed conflict, the image had to include some form of fighting such as soldiers, weapons, and military vehicles. Twitter images were coded as international politics if state officials or international organization officials were depicted. Examples of images in the conflict violence category contained the severe consequences of the conflict such as images of injured people, destroyed property, and disastrous living conditions (i.e. starvation and poverty). The everyday life category included images portraying day to day activities in Yemen such as nature, food, and people walking. To be coded as journalistic work, images had to include journalists' working conditions (i.e. images showing their camera or microphone). Images that fell into the demonstrations category captured Yemeni people when they were protesting or objecting.

Several categories in the focal theme variable were utilized to reveal separate visual narratives in the images of the Yemeni journalists. This included analyzing visual subordination and the established reality about the Yemen conflict by the repetition of particular themes in the images of same-affiliated journalists (with Qatari and US news organizations). The images that were coded as Maps and Textual-elements category excluded in this inquiry since they did not include any visual elements regarding a theme and, thus visual framing. A key element of visual framing is the selection of the aspects of a story to portray (Fahmy et al, 2014). To examine visual framing, the repeated and focused themes portraying the Yemen conflict were considered

in the images circulated by the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations. A similar approach was used in the previous literature of visual framing (Fahmy, Karademir, & Taha, 2020).

### Country Affiliation

To determine the affiliation of the chosen journalists with news organizations, the researcher took into consideration the following sources: journalists' published works, work experience, Twitter profiles, profiles in other online platforms such as the Pulitzer Centre, columns in news organizations, both news and academic articles on the topic of these journalists, and the news networks hosting the journalists. After these considerations, it was clear that each journalist fell into one category; either a contributor of US news organizations or contributor of Qatari news organizations. See Table 1 for a detailed list.



**Figure 6. A tweet image showing graphic visuals**



**Figure 7. A tweet image showing non-graphic visual**

#### Graphic/ Non-Graphic

This variable was divided into two sub-variables: graphic and non-graphic. The category of graphic photos was based on previous literature and the codification of Potter and Smith (2000), "shockingly depict[ing] physical harm to the victims" (p. 302). To be classified as graphic, tweet images had to depict any physical harm such as injury, blood presence, dismembered bodies, and severe starvation (For example, see Figure 6). Images that did not include any physical harm were classified as non-graphic (For example, see Figure 7).

#### **Intercoder Reliability**

After the researcher completed the coding process of 1272 Twitter images, a second coder was asked to code randomly chosen Twitter images from each journalist's subset, which represents more than 9.8 percent of each journalist's image samples. The second coder finished

the master's program "Mass Communication and Journalism" at the American University in Cairo and currently works in the mass communication department of a university. The main researcher gave training on the coding sheet to the second coder and explained the study before the coding process proceeded. Later on, intercoder reliability using Scott's Pi was conducted to determine consistency among coders. The Scott's Pi values for all variables were higher than 0.791 (see Scott, 1955). More specifically, the rate of agreement was 0.96 for the Visual/Textual Elements of the image. The agreement rate for the focal themes was 0.79. For the Graphic/ Non-Graphic variable, the agreement was 0.90. Lastly, the agreement was 1 for the affiliation.

In the final process, the researcher coded the entire sample (N= 1272). Next, the statistical program, SPSS, was employed for the statistical analysis. Data distribution tables were used to give an overview of each journalist's Twitter images subset.

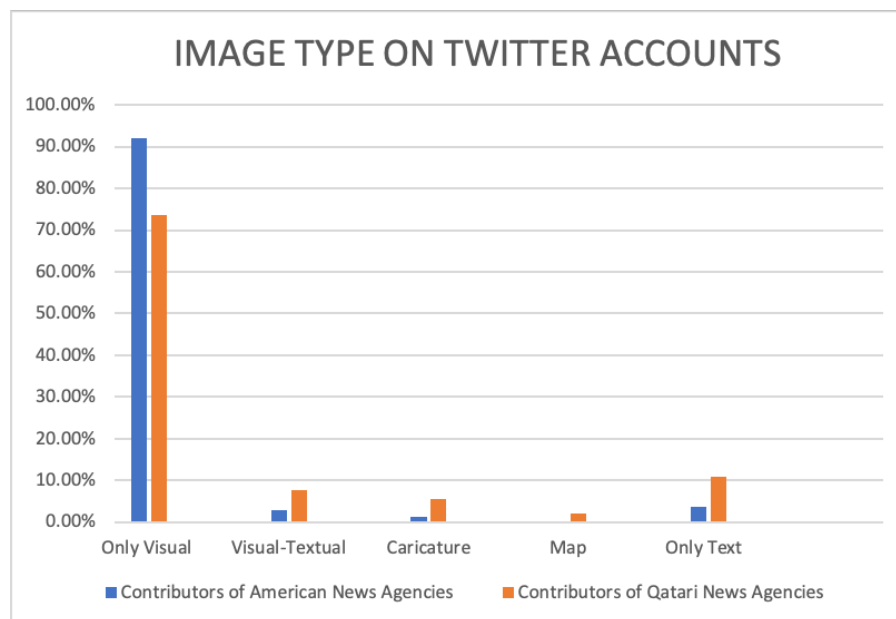


## Chapter Six

### Results

For this research, the images on Twitter of four Yemeni journalists were carefully selected to represent journalists affiliated with both US and Qatari news agencies, amounting to a total of 2952 images. After excluding the images which were not relevant to Yemen, the final sample size of the images related to Yemen on these journalists' Twitter accounts was reduced to 1272 images. These images were analyzed to reveal visual narratives created by journalists on Twitter and their ethical standards regarding war-related images with a comparison of journalists based on their affiliation with US and Qatari news organizations.

**Graph 1.** Yemen-related visual tweets in the private Twitter accounts of Yemeni Journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations based on image type (N=1272)



There were more images from the Yemeni journalists, representing Qatari news agencies (89.1%) than the Yemeni journalists representing US news agencies (10.9%). In both groups, more than 73 percent of images were coded as visual elements only. A small percentage

of the images were coded as text elements only (3.6%), shared by the Yemeni journalists who were affiliated with US news organizations. Further, in the selected journalists' images, there was no image coded as Map category (See Graph 1). On the other hand, the journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations relied more on Map (2.0%) and Textual Elements only (11.0%) images. Table 2 details the image type of the journalists from both affiliations.

**Table 2.** Frequency and Percentages of Yemen-related visuals in the private Twitter accounts of Yemeni Journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations (N=1272).

AFFILIATION	CONTRIBUTORS TO US NEWS AGENCIES	CONTRIBUTORS TO QATARI NEWS AGENCIES	TOTAL
VISUAL ELEMENTS ONLY	128 (92.1%)	835 (73.7%)	963
VISUAL-TEXTUAL	4 (2.9%)	86 (7.6%)	90
CARICATURE	2 (1.4 %)	65 (5.7 %)	67
MAP	0 (0.0%)	23 (2.0 %)	23
TEXT ELEMENTS ONLY	5 (3.6%)	124 (11.0%)	129
TOTAL	139 (100%)	1133 (100 %)	1272

Several categories in the framing variables were utilized to answer RQ1 and RQ2 that examined the visual narratives of Yemeni journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations.

RQ1a inquired about the portrayal of the Yemen conflict by the journalists affiliated with US news agencies through their images on Twitter. To answer this question each image was coded to exhibit whether it included visual elements or visual-textual elements. As mentioned in the method part, the repeated and focused themes were employed to detect visual narratives

(visual framing) in the images circulated by the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations. The categories in the variable of image type were used to detect images that have a visual narrative and thus, a theme in it. Therefore, the images, that were not applicable for any theme categories (i.e. the images coded as maps and only textual elements), were not considered. A similar approach was used in the studies analyzing visual framing of images on Twitter (Ibrahim, 2019; Fahmy, Karademir & Taha 2020). In addition to visual elements and visual-textual elements, the caricature images were included to answer this research question, since they contained a visual description of the Yemen conflict. The rest of the image types consisted of maps and text-only images and thus, were excluded in the examination of this inquiry. The vast majority of images included only visuals elements (92.1%), while a very small percentage of images were coded as visual-textual elements (2.9%) and caricatures (1.4%).

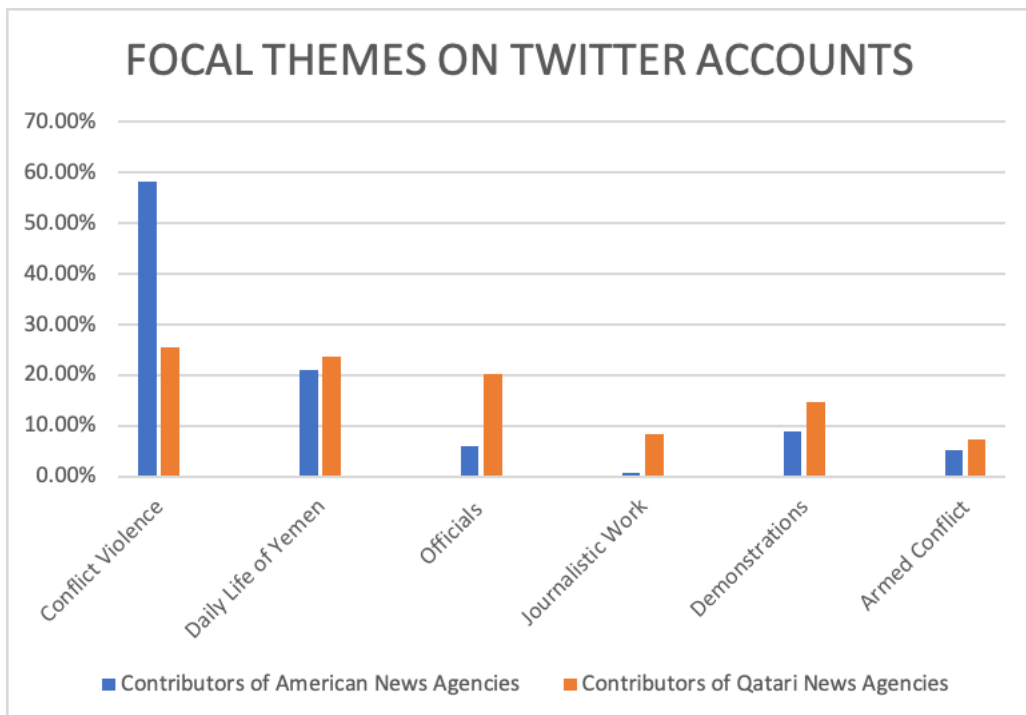


**Figure 8.** A tweet image displaying a dire condition of the Yemeni war and shared by a journalist affiliated with US news organizations.



**Figure 9.** A tweet image displaying daily life of the Yemeni war and shared by a journalist affiliated with US news organizations.

**Graph 2.** Visual tweets of Yemen-related images in the Twitter accounts of Yemeni Journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations based on focal themes (N=1120).



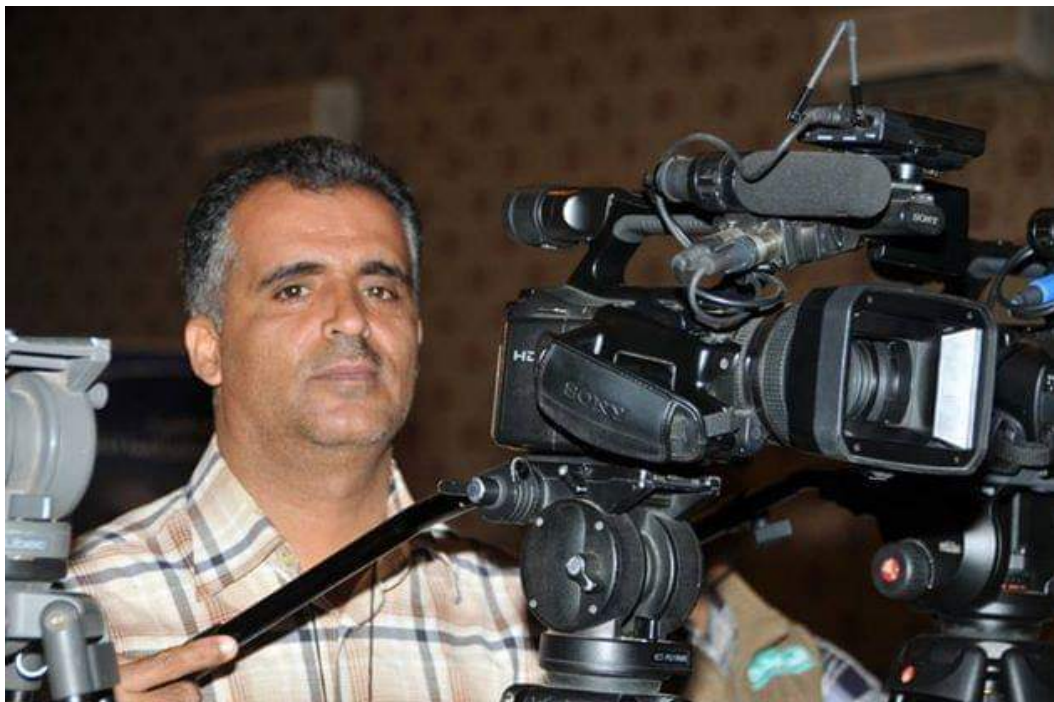
Regarding themes, the most emphasized themes in the images of the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news organizations were as follows: Conflict Violence (58.2%), Daily Life of Yemen (20.9%), and Demonstrations (9.0%). More than half of the images (58.2%) were dominated by themes of violence in conflict (See Figure 8). Following, one-fifth (20.8%) of images were centered on day to day life in Yemen (See Figure 9). The official theme was not prominent in the images of the journalists affiliated with US news organizations. As shown in graph 2, this particular set of Yemeni journalists shared the least number of images related to journalistic work (0.8%).



**Figure 10.** A tweet image displaying an official from Yemen and shared by a journalist affiliated with Qatari news organizations.



**Figure 11.** A tweet image displaying a demonstration happened in Yemen and shared by a journalist affiliated with Qatari news organizations.



**Figure 12.** A tweet image displaying the working condition of a journalist in Yemen and shared by a journalist affiliated with Qatari news organizations.

By the same token, RQ1b sought to examine the same question for the images of the Yemeni journalists who contribute to the Qatari news organizations. Approximately 73 percent of images used only visuals in communicating messages, while the percentages of images coded as textual-visual elements and caricature were 7.6 percent and 5.7 percent, respectively. The themes of the images that this subset of Yemeni journalists drew up were found to be more equally separated. Unsurprisingly, the most reported theme was conflict violence (25.5%). This was closely followed by the daily life of Yemen (23.7%). Furthermore, one-fifth (20.3%) of images showed officials of either national or international in the Twitter accounts of the journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations (See Figure 10). Along with that, the journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations focused on the demonstrations with 14.7 percent of images (See Figure 11). Lastly, 8.4% of images presented the working conditions of journalists as seen in Graph 2 (See Figure 12).

**Table 3.** Frequency and Percentages of visual tweets of Yemen-related images in the Twitter accounts of Yemeni Journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations on focal themes (N=1120).

THEME	CONTRIBUTORS TO US NEWS AGENCIES	CONTRIBUTORS TO QATARI NEWS AGENCIES	TOTAL
CONFLICT VIOLENCE	78 (58.2%)	251 (25.5%)	329
DAILY LIFE OF YEMEN	28 (20.8%)	234 (23.7%)	262
OFFICIALS	8 (6.0%)	200 (20.3%)	208
JOURNALISTIC WORK	1 (0.8 %)	83 (8.4%)	84
DEMONSTRATIONS	12 (9.0%)	145 (14.7%)	157
ARMED CONFLICT	7 (5.2%)	73 (7.4%)	80
TOTAL	134 (100%)	986 (100%)	1120

RQ2 examined the differences and similarities in the visual coverage between the Yemeni journalists who were affiliated with US news organizations and Qatari news organizations. Results found that the Yemen conflict was portrayed differently in their images (Table 3). The majority of the images from US-affiliated news agencies tended to depict conflict violence (58.2%), while only twenty five percent showed the conflict violence in the images of Qatari-affiliated journalists. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news organizations were more likely to depict the conflict violence of the Yemen conflict than the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations. Regarding the images coded in the Officials category, the difference was distinctly high between the journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations (20.3%) and US news organizations (6.0%). Similarly, the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations portrayed the demonstrations in about fifteen percent of images, whereas the same theme was present in less than ten percent of the images of the Yemeni journalists representing the other side. Lastly, while the journalistic work theme was limited in the images of US news organizations-affiliated journalists (0.8%), the images shared by the journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations focused more on journalists' working conditions (8.4%). Here, it was found that the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations were more likely to portray the conditions of journalists reporting on the Yemen conflict, whether inside or outside of the country.

On the other hand, the armed conflict theme was exhibited in equal measure with regards to the images of journalists from both affiliations. The results showed that the Yemeni journalists from both affiliations tended not to concentrate much on the armed conflict theme in their reporting on Yemen on Twitter. Still, it can be said that the images of the Yemeni journalists from different organizations communicated different visual narratives for reporting on the



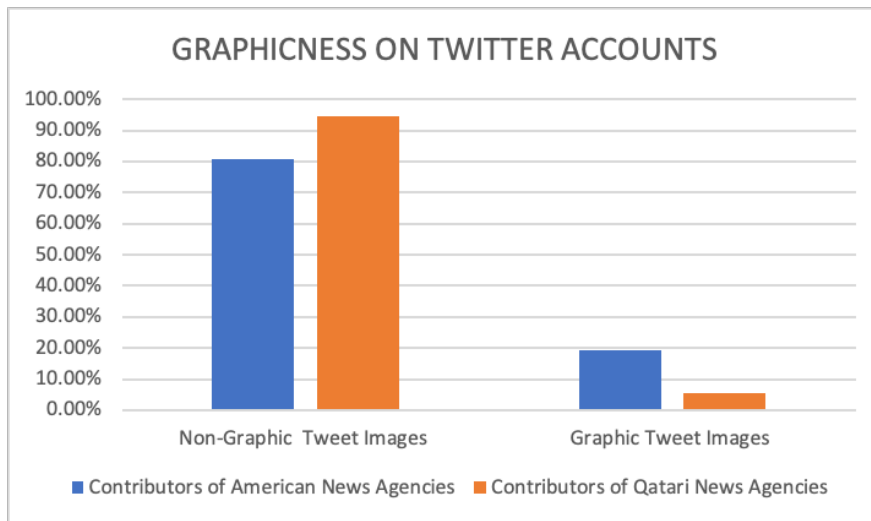
Yemen conflict on Twitter. In this study, it was aimed to assess organizational-level influences on the political context of the images by choosing the journalists who work for different news organizations. At the same time, the journalists were chosen only from Yemeni nationality to assess the individual-level influences. Results revealed that organizational-level influences play a role in shaping the political context of the journalists' images on Twitter.

The following part of the analysis examined how graphic the images on Twitter of the Yemeni journalists were in reporting on the Yemen conflict. Results of the Graphic/ Non-Graphic variable RQ3 examined whether the journalists affiliated with US or Qatari news agencies showed more graphic images in their private Twitter accounts (See Table 4 & Graph 3). Regarding the images of the journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies, it was found that a small percent of images (5.6%) included graphic visuals. Additionally, more than nine in ten images (94.4%) did not include any graphic visuals in their visual tweets. On the other hand, results revealed that almost two in ten images (19.4%) of the journalists affiliated with US news organizations included graphic visuals while about eighty percent did not include any graphic visuals.

**Table 4.** Graphic/ Non-Graphic visuals depicting images in the Twitter accounts of US and Qatari news organizations contributors (N=1120)

AFFILIATION	CONTRIBUTORS OF US NEWS AGENCIES	CONTRIBUTORS OF QATARI NEWS AGENCIES	TOTAL
NON-GRAPHIC TWEET IMAGES	108 (80.6%)	931 (94.4%)	1039
GRAPHIC TWEET IMAGES	26 (19.4%)	55 (5.6%)	81
TOTAL	134 (100%)	986 (100%)	1120

**Graph 3.** Visual tweets of Yemen-related images in the Twitter accounts of Yemeni Journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations based on graphicness (N=1120)



As seen in Table 4, the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news organizations shared graphic images with greater frequency than the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news organization, suggesting that the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news organizations were more likely to share graphic visuals on Twitter than the Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news organizations (See Graph 3).

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Discussion**

This comparative study investigated the portrayal of the Yemen conflict and the ethical boundaries in the Twitter accounts of four Yemeni journalists who are affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations. This examination was carried out by using a quantitative content analysis of the Twitter images these journalists shared between January 1, 2014, and November 11, 2019. Several media scholars have highlighted the power of war-related images in shaping people's opinions and behaviors. Thus, many studies examined the war-related images that were circulated by different news organizations from different countries. More specifically, studies analyzed how conflict reporting between Qatari and US news organizations varied in terms of ethical standards and visual narratives (e.g., Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, & Azran, 2014).

Most academic research on the portrayal of conflict or war in both traditional and online media examined the visuals of news organizations, rather than the work disseminated on social media by journalists affiliated with these organizations. The literature related to the journalists' visuals of conflict reporting on Twitter in general, is scarce (See Pantti, 2019). Therefore, this study helps to bridge the gap in the literature by comparing the ethical and political portrayal of the Yemen conflict in the journalists' Twitter accounts affiliated with organizations from the US and Qatar.

#### **Visual Narrative**

First, this study aimed to exhibit the portrayal of the Yemeni journalists based on their news organizations' affiliation with countries. A similar study by Fahmy, Karademir, and Taha (2020) compared the tweeted images of journalists affiliated with Iranian, Saudi, Qatari, and US

news organizations. They found that the journalists supported a distinct visual narrative according to their news organizations' affiliation with countries. The current study supports these findings.

The findings revealed that the portrayal of the Yemen conflict was different in the images of the Yemeni journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations. The political and military developments of the Yemen conflict were more likely to be seen in the images of the Qatar-affiliated journalists than US-affiliated ones. On the other hand, the journalists affiliated with US news agencies focused mainly on the humanitarian consequences of the war whereas the journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies portrayed the conflict more diverse and balanced themes by showing officials, demonstrations, and journalistic works with higher percentages. These different visual narratives of the Yemen conflict can be understood with the visual framing theory.

The framing process starts with the first interaction between sources and journalists (Entman: 1993) and continues in the selection and distribution of images. In this process, visual framing can be established by emphasizing or omitting certain photos evoking particular opinions in the audience's minds. Unsurprisingly, journalists here carried over their visual framing of war to Twitter. Results of this study revealed that visual framing was constructed through the repetition and frequency of visual depictions eliciting similar themes on Twitter, which supports the previous literature of visual framing (Bowe, Gosen, & Fahmy, 2019; Fahmy, Karademir, & Taha, 2020).

Furthermore, the separate visual frames of the journalists affiliated with separate organizations might be traced to two reasons; the first is that the audience's interest plays an important role in the news decision-making process even though audiences do not directly

dictate media content (Tai & Chang, 2002). The journalists affiliated with US and Qatari news organizations can address different audiences on Twitter. This situation would lead the journalists to focus on different aspects of the Yemen conflict. Another explanation would be the influences of the U.S. government on US media organizations in controlling the political context of war images (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2006) and, consequently, extending such influences on the political context of journalists' personal Twitter accounts when they report on a conflict (Fahmy, Karademir & Taha, 2020). It should be noted that previous literature explains that news organizations tend to support foreign policies from the host country in which journalists are located at the time of reporting (Aday, 2014; Pourhamzavi & Pherguson, 2015). In a similar vein, journalists, contributing to news organizations operating in the same country, might have similar visual narratives. Therefore, in this study, the separate visual agendas might be followed through images on Twitter accounts of journalists, that support foreign policies of the country in which their news organizations reside.

Consequently, the current study explains that journalists from the same country working in different international organizations would serve separate visual narratives. Journalists do not necessarily need to share the same nationality in order to promote a country's foreign policy in which their news organizations operate. As seen in this study, journalists from the same nationality can communicate different visual frames of conflict depending on their affiliation with news organizations.

### **Ethics of Twitter Images**

Moreover, this study analyzed the ethical standards of the images in the journalists' Twitter accounts along with the political context. Surprisingly, the findings of this study reveal that Yemeni journalists affiliated with US news agencies were more likely to share graphic

images (19.4%) than Yemeni journalists affiliated with Qatari news agencies (5.6%) on Twitter. As mentioned earlier, US and Qatari news organizations were defined differently for their visual coverage of tragic and violent images; Al-Jazeera has been known to more likely report personal suffering, injured bodies, and dead people from conflict areas (Ayish, 2001; Jaspersen; El-Kikhia, 2003; Figenschou, 2011), whereas the US news organizations have been known to sanitize their visual coverage of conflict. This reporting manner of US news agencies was a recurring theme that kept cropping up in a number of different studies reporting on war coverage by US news organizations (Bennett & Paletz, 1994; Griffin, 2004; Zelizer, 2005; Silcock, Schwalbe, & Keith, 2008; Aday, 2015). This finding seemed surprising given the previous literature, which pointed to the opposite with regards to visual coverage of news organizations from the U.S. and Qatar. Further, the finding came as a contradiction to Voakes' (1997) model of ethical decisions of journalists, where he defined the individual level as the weakest influence on ethical decision making and the organizational-level as the most crucial. The results of this study here, highlighted that graphic images were used more on Twitter by the journalists whose news organizations were more likely to sanitize their coverage from war zones. In the digital platforms where news organizations' ethical guidelines did not necessarily apply, organizational-level influences on journalists' ethical standards might not have played such a crucial role.

Therefore, this study explains that the digital transformation of journalism has challenged the model of ethical decision making by journalists. Nowadays, journalists' individual opinions and behaviors may trump adherence to ethical practices and standards of their news organizations when it comes to conflict reporting on digital platforms because social media gives that space to journalists.

To clarify, although Yemeni journalists share a similar cultural background for reporting on the Yemen conflict (individual-level influences), they work with different organizations affiliated with the US and Qatari media that have a separate organizational culture for depicting graphic visuals (organizational-level influences). If we apply Voakes' model once more (1997), ethical decisions taken by the Yemeni journalists were more likely to have made a difference in showing graphic visuals based on their organizational culture. However, the study also indicated that the Yemeni journalists who work for US news organizations tend to ignore their organizations' ethical practices for sharing graphic images on Twitter. Therefore, the current study explains that individual-level influences might be more powerful than organizational-level influences on journalists with regard to their ethics-related decisions of showing graphic visuals on digital platforms.

### **Implications of Findings**

Overall, the study's results revealed that the organizational-level and the individual-level influences have varying degrees of influences when it comes to ethical and political contexts of war images circulated by journalists on Twitter. The organizational level plays an important role in shaping the narrative and political context of war-related images on digital platforms whereas the individual level might have a higher degree of influence than organizational-level in terms of ethical standards and disseminating graphic images. The content analysis shows that journalists do not follow the ethical standards of their organizations for war-related images on social media.

People commonly use social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook to gain an understanding of a conflict or a war (Mis, 2016). However, there has been no previous research directly examining the graphicness of images shared by journalists on Twitter. Therefore,

researchers should assess the different structural forces influencing the visual narratives of war by journalists on their social media accounts.

### **Conclusion**

The current research supports that attention is given to only particular aspects of the news and news framing is produced by the biased world we live in (Fahmy, 2005a). The visuals circulated online by professional journalists presented a particular reality of a conflict according to internal and external level influencers on their online media content. Although it seems that journalists on Twitter do create their individual media content out of editorial constraints, the visual gatekeeping process still has implications on their visual narratives (Fahmy, Karademir & Taha, 2020); while this situation becomes another reflection of the biased world we see and live in.

Apart from this, the research underlines that journalists can now publish images on digital platforms without depending on any news organizations to visually inform their audience. The ethics of these images (in other words, image tweets, posts, snaps etc.) shared by journalists unveils a new ethical dilemma, especially considering that the social platforms are more flexible to graphic visuals. This situation becomes more problematic when most organizations do not have clear-cut guidelines for their professionals regarding their image ethics on digital social media platforms, and journalists use images from war zones to enrich their online conflict reporting

Accordingly, the individual-level and organizational-level have different degrees of influences on ethical boundaries and political context of images shared by journalists on digital platforms. The organizational-level influences are more effective in creating similar visual political agendas through image sharing of journalists on Twitter whereas the individual-level



might play a more active role in the ethical decisions of journalists. Digital journalism on online platforms has become a game-changer in shaping forces affecting journalistic practices and the relation between journalists and the audience. There seems to be a preference for using violent and tragic images and visual framing on Twitter among journalists. This requires more research, not only in these affiliations but also all other news organizations affiliated with different countries. This inquiry becomes significant particularly since the impacts and usage of online journalist practices are increasing. Thus, there is a need to revise the hierarchy of influence model with regard to online journalism practices and the effects of digital platforms on journalistic practices.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

This study used a quantitative content analysis on the images of the four Yemeni journalists. However, this methodology does not answer why these journalists used different images to report on the Yemen conflict. Therefore, future studies should use other research methods to provide a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the different usage of images. Future studies can also research how the conflict reporting of the journalists changed over time. Time analysis might reveal important results. Furthermore, the study is considered an exploratory analysis with a relatively small sample. Examining Yemen-related images from journalists, who are non-Yemeni and affiliated with other news organizations, might generate different results. Additionally, this research only focused on Yemen-related images. Analysis on the war-related images from other conflict areas might yield important results. Furthermore, it is worth noting that some images posted on the Twitter accounts of journalists could have been deemed too graphic and accordingly removed from their accounts and not included in this analysis. Lastly, in this study, Twitter was considered as a digital platform where journalists share war-related

pictures. Future studies might examine war-related images of journalists on other platforms such as Facebook and Instagram that are used for online reporting by journalists.

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## Appendix I

### Coding Scheme Twitter Images of Yemeni Journalists

1. Image Tweet Number: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Account ID: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Release Year: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Variable 1: Type of the image

0. Text Elements Only (No Image Content, No ethics)
1. Map (No Image Content, No ethics)
2. Visual-Textual
3. Visual Elements Only
4. Caricature

#### Variable 2: Image Content

##### 0. There is no content relevant to ethics

1. Armed Conflict
2. Demonstrations
3. Journalistic Work
4. International Politics
5. Conflict Violence
6. Everyday Life

#### Variable 3: Affiliation with News Organizations

1. Contributor of US news organizations
2. Contributor of Qatari news organizations

#### Variable 4: Ethics

##### 0. There is no content relevant to ethics

1. Graphic
2. Non-Graphic

## Appendix II

### Sample List

In all of the Twitter accounts of journalists examined, the opinions expressed were not endorsed by any news organizations.

#### Contributors to US News Agencies

- **Shuaib M. Almosawa**

Shuaib M. Almosawa is a Yemeni freelance journalist based in Yemen who wrote for *The New York Times*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Intercept*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *The New York Times*, and *Foreign Policy*. Almosawa tweets primarily in English.

- **Maad Alzekri**

Maad AlZekri is a Yemeni freelance video journalist based in Yemen at the Associated Press (AP). In 2019, he was part of an AP team that won the Pulitzer Prize for their reporting on the Yemeni civil war. He also published in *The Washington Post*, *The North Platte Telegraph*, *Seattle Times*, *the AFRO*, *The Pulitzer Center* and *Everipedia.org*. Alzekri tweets primarily in Arabic.

#### Contributors to Qatari News Agencies

- **Afrah Nasser**

Afrah Nasser is an independent Yemeni journalist. Since 2011, she has lived in exile in Sweden. She has covered the Yemen conflict for *Al-Jazeera* in English and Arabic and was a regular host on Al-Jazeera to discuss the conflict. Nasser's work also appeared in other international publications. Overall, she has published and contributed more in *Al-Jazeera* than any other news organizations, specifically during the war in Yemen from 2014 to 2019. Nasser tweets primarily in the English language.

- **Abdulaziz Al-Sabri**

Abdulaziz Al-Sabri is a Yemeni photographer based in Yemen. Al-Sabri worked as a cameraman and photographer for *Al Jazeera* covering the Yemen conflict. In 2016, *Al-Jazeera* announced that its crew members, including Al-Sabri went missing in Yemen. Afterwards, its crew, that were abducted in Taz City, were released. Al-Sabri tweets in both English and Arabic.