



Nutshell Paragraphs, Fact-Base or Propaganda:

How Do Nutshell paragraphs in five news media reflect an international crisis?

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Examiner:	Annika Bergström

Abstract

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Keyword: The nut graph, the nutshell paragraph, the nut graf, fact, propaganda, agenda setting, comparative analysis, content analysis, international crisis, the Libyan crisis, NATO, journalism, journalist, editor, editorial manipulation, newspaper, TV, media, news media, Swedish news media, print news media, news writing, audience, Global Times, Dagens Nyheter, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, the Guardian, the New York Times.

Purpose: The aim of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the contents of nut graphs written by five print news media outlets: Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times, regarding the Libyan crisis, in order to examine whether they set media agendas through the nut graph. This study will be carried out from an agenda-setting perspective, focusing on the media agenda, aiming to gain insights into how these news outlets from China, Russia, Sweden, the UK, and the US reflected the Libyan crisis in their nut graphs. Furthermore, the thesis aims to explore how the Swedish news media handle the nut graph.

Theory: The theoretical framework of this thesis is centered around content analysis of the nut graph written by Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times in the framework of second level of agenda-setting theory. In the context of this study, the agenda-setting theory provides a lens through which to analyze how the five selected news media construct their narratives of the Libyan crisis through the use of the nut graph. By examining the emphasis placed on specific aspects of the crisis within the nut graph, this framework allows for a deeper understanding of how the media outlets shaped the significance of specific issues in the minds of their audiences. In addition, Dagens Nyheter, a Swedish news media, is specifically examined to investigate distinctive features of its possible nut graphs in contrast to other selected news media outlets.

Method: This study employs a qualitative method to gather the data needed for a comparative analysis of nut graphs within news articles addressing the Libyan crisis across the five selected news outlets. Central to this study is the qualitative content analysis of nut graphs, which concisely capture an article's core message. Complementing the content analysis, email interviews are conducted with participants from both categories – editors and journalists, and field experts and academics – affording them ample time to contemplate questions and provide insights that enrich the qualitative investigation.

Result: The study suggests avoiding a nut graph about international crisis news articles is better than including a weak one, as the latter could mislead the audience. Given that the nut graph summarizes a news article's 'so what' essence effectively, editors can potentially use it

as a tool for setting agendas consciously or unconsciously.

However, this study could not establish conclusive evidence of media agenda setting through the nut graph written by the selected news media about the Libyan crisis. While a few examples hint at media agenda through the nut graph by the selected news media, they are insufficient to generalize and prove the hypothesis. One of the most important findings of the study is that editors of the Swedish news media, Dagens Nyheter, typically do not compose the nut graph for their news articles. To conclude, the researcher found out through the literature that, the nut graph could present a fact or a hypothesis.

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With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,

And with my own hand had wrought to make it grow;

And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—

I came like Water, and like Wind I go.

From The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Translated by Edward FitzGerald

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Originally coined by The Wall Street Journal, the nutshell paragraph, commonly referred to as the 'nut graph' or 'nut graf,' plays an important role in every news piece. When I arrived at the Journal as a new reporter in 1983, the nut graf was a tradition unto itself. When I turned in a draft of my first front-page story, my editor said, 'But there's no nut graf!' Journal features generally start with an anecdote, then moved to a nut graf. I do not recall anyone telling me what a nut graf was or what it was assumed to do, but it was easy to draw those assumptions (Stewart, 1998).

The 'nut graph' is a sentence or paragraph placing the focus of the story which was coined more than 50 years ago by The Wall Street Journal in a memo to its staff (Rich, 2015). It was created to improve readers' understanding of news stories and motivate them to read further. The memo said a story must have one major theme that must be defined in a 'nutshell summary' high in the story. The concept of the nut graph has since become a standard procedure for all news stories (Rich, 2015). Different news media have different norms to place the nut graph in the news based on the subject of the story but it is often placed in the third or fifth paragraph. The nut graph should generally be placed in the third to fifth paragraph, but if the lead is very persuasive, the nut graph could come later (Rich, 2015). What makes the role of nut graphs so interesting and crucial is that they don't just help readers understand why a piece of news is important; they go beyond the actual news and connect it to a much broader perspective, especially when the news is about an international crisis.

Is there any history or background the reader needs to comprehend how a problem or action emerged? Put the story in perspective (Rich, 2015). Due to the significant role of the nut graph in news writing, numerous books and articles have been written about it. The subject has been discussed from various angles to assist journalists in understanding, recognizing, and eventually writing it properly. The nut graph gives the important information. It expresses the problem, the ‘so what’ of this story (Rich, 2015). Meanwhile, it is scientifically intriguing to analyze the content of the nut graph. The scientific problemization in this study lies in the content analysis of the nut graph within news articles, and its potential to disclose patterns and variations through different media sources. To accomplish this, through a comparative analysis of the nut graph, written by five print news media sources from China, Sweden, Russia, the UK, and the US – Global Times, Dagens Nyheter, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times – the researcher aimed to investigate their variations and narratives, shedding light on how information within the nut graph, is potentially utilized for media agenda. In addition to the aforementioned points, the scientific problemization in this study also extends to the broader context of journalism and communication research. The analysis of nut graphs functions as a small-scale example for understanding how media outlets highlight, structure, and present information to their audiences. This investigation not only contributes to the field of media agenda-setting but also has implications for journalism ethics and practices which raises questions about transparency, bias, and the role of journalism in influencing public mindset. In sum, the researcher works from an agenda-setting perspective with a specific focus on the media agenda.

Ken Wells, a writer, and editor at The Wall Street Journal, defined the nut graf as ‘a paragraph that conveys what this whole story is about and why you should read it. It’s a flag to the reader, high up in the story: You can choose to continue or not, but if you read no farther, you know what that story’s about,’ (Poynter, 2003). To craft a very effective nut graph, it's important not only to include a comprehensive understanding of the story but also to engage in a form of psychoanalysis of the readers. The more delicate the subject matter, the greater the requirement for psychoanalysis. As Jack Hart, editor, and writing coach at The Oregonian, described so well, the nut graf is ‘a core statement that responds to the basic question lurking in the mind of every reader: ‘Why should I bother with this story?’,’ (Poynter, 2003). With millions of Web sites

competing for readers' engagement, readers will click on another story or site if the lead or nut graph is not apparent (Rich, 2015). The role of the nut graph is so important not only for holding the reader, and constructing the whole story but also for finding a reason for the story. To find a lead that will function for you in your story, first find your nut graph. Ask yourself what the central point of the story is? (Rich, 2015). What is the difference between a nut graph and a theme? The nut graph is the reason for the story, but the theme is an angle or recurring notion that weaves all through the story (Rich, 2015).

Additionally, it is important to note the various spellings of the term 'nut graph' encountered in the literature. Apart from the commonly used 'nut graph' and 'nutshell paragraph,' journalists and academics have also employed alternative terms such as 'nut graf,' 'gospel graph,' 'billboard paragraph,' 'swing graf,' 'focus graph,' and 'bolt graf.' Throughout this study, the researcher refers to it as the 'nut graph.' Moreover, The term 'selected news media' used in this study specifically refers to the aforementioned print news media sources.

1.2 Problem Statement

An international crisis like Libya's inevitably follows trends, as events unfold continuously from the beginning to the end, with news media broadcasting them every second. The bigger the crisis, the bigger the news coverage. The nut graf structure is ideal for stories that declare trends (Poynter, 2003). Therefore, studying the nut graph is one of the ways between others to examine international crisis trends through news and check if the selected news media set agendas through their nut graphs by different narratives, which might affect the readers' comprehension of the actual events of the crisis.

This form is useful for anecdotes about trends, important issues, features, news sidebars, and news events that lend themselves to a feature approach (Rich, 2015). The news about international crises varies in trends based on incidents: explosions, and attacks, but the nut graphs of the same news trend mostly stay the same because they have a bigger role: persuasion. The nut graph repeats itself persistently through time, and the repetition often continues for a while to persuade the readers about the reality of the crisis, which not necessarily reflect the whole reality. Magazine editors like Evelynne Kramer define the paragraph as 'opening the aperture.' As members of a video generation, you might see it helpful to consider this form's

lead as a close-up. The nut graph is a wide-angle shot (Poynter, 2003). But what if the wide-angle shot is taken from one side of the story? The answer is simple; the reader would most probably only see that side of the story, especially if it happens persistently. Repetition can affect beliefs about truth. People tend to perceive claims as truer if they have been exposed to them before. This is known as the illusory truth effect, and it explains why advertisements and propaganda work and also why people think fake news to be true (Hassan, & Barber, 2021). If journalistic recognition of 'newsworthiness' are the major driver of media coverage, then we should expect little cross-national variation in the sorts of events that become news (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). What Galtung and Ruge (1965) argued can also apply to the 'cross-national variation' observed in nut graphs crafted by mainstream media. If 'newsworthiness' and conveying the authentic unfolding of events to the public hold notable importance in news writing, then we would expect lower 'cross-national variation' in nut graphs. However, this is not the case with nut graphs produced by mainstream media. Tends to be in a higher level of 'cross-national variation,' specifically evident when the news covers an international crisis, especially conflicts where countries' foreign policy interests greatly divide. Whether or not the newsman is working for The Times or for Tass or for the Daily Yell, he or she will try to catch the attention of the readers, to interest them. (Östgaard, 1965, p14).

Some readers might find the nut graph useful because it tells the story in short, save time, and provide reasons why it fits into readers' lives. In these days of impatient audiences, the nut graph should come early in the story—usually by the third to fifth paragraph (Rich, 2015). Nut grafs often employ summary language to bring together contrasting events to show trends or long-running conditions (Poynter, 2003). Additionally, for readers who do not want the whole story, the nut graf summary deck 'permits some interpretation of the context or impact of the story, a journalistic aspect often difficult to achieve in the typical single- or even multiple-deck headlines.' Researchers tested the hypothesis in Washington on both subscribers and non-subscribers of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. The summary decks proved to be popular, with participants from both groups expressing nut grafs helped them take in complicated information fast and typically agreeing they were worthwhile despite the space they took up (Vargo, Schierhorn, Wearden, Schierhorn, Endres, & Tabar, 2000).

However, when it comes to an international crisis like Libya, the nut graphs written by mainstream media usually refer to the responsible phenomena of the crisis subjectively, which differs based on the news media. Whether you carry a soft or hard approach, make sure that your nut graph describes who is being accused of what, and put it high in the story. If a report is part of a court record, you might use it as fact—but it still may not be true. It is up to a judge or jury to determine whether the claims in court documents and trials are true. So you need to ascribe your information, although not necessarily in the lead (Rich, 2015). Taking the points of (Rich (2015) into account and if the story is about an international crisis it is up to the public to decide who is responsible for the crisis. Moreover, as Rich (2015) mentioned even facts may not be true, and it is the responsibility of the news media to ‘attribute the information’. Journalists have obligation to introduce responsible forces for an international crisis to the public, and make them accountable by providing all the facts and by telling the whole story and not just setting agendas for the event. Meanwhile, is it possible to put all the facts or to include the whole story of an international crisis in a nut graph? Currently, nut graphs written by mainstream media for international crises do not tell the whole story and do not provide all the facts to the readers but still, they make big conclusions by setting agendas. Editor-in-Chief Matt Murray says, ‘I detect many of our nut graf’s are formulated around ‘supposed to’—something was supposed to occur and it did not. That is often a weak basis for a nut graf’ (The Wall Street Journal, 2022). If what Matt Murray mentioned is true, and if editors use assumptions even in the nut graph written for war news, then it is no longer a ‘weak basis’. In this case, it can be a catastrophe in terms of journalists’ responsibility towards the public in reflecting the reality of events. Therefore, this issue presents challenges from both a societal and a scientific standpoint. From the societal perspective, the problem is that the public deserves to read more than editors’ assumptions in the news. From the scientific standpoint, as Matt Murray mentioned, nut graphs written based on assumptions have a weak foundation.

1.3 Purpose and Aim

The aim of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the contents of nut graphs written by five print news media outlets: Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times, regarding the Libyan crisis, in order to examine whether they set media agenda through the nut graph. Additionally, the Swedish news media outlet,

Dagens Nyheter, is selected as a sample for dual examination: first, to determine whether it included the nut graph in its news articles written about the Libyan crisis and second, to explore if it set any media agenda through the potential nut graph. This examination is conducted from agenda-setting perspective with the focus on the media agenda. The significance of this issue extends beyond journalistic and public perspectives; it also holds importance from a scientific standpoint. Comparing and analyzing the content of nut graphs written by different news media outlets is not only scientifically valuable but also intriguing. The comparison seeks to identify variations in terms of narratives and to explore if any form of media agenda setting is present. This exploration is crucial since it could pose challenges for readers in comprehending the actual reality.

Here is a swift way to construct a nut graf for your next story: Makeup your mind about what the report is and why people should read it, and then type that finding in one or two sentences (Poynter, 2003). In the case of the Libyan crisis, the nut graph written by selected news media have different interpretations of the Libyan crisis and makes different conclusions. When they referred to NATO interference in the crisis in the nut graph, the differences become even clearer. Let's be transparent about one type of 'interpretive' reporting that is not wanted. That is what people call slanted news (Schramm, 1957, p240). What the audience read in the nut graph written by the selected news media about the Libyan crisis is often the same as politicians' hypotheses. However, who am I as a journalist to make such big conclusions? 'My editor once said (regarding my nut graph) you buried it, and the reason I buried it was because who was I to say what the story was about? I do not know anything. I only worked on the story for five hours' said Chip Scanlan, former writing program director to the Poynter Institute (Carrillo, 2019). It has been said that 'the duty of the foreign correspondent is to convey the story to the public in the nation to which he is assigned, not simply the official acts of the government and the statements of the press attaches'. But other available information suggests that this is hardly done and that the out-flow not only is dominated by 'politics', but also, typically more than the within-flow, mirrors the views of the people in power. This would presumably not be true in news from countries where the government controls all the news media, where the government's arguments would dominate both the within the flow and the out-flow (Östgaard, 1965). Do journalists need to echo the voices of politicians in the nut graph regarding an international crisis, even when

news media are not directly covering political speeches? Editors worldwide need to remind themselves that the public deserves more facts than assumptions in the nut graph.

1.4. Choosing the Libyan Crisis as a Case Study

Considering the presence of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops in Libya, the researcher found it intriguing to analyze news stories related to the Libyan crisis, as reported by an American, a Chinese, a European, a Russian, and a Swedish news outlet. This choice aimed to examine the narratives these outlets presented about the crisis. The presence of NATO forces within Libya during a critical phase of the country's crisis infused an international perspective into the study. The international dimension of the crisis gains further significance when considering the United Nations Security Council's endorsement of NATO intervention in Libya. The intervention in Libya in 2011 was proclaimed to have been a triumph...: ... the UN Security Council, by passing resolutions 1970 and 1973, demonstrated its ability to respond to humanitarian crises without any of the five permanent members of the council using a veto (Terry, 2015).

1.4.1 Audience Awareness of the Libyan Crisis Facts

The media can put stress on whatever aspect of an issue it wishes. It can turn a passive audience into an active one, and if we do not see any protests against the wrongdoings of politicians or governments, it is a sign that the media, in general, and the news media, in particular, have not fulfilled their responsibility toward the public. Libya's eastern capital of Benghazi bursted into a popular uprising in February 2011. Within days, the eastern region had fallen under the control of rebels. After six months of fierce fighting and an international military intervention led by NATO, Tripoli also fell (Pargeter, 2012). Since 2011, each state has had a strategic interest in Libya. France and Egypt have each upheld their air strikes in Libya, mentioning self-defense in that the strikes are an endeavor to defend themselves from terrorist groups. This is identical to the United States' post-9/11 justification for initiating its drone program in Pakistan. Egypt's forty-two attacks have resulted in at least thirteen and at most fourteen civilian deaths. France's five attacks have resulted in a minimum of four and potentially as many as eight civilian deaths. France may also be responsible for seven strikes in 2018, likely performed in coordination with the LNA. The UAE's 131 strikes since entering the conflict in 2016 have resulted in at least 135

and potentially as many as 185 civilian deaths. Turkey, which entered the conflict in 2019, has operated strikes unilaterally as well as with the GNA twenty-two times, resulting in between ten and twelve civilian deaths through 5 February 2020 (Salyk-Virk, 2020). The question is why the news media do not repeat these facts in the nut graph. Are they not as important as other issues? New America and Airwars recorded more than 4,300 airstrikes reportedly executed between September 2012 and 5 February 2020 in Libya, which resulted in at least 611 civilian deaths employing the low-end estimate, and as many as 899 civilian deaths employing the high-end estimate (Salyk-Virk, 2020). One can make a mind-blowing nut graph out of this information, which focuses on people suffering. Since the 2011 NATO intervention, Libya stays completely unstable as two competing militaries—that of the internationally acknowledged GNA, and the forces of General Haftar’s LNA—struggle for power. Both of these troops deploy air strikes, and both are backed by foreign countries also launching air strikes. From 2012 through 5 February 2020, 4,349 strikes were recorded, 2,348 of which were executed by the LNA alone. According to news reports and accounts on social media, at least 1,820 people in total were killed in these strikes taking the lowest assessment, and as many as 2,440 were killed by the highest assessment and of these recorded deaths, between 611 and 899 were civilians (Salyk-Virk, 2020, p205). While writing the nut graph about Libya, all journalists in editorial offices around the world need to ask themselves if the audience is aware of the inconsistencies in the foreign policy of the outside powers involved in the Libyan crisis. 12 February 2020 marked the most recent UN Security Council Resolution (2510) to demand a ceasefire. It was passed almost unanimously, with Russia abstaining rather than voting it down (Salyk-Virk, 2020).

As you mentioned in the article the NATO air strike happened on 19 June 2011 but your article was published on 5 Sep 2011. I could not find any article reported by The Guardian on the incident. I want to know why The Guardian did not report the incident in a timely manner; this question was asked on 1 May 2023 by the researcher from Luke Harding, Senior international correspondent in The Guardian. ‘We weren't in Tripoli at the time and couldn't get a visa from the Gadaffi regime. I wrote the story after Tripoli had fallen when it was possible to piece together what happened’, he said to the researcher in an email on the same day.

1.5 Research Questions

This study goes through theoretical explorations about the nut graph, and focuses on a comparative analysis of its content written by selected news media to answer the following research questions:

- How does the nut graph in the five selected news media outlets differ in terms of coverage of the same incidents about the Libyan crisis?
- How does the Swedish news media differ from other selected news media in terms of its nut graphs written about the Libyan crisis?

The first research question was chosen due to the researcher's 11 years of journalistic experience from 2010 to 2021 in Iran. Through this experience, the researcher discovered that the nut graph is often subjective and can potentially mislead the audience's understanding of the actual reality. The second research question regarding the nut graph's role in the news media style of Sweden originated from a conversation between the researcher and a classmate at the University of Gothenburg. Subsequently, it evolved into a research question after conducting interviews with several Swedish editors and journalists. Detailed discussions on this matter will be presented in the next chapter. The researcher formulated the idea that selecting a Swedish news media could potentially offer a solution to the challenges that the nut graph might present.

Thirty-one news articles focusing on the same incidents related to the Libyan crisis were selected from the five chosen news media outlets to address the research questions. The selection criteria were based on their significance and relevance to prior studies conducted during a similar period of the Libyan crisis. This study concentrates on news reports spanning a brief period of the Libyan crisis, from the NATO attack in Tripoli on 19 June 2011 to the murder of the security chief of Benghazi on 21 November 2012. This timeframe is chosen to shed light on the importance of nut graphs written by news media outlets about the crisis. It aims to explore their differences through a critical overview. The duration of the Libyan crisis in this study was determined through consultations with a few Libyan experts and was also influenced by a previous study conducted during a similar timeframe.

1.6 Limitations

The significance of the problem can be understood from various perspectives, which could include conducting reader interviews, extending the duration of the Libyan crisis under examination, and adopting a mixed-method approach instead of a purely qualitative one. However, due to time limitations for this study and considering previous research findings, I opted to narrow down the focus. If time constraints were not a concern, a larger number of nut graphs would have been selected to address the problem on a broader scale. It is important to note that the chosen news articles do not encompass the entire spectrum of nut graphs in the context of Libyan crisis coverage. Similarly, due to these limitations, the study does not include a news media source from either the Arab world or Africa. Given that Libya is located in both the Arab world and Africa, including a media source from these regions would offer insight into their specific interpretations of the crisis. The study also omits representation from both print and TV media. The decision regarding the type of news media chosen was made after consulting with media experts. In addition, one significant limitation of this study was the time-consuming process of locating and collecting a limited number of crucial news articles from the websites of the selected news media. This challenge stemmed from the absence of data in both Factiva and Mediarkivet databases. A librarian at the University of Gothenburg attempted to address this issue, but the limitation persisted.

The study also did not address the following crucial question due to various limitations:

How does the nut graph written by the selected news media affect the audience's understanding of the Libyan crisis?

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the researcher provides an intricate explanation of how the research questions were formulated, the criteria for selecting news media and news articles, and the rationale behind adopting the agenda-setting theory, which was chosen after a comprehensive review of relevant theories. Given the intention to conduct a comparative analysis of the nut graphs written by Global Times, Dagens Nyheter, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times,

all addressing the same incidents related to the Libyan crisis, the decision to conduct a content analysis study was made. This method aimed to assess whether the selected news media establish agendas within their nut graphs. The inclusion of Dagens Nyheter in the study was motivated by the researcher's hypothesis that Swedish news media editors generally tend not to utilize the nut graph in their news articles. This aligns with the hypothesis that news articles devoid of nut graphs maintain a balance of objectivity and allow readers the space to formulate their own conclusions, rather than being influenced by the conclusions presented in the nut graph. Among several related theories, the researcher examined and selected the agenda-setting theory as the framework to analyze the nut graphs written by the chosen news media about incidents during the Libyan crisis. This decision was influenced by two crucial reasons. Firstly, the agenda-setting theory aligns with the researcher's hypothesis. Secondly, it possesses the potential to address the selected research questions effectively. Opting for the agenda-setting theory facilitates the conduction of a content analysis on the selected nut graphs. This analytical approach holds significance not only from journalistic and public perspectives but also from a scientific standpoint. It allows for the analysis of variations and narratives within the nut graphs, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

During the research, other relevant theories— framing effects theory: what is mainly annoying in public opinion research is a phenomenon known as ‘framing effects.’ These happen when (often small) modifications in the presentation of an issue or an event produce (sometimes large) changes of belief (Chong, & Druckman, 2007, p104), superstructure theory: we employ the theoretical term superstructure to define schemata. Schemata have a fixed, traditional (and therefore culturally variable) nature for each type of text. We believe that also news dialogue has such a traditional schema, a news schema, in which the overall topics or global content may be inserted (Van Dijk, 1985), and news values theory: news values can be defined in various ways, but in nature, they determine what is news worthy (Bednarek, & Caple, 2014)—emerged. Although these theories were not employed in this study, they are briefly mentioned. The selection of the appropriate theory for this study was a careful process that required a thorough review of these relevant theories.

2.1 Exploring the Second-Level Agenda-Setting

In this chapter, we delve into the concept of second-level agenda setting which is considered as the media agenda within the broad framework of agenda-setting theory. Second-level agenda setting, in our context, refers to how news media outlets not only select and highlight particular issues but also play a crucial role in framing and presenting these issues to the public.

2.1.1 Media Agenda within Agenda-Setting Theory

A vast accumulation of research during the past twenty-five years has confirmed the influence of news coverage on the salience of issues and other topics on the public agenda, an influence now called the first level of agenda setting. Some of these studies, as well as early theoretical speculation, also suggested the possibility of widening the scope of agenda-setting theory to include the transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda of the attributes and frames that describe topics on the agenda. Recent theoretical focus on attributes and frames has elaborated the second level of agenda setting (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997, 715).

2.2 Analyzing the Nut Graph's Content and Source & Is It a Hypothesis, a Fact, or Propaganda?

Many books and articles have been written about how to formulate the nut graph. However, the researcher could not find even a single sentence explaining how it needs to be written for controversial issues like a war or an international crisis, although some raised critical questions about its usage. In more general terms, the nut graf generally poses a hypothesis, conveys a contention, asks a question, or delivers a fact or situation so dramatic or puzzling as to direct the reader to continue reading. The nut graf helps to build tension in the story and make the reader want to discover what happened, and while the nature of the tension is usually very concise, it does not have to be. Subtle nut graf, in the hands of a professional, can be very convincing. One rule of the game that authorizes no exceptions is that the nut graf has to set up, foreshadow, or in some other tone match the ending, which I often call a 'bolt' graf, to underscore this relationship. For readers who think of the story as a psychological mechanism, there is a lot more to it than nut, point of understanding, and bolt. Stories can have an amazing degree of internal intricacy; books have been written about it, and authors spend their lives analyzing it (Franklin, 1993). As

Franklin (1993) mentioned, the nut graph can present a fact or a hypothesis. When the news story is about less sensitive issues, it might be helpful to pose a hypothesis to make the reader curious about the story. However, when it comes to sensitive issues like international crises, even combinations of both facts and hypotheses can become misleading and are not acceptable. Our communication system is established on the idea of a free marketplace of ideas. It will not function right unless all stances on a controversial inquiry are willingly introduced (Schramm, 1957, p359). The nut graf conducted the 'selling' function. In essence, it told the audience why they should carry the time to read the article. It pushed to make the story seem significant, timely, and topical. It truly recognized that most readers of a daily newspaper were presumably looking for reasons to overlook a long, time-consuming story, and it attempted to address that reaction. In this, The Wall Street Journal was ahead of its time. But over the years something had gone wrong. Reader surveys revealed that the nut grafs were not selling readers on a story and inspiring them to read on. Rather, a big percentage of readers stopped reading after the nut grafs! (Stewart, 1998).

Moreover, Östgaard (1965) argues here what Vargo, Schierhorn, Wearden, Endres, and Tabar (2000) discussed before about the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin's audience interest in the nut graph due to its 'interpretation of the context'. We are not concerned with the actions to utilize simple words and sentences in order to get the 'message across' more readily, and will not discuss with the view that 'in essence, good newspaper writing is an expert job of simplification', if by 'simplification' one means only 'clarification'. This would not be a 'negative factor' affecting the news flow, as it would not result in any misshaping of the original message. But the simplification aspect can also affect the content of the news messages, if 'simplification' implies 'making less complex'. If the event (issue, problem, statement, etc.) which is to be reported has a specific intricacy, and 'what happened' is then reported as being less complicated, 'more simple' than it really was, then we have a sample of 'simplification' of the news which clearly damaged the news flow at this stage (Östgaard, 1965). According to Robert W. Desmond, 'the whole pattern of facts often must be so simplified and condensed in presentation as to distort the exact truth at times'. Without demanding that news media should ever attempt to present the 'exact truth', or even less the 'whole truth', it may be stated that generally speaking, simplification of the news will impair the flow of news, so as to make the

picture presented to the public more simple, less complex, than 'what really happened' (Östgaard, 1965, p7,8). As we have described the aspects, many or all of them are at work at all times, with consequences for most if not all of the material that goes through the information channels. They influence both the content of the reports (because some info is left out and others is passed along) and the way in which they are proposed (Östgaard, 1965).

As with other parts of a piece of news, the nut graph should not mirror what the editor desires to be the facts, or as Elmer Davis once said the good newspaper should avoid 'interpretive reporting'. Likewise, interpretive reporting is employed in the nut graph to present the whole picture of news to the readers and to motivate the readers to continue reading. Elmer Davis in *But We Were Born Free*, expresses this problem well: 'The good newspaper, the good news broadcaster, must walk a tightrope between two great gulfs—on one side the false objectivity that takes everything at face value and lets the public be imposed upon by the charlatan with the most brazen front; on the other, the 'interpretive' reporting which fails to draw the line between objective and subjective, between a reasonably well-established fact and what the reporter or editor wishes were fact. To say that is easy; to do it is hard.' (Schramm, 1957, 92). 'I am familiar with the term and I'm sure there might be problematic nut graphs out there,' an experienced freelance journalist in Italy, who expressed a desire to remain anonymous, said to the researcher through a LinkedIn text message conversation on 18 April 2023.

And if it seems that in this audience there are a number of classes of taste and types of need, then I think it is feasible for the audience to insist that the media serve those diverse tastes and needs, instead of ladeling up a tasteless common-denominator broth which appeals to each and fulfills none (Schramm, 1957, 355, 6). 'How exactly do you define 'nut graph'? It occurred to me that we might not have the same definition, and certainly, other news organizations might also differ,' Steven Lee Myers, correspondent at The New York Times Company told the researcher in an email interview on 21 May 2023 when being asked if he used the nut graph in his news article for The New York Times on 12 September 2012 about the attack in Benghazi that killed U.S. Ambassador. He pointed out an important factor that different news media might not have the same definition for the nut graph.

2.3 Overcoming Editorial Manipulation & Do Not Read the Nut Graph!

The most common question that journalists hear from friends might be; which news media can one trust? The researcher's response is always the same: 'None. However, if you must, avoid reading the nut graph unless you want to become a product of your society! This usually sparks an interesting conversation, and then I would stop joking. The researcher encourages his friends to file complaints with news media outlets if they notice any kind of editorial manipulation in the nut graph. Then we try to become a discriminating audience. We give some thought to what the media might be offering us, and we speak about the media with our friends (Schramm, 1957, p357). In some cases the newsmen will deliberately 'editorialize' their news pieces, i.e. link news to the 'editorial line' and they can also do it unintentionally, as do government administrators and agency journalists or rewrite men. Such impact has been registered even in cases when the medium would claim that it is conveying only unbiased and 'straight' news, while actually, according to V.O. Keys, Jr, it 'seeks to achieve its policy ends, not by editorializing directly in the news, but by manipulating the emphasis given to news themes in accord with its policy'. Occasionally it is claimed that such editorial manipulation of the news has more significant impacts than other forms of control of the news flow, but little study has been done that defends such a theory (Östgaard, 1965, p6). In terms of editorial manipulation of news themes, the negative effect on the audience is greater if it happens in the nut graph due to its importance. The theme has been described as 'meaning in a word' and in a nut graf story, it is meaning in a paragraph (Poynter, 2003). William E. Blundell, a former Wall Street Journal author who coaches writers, and whose stories depicted the approach in its finest form, calls 'the main theme statement the single most important bit of writing I do on any story.' (Poynter, 2003). The first requisite, therefore, is an alert, curious audience. This means that we pay some attention to our media. We read, view, and listen. We understand what is in the media. We do not wash our hands of the media with the assumption that they are being patterned for someone else (Schramm, 1957).

2.4 Previous studies

2.4.1 Definition and Importance of the Nut Graph & Previous Studies on the Nut Graph

Nut graf summary decks, those casual and brief synopses of the news that are neither text nor headlines, demand a wide range of readers and non-readers. Both designated older readers and younger nonsubscribers like the brief read aspects of nut graf decks as an easy way to make sense of the news story (Hilliard, 1991, p1). In this study, Hilliard (1991) explained why the nut graph is so important and how it can be used as a tool to hold the readers' attention and attract them to the news. This technique is very effective for stories written in narrative style (Rich, 2015, p212). To assist your audiences comprehend why a story has relevancy and importance, you should include a nut graph in your narrative pieces. The purpose of this paragraph is to tell your readers, 'This matters because of X, Y, and Z, and here is how it fits into your life.' No matter what you want to do with your story, you need to give people the most valuable interest elements, much like a lead would do in an inverted pyramid story (Filak, 2020, 133). In this study, Filak (2020) explains the importance of the nut graph in news writing, and how it can attract readers to the story. Other studies also provide detailed explanations of the nut graph's role and its significance, including the use of different terms to refer to it. While the lead presents a distinct instance or manifestation of a bigger issue, nut graphs are paragraphs that present that underlying problem and inform the reader what they can expect to read about in the feature. They also usually hint at the article's relevancy. The nut graph, which is also called the billboard paragraph, is often the second or third paragraph and arrives right after the lead (Angler, 2017). The nut graf is often called the 'swing graf' because it swings the lead into the true focus of the news story. A nut graf comes early in a feature because you do not like readers wondering about the exact subject of the story (Marsh, Guth, & Short, 2020). The nut graph is a crucial paragraph for it helps the audience understand the importance or 'point' of an article. It presents the 'so what' for those audiences and provides the audience with the rationales to care about the topic. When formulating a proper nut graph, it is significant to clearly and concisely write the 5W's – Who, What, When, Where, and Why (Ferris, & Wilder, 2013).

Remember that the nut graph is a suggestion for a set of best techniques and a shared language for story dialogue. No story function should stop because a distinct paragraph cannot be circled as the nut. Some narrative techniques will not have a nut graph at all. In some news stories, nut

graph questions might be replied to, but not in a single, packed paragraph (Davis, & Davis, 2012). If your lead explains the focus in the first sentence, you do not need a separate nut graph. However, if your lead does not identify the main idea of the story, you need a nut graph to explain the focus: Lead: When freshmen begin college, they often feel like the world is their oyster. Unfortunately, many 18- and 19-year-olds are swallowing that big oyster in one gulp—and bellying up for seconds. Nut graph: There is a name for this behavior—it is called the ‘freshman 15,’ and it has been a part of college life for about as long as young people have been heading off in pursuit of higher education. That term is used to describe the typical weight gain many freshmen experience during their first year away from home (Rich, 2015, p37). Many journalists, both students, and professionals, have a difficult time formulating a nut graf. The nut graf needs the writer to sum up the story in a way that might seem like editorializing. It is not. The critical thinking and analysis that the form needs must be supported by careful reporting. The nut graf formulates a case, but it must be backed by proof (Poynter, 2003). This process (formulating the nut graph) is also influential for broadcast news because the audience relates to people, so formulating the story by concentrating on a person affected by a problem is a proper way to hook viewers (Rich, 2015).

Moreover, Shie (2012) in a study explored the alignment of major generic discourse units of a news story; including the nut graph by examining corresponding The New York Times (NYT) input stories and The NY Times International Weekly (IW) output stories. Even if a news story is backed by ‘verifiable facts,’ such judgments extend the possibility for dispute and accusations of subjectivity. This new insight of objectivity endeavored to draw a line between journalists’ professional judgments ‘(O.K. to include in a news report) and their personal opinions (not O.K.),’ Mathew Pressman, a journalism professor at Seton Hall University, wrote in 2018. Some people would call this method “point-of-view journalism,” although there is no standard definition. One signifying sign is a nut graph, a paragraph near the opening of a story that describes “in a nutshell” what the news story is about. Taken from magazine profile stories, the nut graph has evolved into a common feature in business reporting (Corfman, 2023). As journalists attempt to link together different cultural threads and draw big but noteworthy conclusions, variety presents an opportunity to fact-check the arguments and, rather than simply cycle through a familiar set of nut graf, actually add a new angle to the ongoing description

(McBride, & Rosenstiel, 2013). Referring to the facts, not assumptions, in the nut graph by focusing on the diversity mentioned above is crucial. It helps to avoid a vicious circle of setting agendas through the nut graph.

Don Fry says he begins the writing process long before he sits down at his computer. 'I'm imagining the story while I'm reporting it,' he says. Fry concentrates on what he calls the 'point statement,' also known as a focus graph or nut graph. He asks himself what the story is about and what the point of the story is. Any information that doesn't relate to the point statement doesn't get included in the story (Rich, 2015, 150). What considers for the prominence of nut grafs in journalism today? In my opinion, they cater to and reflect broad trends: People desire the whole story in a nutshell; they want it quick, and they like it to be conclusive. Nut grafs facilitate the experience of reading. They are considered by many editors as a path to compete with TV. My own bias is likely apparent by now, so I will accept it: 'If I could put a stake into the heart of the nut graf, I would. And yet I would have to almost immediately reinvent it, for I use it myself.' Clearly, it is feasible to go too far in the opposing direction, shunning nut grafs (Stewart, 1998, 156). Stewart (1998) expressed his concern about biased reporting and the careful formulation of the nut graph by stating, 'If I could put a stake into the heart of the nut graf, I would'.

2.4.2 Who Writes the Nut Graph?

Empathy is not beyond human capability; good journalism usually is the norm by which empathy is evoked. But who composes the story matters. When minorities and women and people who have known deprivation or misfortune first-hand are writers of news as well as its audience, the social world depicted in the news develops and changes (Schudson, 1995). A role of an editor is to cooperate with reporters to define the nut graph and to confirm that it is constructed properly so the audience will stay involved (Davis, & Davis, 2012). Schramm (1957) and Davis and Davis (2012) both agreed that the formulation of the nut graph is through the cooperation of the editor and the reporter. When a discussion about "the nut" happens at the outset, in the assigning phase, the editor and reporter come to agree on the questions and answers. If the reporter and editor see the nut differently, it is better to discover that earlier rather than later. A discussion about the nut graph can help crystallize everyone's thinking about a story, so it is a good place to start a story chat. It ensures reporter and editor have a shared vision about a story, which naturally evolves into the key questions any planning discussion should cover: What is the best

approach? Who are the key sources? What is the critical background to include? What are the three or four key questions that need to be answered? What key numbers need to be in the story? Where can the reporter go to report the story to give a sense of location or place? What are the design opportunities around this idea? Framing a story discussion around the nut graph is efficient and fast, a predictable and comfortable starting place that lets the reporter take the lead (Davis, & Davis, 2012, p74). I usually found myself locked in discussions with editors for whom the nut graf had become more significant than the story. They always liked to move the 'good' material, the 'news,' as they often named it, from deep in the story into the nut grafs, without concern for the story's overall structure or even chronological order (Stewart, 1998). No reporter, no newspaper, no broadcaster, and no newsreel are anticipated to be perfect, presenting no resistance and no variation to the news that becomes available (Schramm, 1957).

But the significant body of knowledge that the mass communicator requires is not so directed or specialized; it is a complex of whatever aids him to comprehend the world around him. That is, he requires some psychology to help him comprehend the people around him; some sociology to assist him to understand social relations, organization, and disorganization; some political science to enable him to understand the workings of government; some economics to assist him understand business and finance; some anthropology to help him notice his culture in perspective; something of the wide and illuminating sweep of history; some of the humanizing wisdom of literature and art; some introduction to science so that he can at least comprehend its language and method, and be ready to look through its window into modern life. To put it another way, he requires, not a specific education in a body of knowledge unique to his job, but rather the broadest possible education so that he can apprehend and interpret what he is going to see and write or describe (Schramm, 1957). The editors who write the nut graph are typically experienced and educated. However, it is important to note that their expertise does not necessarily include all aspects of an international crisis. To accurately convey the complexity of such events to the audience, editors require more than just journalistic experience or education. As Schramm (1957) emphasized, they need 'the broadest possible education'.

Covering news linked to international crises places a notable responsibility on editors, as they aim to capture the entire story for the readers within a nut graph, a task that bears substantial moral importance. Almost all in mass communication acknowledge he is employed in public

service and has unique responsibilities for that reason. In some points, these responsibilities are put on a high ethical basis; in others, they are defined simply as a need to offer the public what it wants. But the biggest step toward professionalizing the mass-communication industry would be simply to underline the individual sense of responsibility rather than just the corporate sense—that is, the obligation of the communicator as a public servant and a professional, as apart from but not fundamentally contrary to his responsibilities to the business he works for (Schramm, 1957). We do not suggest that newspapers should do more about training their reporters to compose leads and copy-read stories; training on that level is being skillfully handled now. While the training which results in a deeper insight into the world they report about is not being handled except in the day-to-day experience of covering a beat or the day-to-day dialogues of the city room. What is required is more experience of the kind illustrated by the Nieman Fellowships, which enable a newspaperman to go back to Harvard for a year, study what he supposes the need to study, and participate with other Niemann Fellows in an exciting seminar on the obligations and techniques of the press' (Schramm, 1957). What we are referring to is the building of professional mindsets. This is not something you can legislate or purchase. But it is something that the fellows of the mass communication industry have it in their power to achieve if they will (Schramm, 1957).

2.4.3 The Role of the Nut Graph in Media Agenda

This study compares and analyzes contents of nut graphs written by the selected news media regarding the Libyan crisis in order to examine whether they set media agenda through the nut graph. The study carried out within the broader perspective of agenda-setting theory, with a specific focus on the media agenda. The crisis will be analyzed through a framework that treats the nut graph as a crucial element of the news story.

The mass media move attention to specific issues. They build up public images of politicians. They are repeatedly offering objects proposing what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, and have feelings about (McCombs, & Shaw, 1972). Perhaps the hypothesized agenda-setting operation of the mass media is most concisely stated by Cohen (1963, p.13), who noted that the press 'may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.' While the mass media might have little impact on the direction or intensity of mindsets, it is hypothesized that the mass media

set the agenda for each political movement, affecting the salience of attitudes toward the political issues (McCombs, & Shaw, 1972, 177).

Scholars presented another phase of agenda-setting theory with the question, 'If the press sets the public agenda, who sets the media agenda?' The design of news coverage that describes the media agenda results from the norms and conventions of journalism, and the daily relations among news organizations themselves.... And because journalists routinely look over their shoulders to verify their sense of news by watching the work of their coworkers, especially the work of elite members of the press, such as the New York Times, Washington Post, and national television networks, this stage encloses intermedia agenda setting, the impact of the news media on each other (McCombs, 2005). The researcher found out that not all the selected news media utilized diverse news sources for gathering information when they did not exclusively cover the incidents. Agenda-setting influences, the transmission of objects, and attribute salience from the press to the public about topics, political figures, and other issues have important consequences for people's perspectives and ideas. This stage of agenda-setting theory has recognized three distinct consequences of agenda-setting for attitudes and opinions: forming an idea, priming ideas about public figures through stress on special issues, and shaping an opinion through a focus on special attributes. There are also consequences of agenda-setting for observable behavior (McCombs, 2005, p549).

Following the known lead of content analysis in mass communication study, most agenda-setting researches have highlighted attention, the number of news stories dedicated to a special topic, and, secondarily, the importance of the news about a topic (e.g., page placement, size of the headline, amount of time or space, appearance in the lead), (McCombs, 2005, p550). However, this study examines whether the nut graph, which is a crucial element of any news article, was utilized for media agenda. The conventional agenda-setting role of the mass media concerns both the surveillance and consensus processes of communication, calling awareness to the new and major issues of the day and affecting agreement about what are the primacies of these issues (McCombs, 2005). Turning particularly to the practice of journalism, both as professionals and researchers we require to constantly monitor how well the news media are performing these social roles (McCombs, 2005, p556). Arguably, the most essential, overarching moral question for journalists involves their stewardship of these resources. Setting the agenda is an

extraordinary responsibility (McCombs, 2005, p556). For three decades, the concept of agenda-setting has furnished one of the most effective and fruitful paradigms in media and communications research (Jennings, & Miron, 2004). When mass media highlight a topic, the audience/public acquiring the message will assume this topic to be important (Cohen, 1963; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). As noted by (Walgrave, & Van Aelst, 2006), among public agenda-setting scholars, the discussion over the power of print and electronic media is far from resolved. Some scholars argue for the primacy of newspapers, while others consider the power of TV (Eilders, 1997; Protess & McCombs; Schoenbach, 1991; Shaw & McCombs, 1977).

2.5. Media Influence on the Public: Meeting Public Demands or Shaping Them?

It is often argued that ‘public desires are created by what the media supply’, rather than vice versa (Östgaard, 1965). Hence, there is no reason to debate what came first, the chicken or the egg, whether public desires are created by the news media supply or vice versa, as either illustration would fit into our theory (Östgaard, 1965). Thus, the world consists of individual and national actors, and since it is unquestionable that the move is based on the actor's image of reality, international action will be based on the image of international actuality. This image is not created by the news media (press, radio, TV, newsreels) alone; personal feelings and contacts, professional relations abroad, diplomatic communications, etc., count too - whether less, equally much or more, we do not know. But the frequency, ubiquity, and perseverance of news media will in any case create them first-rate competitors for the number-one position as international image-former (Galtung, & Ruge, 1965). To conclude, lecturing at the Scandinavian Summer University in Bergen, in 1964, Pertti Pesonen said: ‘The influence of newspapers on the individual readers and through them on public opinion, has so far been very far from sufficiently studied’ (Östgaard, 1965, 18).

2.5.1 The Influence of News Agencies (the Sellers) on News Media (the Clients)

One important effect of news agencies on news media is that if the former does not report an incident in a country, the latter would likely follow suit and not report it either. The fact that agencies often sell their services within the country from which they report - most bureaus will contain both an incoming and an outgoing service - will in some cases potentially also influence the coverage from certain countries, particularly perhaps, when the news media within that

country are operated by the government (Östgaard, 1965). ‘We do not edit TT articles at all; they are published automatically on Aftonbladet,’ said Martin Schori. ‘The news piece from Aftonbladet that you have attached is not written by a journalist from Aftonbladet. It’s a text from TT News Agency, the national wire service in Sweden, that’s been automatically published on Aftonbladet’s website,’ said Victor Lindbom. The researcher finds it necessary to mention these two email interviews again to make his point clear about the influence of news agencies on news media. Regardless of the degree of trust between a news agency and a news media, the automatic publication is not in accordance with Thucydides’ principle of reporting news events to the public. The researcher found through his journalistic experience that automatic publication by a news media from a news agency has become a regular phenomenon nowadays, which might lead to over-dependency of the news media.

It will be taken for granted that an important part of the international news flow is carried out by four Western agencies. It will also be taken for granted that political motivations rarely, if at all, play a part in the way the function of these agencies is directed by the central offices, even when the agency is closely linked with a national government, as is the case with the Agence France-Press. Rather it will be taken for granted that the work of the agencies mostly is inspired by the wish to ‘sell’ the news services to the clients and that major actions are therefore made to ‘satisfy’ these clients. Available information definitely supports such speculation. This does not mean that political factors can be dismissed in this connection. Asked ‘to what extent should a correspondent’s reports be influenced by the best interests of the United States as judged by the correspondent’, 10 percent of 140 U.S. foreign reporters answered ‘greatly’, 34 percent to some extent, and 47 percent ‘not at all’. Even if the 47 percent should have ‘the superhuman capability to suppress completely their own political preferences when noting their reports, the result should show a not inconsiderable motivation for the political influence of the news by the journalists themselves...If the entire service of the agencies would thus seem to be biased, even though solely to a small degree, by the general political outlook among their correspondents and the often-forgotten but important rewrite men and editors along the line, the question then would be to verify if certain political ideas are dominant among their personnel...The educated guess is that the very big majority of those who work for the four Western agencies, like the clients who would pay by far the greatest part of their income, have a Western outlook on world affairs. If

their 'national loyalty bias' is cut by the international team of which they are a part, it is possibly replaced by a 'Western loyalty bias' (Östgaard, 1965). The political impact on the news flow can also be detected in those cases where governments evidently try to control the outward flow of news, by direct censorship or by more indirect methods such as restrictive measures or the threat of expulsion (Östgaard, 1965).

2.5.2 The responsibility of clients as the publishers & Decision Makers

The final stage in the news cycle is offered by the news media, which presents the final outcome to the readers, listeners, and viewers. It is they who determine, in the last resort, what is to be offered to the public, and in countries closely linked with the large news agencies they will have a fortune of material to pick from, provided they can afford to pay for the services of one or more of these agencies.

Moreover, all the information obtainable to the writer implies not only that the agency material is processed so that the chances of its being used by clients are as large as possible, the clients are also able at any time to demand more coverage, and thus directly affect the flow of news. Thus, it should be evident that the clients of the agencies have a large range of options when the final selection of the news for presentation is to be made, with the range, however, being certainly limited by the factors mentioned earlier (Östgaard, 1965). The news media have the responsibility to report important incidents all around the world even if news agencies do not report them based on any reason. Moreover, the news media should not be 100 percent dependent on news agencies to report an incident. By following this procedure even if an incident is under-reported by news agencies, the audience would still become aware of it through news media.

2.5.3 Evaluating Self-Criticism in the Media Industry

Generally, we all want to stay out of trouble, so it might happen that we avoid criticizing ourselves and other people to maintain peace of mind. However, if we aim to make progress, criticism and especially self-criticism are essential.

Elmer Davis once composed a short story about a newspaperman who married a girl who was an excellent reporter. At first, this quality largely attracted the man; then it began to bother him.

Finally, the girl wrote an authentic story of a speech that would eliminate a public man, and the newspaperman divorced her. He could not live with a 'perfect' journalist. And the rest of us couldn't live with one either (Schramm, 1957). We want them to perform somewhere above the level of a pitchman, but somewhere below the level of the angels. We want them to try to live up to the strange responsibility of informing free citizens of a free country, and thus to help to keep it and them free. One of the persuasive signs of such a developing professional feeling would be the growth of lively self-criticism within mass communication. The lack of mutual criticism in communications is one of the features of the industry an outsider encounters hardest to define... (Schramm, 1957). The media have no hesitance in criticizing fleeting phenomena outside the industry, for example, the discussions of a political speech, or the unethical move of a lawyer or a physician. Yet self-criticism is not completely wanting (Schramm, 1957)... The media do now on a few occasions criticize one another... But newspapers seldom criticize each other, except to dispute political opinions (Schramm, 1957).

Schools of journalism rarely make any public criticism of newspapers. Trade papers show little space for such materials. The publishers' seminars are concerned with business and administration, rather than the ethical or public service issues. And the question is, why require this be? It is dubious that any grave misdeeds are being hidden, but as long as the protective silence exists, there will always be suspicions. There will always be accusations of 'press lying' or 'one-party press.' There is everything to be gained by promoting positive mutual criticism and conversation of practices within the profession (Schramm, 1957). That is why there is a regular call for government intervention or censorship or new rules or boycott. Nothing would do so much to lessen this activity as some honest and live mutual criticism within the industry. One thing employers can do to help professionalize the industry is to elevate their teams in every way possible. We desire that our journalists will prepare for their calling by acquiring such a worldview in breadth and depth as few college graduates ever get (Schramm, 1957).

The newspaper men whom I have spoken to when they were leaving the profession have often noted reasons other than pay: they believed their job did not deliver the chance for creative expression and initiative they desired, or they did not like the standards of the publisher they were working for, or they desired to start a magazine of their own, or they felt their health wouldn't take the 'rat race' much longer, or something of that kind (Schramm, 1957). It is

notable that so little criticism of broadcasting and newspapers has come into existence. The effective daily critics of radio and television number less than a handful. No sustained routine criticism of newspapers has ever proved possible. However, criticism of this kind is absolutely a part of the professionalizing and general growing up of the media (Schramm, 1957).

2.6 Studies on Media News Coverage

‘What drives media coverage of armed conflict? Do news outlets in different countries respond to the same events in the same ways? Or do they filter information according to the preferences of the political regimes to which they belong?’ (Baum, & Zhukov, 2015, 1). Academics and experts have raised important questions about media coverage of international crises before. These questions can be formulated in different ways and still provide valuable information to both the public and journalists. They can be formulated in a more specific way, drawing attention to different parts of the news, including the headline, lead, or nut graph. The answers to these questions can be enlightening for the public and can provide advance notice to the journalism community that their news writing will be evaluated by academics and media experts. It is necessary for every news media outlet to pay proper attention to the feedback they receive from the public and academics about their reporting. This way, they can fulfill their responsibilities by reforming their activities in the public interest.

Baum and Zhukov (2015) examined biased reporting including; reporting and over-reporting of certain types of events, of the Libyan crisis by international newspapers from 113 countries. They discussed how this process shapes people’s understanding of war. We disclose evidence of a status-quo media bias in non-democratic countries and a revisionist bias in democratic countries, (Baum, & Zhukov, 2015). In another study, Galtung and Ruge (1965) discussed the general problem of factors influencing the flow of news from abroad in four Norwegian newspapers about Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises. Moreover, Östgaard (1965) investigated the factors that influence the flow of news and how news media portray the world as it is, including the influence of governments on news reporting in countries with and without free press systems. Significant attention must first be put on what can be called the negative factors: namely, those which cause the ‘picture of the world’ as it is delivered through the news media to differ from ‘what really happened’, (Östgaard, 1965).

2.6.1 Outside forces on News Media & Free Press and Propaganda

According to the American Institute of Public Opinion, 'the focus [in the U.S. press] on international news should be on those elements which relate foreign news to the lives of Americans' (Östgaard, 1965, 8). If it is true and if the press is obliged to follow this idea then it would be very difficult to define the free press regardless of the countries' political systems.

The international news flow is affected by governments everywhere. The impact also can take more subtle or indirect forms than those mentioned. The large news agencies as well as the more independent foreign correspondents establish a large part of their reports on what has already been published within the country where they are stationed, by newspapers, broadcasting stations or national press agencies... (Östgaard, 1965). If the significance of the news would be recognized by its importance to governments, then one can argue that the media is not a public service, it is a government service. Governments usually make use of this fact and thus intentionally affect the flow of news: Robert W. Desmond labeled such use 'propaganda', later it was called 'management of news' (Östgaard, 1965). Without an efficient Freedom of Information law in place, governments benefiting from unlimited resources can influence the flow of news any time by using propagandist techniques and deceptive arguments. J. Laski's words in 1937 are certainly always valid: ... there is no government in the world not engaged in 'weighting' the news in its own interest.' It should be added that as a result news reports are distorted.' (Östgaard, 1965, p3). As Östgaard (1965) mentioned, the free press is an effective tool against governments' tendency for biasing the news towards any particular viewpoint. To conclude the discussion of the effect of the sources, it can be said that the factors which in this connection impact the news flow are largely of a political nature (Östgaard, 1965).

2.6.2 Bias and Unconscious Bias in Reporting

Journalism, as a profession devoted to serving the public's needs, holds a notable responsibility to report crucial incidents like wars in an unbiased way. The inclination to systematically underreport or over-report specific kinds of events – shapes our understanding of war (Baum, & Zhukov, 2015). Moreover, there is little doubt that there are also culture-bound factors affecting the transition from events to news, and we shall cite four such aspects that we deem to be crucial at least in the northwestern corner of the world. They are for example: The more the event

involves elite nations, the more likely that it will become a news item. The more the event can be seen in personal terms, as due to the action of specific people, the more likely that it will become a news item. The more negative the event in its consequences, the more likely that it will become a news item (Galtung, & Ruge, 1965). We can comprehend the news media better if we realize that what they produce-news is a form of culture (Schudson, 1995). Moreover, media coverage in non-democracies underreported demonstrations and nonviolent action by regime adversaries, largely overlooked government atrocities, and overreported those caused by rebels. We find the opposing patterns in democratic states (Baum, & Zhukov, 2015). But the important thing for us is that the picture of the world as it has been and is pictured is often distorted by sensationalism because the news is provided only when it is ‘sufficiently exciting’ (Östgaard, 1965).

2.6.3 Setting Agenda or Reporting Facts on the Libyan Crisis

To emphasize the importance of journalists' obligation to report facts, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) have referred to Thucydides and his commitment to the methodology of truth, which was written in the fifth century B.C., in the introduction to his description of the Peloponnesian War:

‘With regard to my factual reporting of events...I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eyewitnesses gave different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other, or else from imperfect memories.’ (p. 129).

Although this passage belongs to more than two thousand years ago, it still retains its credibility in journalism. When it comes to nut graphs written by mainstream media for an international crisis, the audience is faced with completely different narratives, which are not in line with Thucydides’ principal.

While Al Jazeera, CNN, and most US news media at first frequently utilized the term ‘revolution’ to convey the events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, since we do not know if a comprehensive change of these societies will take place or not, I am using in this chapter the

more subtle term ‘North African Arab Uprisings’ to relate the media sensations and political insurrections of the Arab Spring...(Kellner, 2012, 61). The various terms used by different news outlets to portray events in Libya could be utilized for media agenda.

Once the Libyan uprising began, the Western and Arab media could not reach enough of the Qaddafi spectacle, endlessly reciting images of his every sighting and statement, including live broadcasts by Al Jazeera of lengthy speeches that would go on for hours (Kellner, 2012). On March 7, Al Jazeera used the feature logo ‘Libya fighting resembles civil war,’ and by March 8, CNN was utilizing graphics for their news conveying ‘Libyan Civil War Carnage,’ and ‘Libya Conflict Now Civil War.’ But since the two Libyan sides were not systematized into skilled armies facing each other in conventional combat situations, perhaps the concept of ‘civil war’ is not completely suitable (Kellner, 2012, 99). The researcher agrees with Kellner (2012) that using the term ‘Civil War’ was not appropriate for the same reason. On the other hand, he believes that the mentioned media used this term for agenda-setting. Al Jazeera marked the new military status ‘War Over Libya,’ while both CNN and NBC marked the events ‘Target: Libya.’ (Kellner, 2012,114). On Sunday, March 21, the global networks had their Media War Machines in full gear, with wall-to-wall scope of the war in Libya. CNN revised its logo from ‘Target Libya’ to ‘Libya War,’ while NBC stuck with its ‘Target Libya,’ and BBC utilized the neutral ‘Libya Conflict.’ Al Jazeera used its ‘Battle for Libya’ graphic and Russian television (RT) employed the rubric ‘Libya Under Fire,’ while my hometown Los Angeles Times displayed a huge bold headline ‘ATTACK ON LIBYA’ (Kellner, 2012, p 115, 6). All these completely different and subjective terms used by the aforementioned media were used to set different agendas for the Libyan crisis.

Critics of the NATO Libya military intervention would turn increasingly vocal and various as the days went on, presenting the question of why did the Obama administration go into an unanticipated and potentially pricey war? The worry of a media spectacle of people being killed in Benghazi and the east of Libya may have forced the Obama government to support UN-sanctioned military action (Kellner, 2012). If CNN were refined US state and military propaganda during wartime, Al Jazeera delivered genuinely balanced news, displaying footage of both Qaddafi and Libyan officials expressing their position that the attacks were criminal and killing civilians.... Al Jazeera delivered on-site accounts of the military situation, including in

towns like Ajdabiya and Misurata, in which there were no Western media reporters. Their hosts suggested differing interpretations and views on the events, and Al Jazeera appeared as one of the most reliable sources of information on the war in Libya in the global media. Russian television (RT), by contrast, showed non-stop anti-American propaganda and attacks on ‘Libya Under Fire,’ their logo, which subtly indicated that Libya was being bombarded and set ablaze by the Western imperialists.... (Kellner, 2012). When it comes to NATO attacks in Libya, the different media agenda for the events happened in the country become even more clear.

An erroneous commentator is no better or more sacred than an inaccurate reporter (Schramm, 1957). Al Jazeera was at the center of documentation of protests from Tunisia to Cairo and Libya and other Middle East and African countries with its reporters and camera crews part of the crowd and part of the move. Other networks like BBC and CNN also had teams in the area and in some cases were giving live interpretations of the uprisings, usually sympathetic to the protestors and offering critical state forces brutalizing, jailing, torturing, and killing protestors (Kellner, 2012). After initially using the discourse of ‘revolution’ to define the overthrow of dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt, Al Jazeera and other global media then used terms like ‘Libya’s Uprising,’ ‘Egypt’s New Era,’ and ‘Tunisia in Transition,’ as well as terms like ‘The Arab Spring,’ ‘The Arab Awakening,’ or ‘The Arab Uprising’ to explain the events... (Kellner, 2012). The researcher believes that the aforementioned news media described the events using different words to establish diverse media agendas.

2.7 Addressing the Research Questions: The Role of the Nut Graph

After completing a course on the nut graph at a news organization in Iran, where the researcher served as a translator, editor, and chief editor between the years 2010 and 2021, a crucial observation emerged. During this period, the researcher encountered that a significant portion of nut graphs, while appearing subjective, were primarily employed for agenda-setting purposes. The researcher's responsibilities included translating and editing news articles related to important events occurring in the US, EU countries, African countries, and Asian regions. This experience highlighted the presence of diverse narratives within nut graphs across various news agencies and media outlets. While the use of diverse narratives to cover events is natural, as long as they reflect the events objectively, the researcher discerned that nut graphs written by different

news sources about the same incidents often exhibited subjectivity. This subjectivity might potentially lead to misleading the audience's understanding of the actual reality.

Additionally, the researcher's exposure to lectures on nut graph writing during the master's program in investigative journalism at the University of Gothenburg prompted a more scientific contemplation of the subjectivity inherent in nut graphs. This academic engagement provided an opportunity for the researcher to delve deeper into the topic's nuances. Consequently, the formulation of the first research question is a result of both theoretical insights and practical journalism experience gained in Iran and Sweden.

The research questions for this study, central to our exploration, are as follows:

How does the nut graph in the five selected news media outlets differ in terms of coverage of the same incidents about the Libyan crisis?

How does the Swedish news media differ from other selected news media in terms of its nut graphs written about the Libyan crisis?

The first research question was selected owing to the researcher's extensive 11-year journalistic background spanning from 2010 to 2021 in Iran. Through this professional experience, the researcher unearthed that the nut graph often exhibits subjectivity and has the potential to lead the audience astray regarding the actual reality. The second research inquiry concerning the nut graph's function within the style of Swedish news media originated from a dialogue between the researcher and a fellow student at the University of Gothenburg. The researcher conceived the notion that the selection of a Swedish news outlet could potentially provide a solution to the challenges that the nut graph might pose.

3. Methodology

3.1 General Research Design

This chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the methodological processes utilized in the research. It will include an explanation of the selected research methods, a description of the chosen samples, an outline of the interview guide, and a depiction of the analysis procedures employed. This study employs a qualitative research method and utilizes qualitative content analysis to examine the potential nut graphs written by Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times. These five print news media outlets from Sweden, China, Russia, the UK, and the US were selected based on their

significance and regular coverage of the Libyan crisis. Specifically, the inclusion of the Swedish news media, Dagens Nyheter, aims to address the second research question by exploring its differences from the other selected news media in terms of the nut graph. A news qualitative researchers tend to accept the possibility of numerous interpretations of textual units by assuming diverse voices (readers), alternative views (from different ideological positions), oppositional readings (critiques), or varied uses of the texts studied by different groups (Krippendorff, 2018, 92). Qualitative content analysis fits this study because different news media often have different interpretations of the same incidents and by comparing their textual units, the differences would be clearer.

'Content analysis is potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences' (Krippendorff, 2018, 2). The content analyst considers data as representations not of physical affairs but of texts, images, and expressions that are made to be seen, read, interpreted, and worked on for their meanings, and must then be analyzed with such uses in mind (Krippendorff, 2018). Moreover, the researcher used a quantitative method to identify appropriate news media for a comparative analysis through communication with academics and journalists to analyze different professional attitudes toward proper media for analysis.

Therefore, the researcher contacted a few academics and journalists from different countries in this regard. Qualitative content analysts obviously acknowledge the need to respond to texts as correlated discourse (Averill, 1985). This study employs qualitative content analysis as a method to examine and interpret the contents of the data, consisting of texts extracted from the selected news media outlets.

3.2 Data, Data Collection, and the Timeline

By considering Krippendorff's explanation above, this study employs the qualitative method to compare and analyze different possible media agendas set through the nut graph by Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times. For data collection, Factiva was used to gather news articles not in Swedish, and Mediarkivet was utilized to find the news articles in Swedish published by Dagens Nyheter. Both resources are provided by the library of Gothenburg University. The Swedish news articles were translated into English using an option available within the Mediarkivet platform. The Russian news articles from Rossiyskaya Gazeta were also translated into English using an option available in Factiva.

To examine the media agenda-setting capacity of five selected news media—Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times—toward the Libyan crisis, this study aims to compare and analyze the information conveyed through the contents of their respective nut graphs. Following the approach of previous academic research on Libya (Baum & Zhukov, 2015) which employed a high-visibility crisis to test its hypothesis, this study narrows its focus to news reports from a specific timeframe of the Libyan crisis, beginning with the NATO attack in Tripoli on 19 June 2011 and concluding with the murder of the security chief of Benghazi on 21 November 2012. This study comprises a dataset of 31 news articles, in which at least two of the selected news media reported the same news events related to the Libyan crisis. In more qualitative methods, data reduction implies choosing representative quotes or prototypical examples from the examined text, summarizing or abstracting an analyst's reading. All content analyses begin with volumes of texts and reduce them to the responses to research questions (Krippendorff, 2018).

The data collection timeline occurred in two distinct periods. The first period spanned from April 25, 2023, to April 27, 2023, during which five news articles about the key incidents of the Libyan crisis were collected from the selected news media after consulting with several experts. Upon analyzing these news articles, the researcher observed that most of the selected news media had not included nut graphs within the selected news events. Consequently, recognizing the time limitation, the researcher decided to expand the number of news articles. In the second period of data collection, which extended from April 28, 2023, to May 6, 2023, the researcher collected 31 news articles, opting to include a broader array of general news rather than focusing solely on the most significant incidents. This decision was reached after consulting with a news writing expert to ensure the inclusion of more nut graphs in the news articles. Subsequently, it was observed that while not all selected news media reported the same incidents concerning the Libyan crisis, in most cases, at least two of them did. As a result, the final dataset encompasses 31 news articles in which at least two of the selected news media reported on the same incidents. After data collection, the researcher compared and analyzed the contents of the selected nut graphs under the light of agenda-setting theory to address the research questions. A content analysis study may result in verbal responses to a research question (Krippendorff, 2018).

3.3 Analytical Framework and Core Concepts: Subjectivity, Objectivity, and Agenda Setting

One of the most commonly used analytical tools in qualitative research is content analysis (Fallik & Francis, 2017). In this study, content analysis has been employed as an analytical tool to examine the presence of media agendas within the nut graph. This involves comparing and analyzing the contents of nut graphs written by selected news media outlets about the Libyan crisis. Throughout the content analysis process, the researcher examined both the subjectivity and objectivity of the nut graph and investigated the media agenda within it. Moreover, using content analysis as an analytical tool provides a way to study objective and subjective language reporting by different news media.

3.3.1 Defining Objectivity and Subjectivity in Reporting

As (Maras, 2013) stated, Perhaps the most concise description of objectivity is offered by Walter Cronkite: ‘Objectivity is the reporting of reality, of facts, as nearly as they can be obtained without the injection of prejudice and personal opinion (quoted in Knowlton 2005b: 227).’

While comparing the contents of the nut graphs of different news media, the researcher had several concerns in mind, including subjectivity issue in this sense, whether they reported facts and the reality of events of the Libyan crisis in an unbiased way or if they contained personal opinions of the editors. If the information is influenced by personal viewpoints, then that is less favored, ostensibly, than a story influenced by notions of impartiality and fairness (Maras, 2013, 155). Journalism schools were established, and their founders and educators aimed to instill in their students ethical standards of journalism and 'unbiased' reporting. Scientists also aimed to determine whether newspaper content was genuinely objective, ethical, and 'enlightening'. In this context, quantitative depictions and distinctions of newspaper content became the focal point of early content analysis. Often, this entailed comparisons, both within one newspaper (by tracking its evolution over time) and by contrasting different newspapers concerning the topics that were addressed (Schreier, 2012, 10).

As mentioned by (Maras, 2013), On this paradigm, objectivity is not defined by contrasting it with subjectivity, nor primarily by adherence to objective reality. Objectivity emerges through an interaction between the world and conceptual frameworks that furnish standards for

understanding and truth. (Maras, 2013, 121) also mentioned: ‘Indeed, what constitutes an appropriate style for contemporary ‘objective’ journalism, and how the journalist moves along the ‘subjectivity scale’, which sees any interpretive or background writing as a move away from the objectivity ideal and ‘straight news reporting’ (Hulteng 1973: 7), is an important area of investigation at a time when the convergence of media and entertainment are placing pressures on the style of news (see Conboy 2004: 184–5).’ To examine subjectivity in research, one need first acknowledge ‘our humanness – our subjectivity’ through self-criticism when reporting or editing as a journalist. And have also this in mind as (Maras, 2013) said, attempting to define objectivity itself poses a potential philosophical bias. Remarkably, the various defenses illustrate a readiness to reintroduce subjectivity into objectivity, not only in relation to the significance of independent assessment but also concerning the vulnerability of the human condition. As Stephen J. Berry writes, ‘Those of us who value objectivity as an essential standard of journalism approach its use by first recognizing our humanness – our subjectivity. Precisely because we understand our frailties, we insist upon maintaining the pursuit of objectivity’ (Berry 2005: 16). On this basis, human weakness and judgement are compelling reasons for objectivity, not reasons to condemn it’ (Maras, 2013, 121). At the core of objectivity in journalism is the notion of reporting the facts. In fact, a reverence towards facts penetrates to the core of objectivity itself (Maras, 2013, 82). Objective reporting on one level assigns a very exact role to the reporter, a process of expressing words, actions and occurrences into simple language (Maras, 2013).

3.3.2 Analyzing Language in the Nut Graph: Subjective vs. Objective

While examining objectivity and subjectivity, one cannot avoid discussing them without considering the way language is used objectively or subjectively, and the possible reasons behind it. The researcher kept in mind that using subjective language to formulate the nut graph might pose difficulties for the comprehension of the actual realities of the Libyan crisis. According to (Jeronimo, Marinho, Campelo, Veloso, & da Costa Melo, 2019), Usually, documents that aim at sharing fact-base and unbiased information, such as trustful journalistic articles and scientific publications, tend to employ a more objective language that does not depend much on presuppositions or emotional and argumentative expressions. In contrast, documents aiming to persuade or convince typically employ a more subjective language. ‘We must, in other words, proceed on the assumption that there is objective truth’ (Lichtenberg, 1991, 226).

According to (Maras, 2013), There is a third crucial facet of objectivity in journalism, which is arguably the least comprehended. It pertains to the way objectivity forms a ‘language game’. Various scholars have denoted this language game in different ways, yet all of them highlight the connection between journalistic objectivity and distinct strategies of portraying events, facts and details. As mentioned by (Maras, 2013, 10): ‘Schiller (1981) tackles the language game from a different direction. He argues that objectivity, at least in the sense understood from the mid-twentieth century, functions as an ‘invisible frame’ through which the story comes into existence on its own, independently of the reporter (1981: 1)’

3.3.3 Agenda Setting Features in Media Narratives: Analyzing Diverse Content for Identical News Stories

Throughout the study, the researcher's focus was on the media agenda's use of diverse narratives for identical news stories to establish varying agendas. As part of this examination, the researcher delved into variations in content within the nut graph, considering them as potential agenda-setting features. As (Althaus, & Tewksbury, 2002) stated, Filtering the identical news content through two distinct media outlets could yield varying patterns of agenda-setting effects. According to (Althaus, & Tewksbury, 2002, 181): ‘When differences in the agenda of different media have been studied, it has typically been to assess the impact of content differences among media on audience agendas’ (e.g., McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Mutz & Soss, 1997; Proress et al., 1991; Roessler, 1999; Wanta, 1997). The content differences of the nut graph written by selected news media for the Libyan crisis accounted for some variance in media agenda. It seems that such differences in the nut graphs contents are great and can be considered as a responsible factor in media agenda-setting effects. An agenda promptly represents both public and private interests. In fact, various actors, spanning from government to lobbyists and public relations professionals, strive to shape the agenda and the priority assigned to items on it... Engaged journalism can remain truthful and focused on facts, while writing in accordance with a declared agenda, which differs from an objectivity that is fact-oriented but downplays or fails to disclose the journalist’s engagement with an agenda (Maras, 2013). Moreover, the interaction between a concept of objectivity and an agenda is a substantial subject for discussion. We can observe that any form of agenda can exert a distorting influence because an agenda lists and prioritizes specific elements within social reality (Maras, 2013).

3.3.4 Classifying Objectivity and Subjectivity, Tracing Agenda-Setting Features, and Identifying Language Markers

The researcher classified something as objective when it described facts or realities and considered something subjective when it involved prejudice, personal opinions, lack of evidence, or an emphasis on particular details. Considering language markers, he looked for words like ‘If’ ... ‘Would,’ as well as ‘If’ ... ‘Could’, in phrases used in conditional sentences, as these words are often associated with hypothetical or imaginary situations and scenarios. The researcher looked for words and phrases that convey feelings and preferences, such as ‘would prefer to’. In addition, he also identified words and phrases such as ‘Would be’, ‘Despite,’ ‘Possibly,’ ‘But if’, ‘Likely,’ ‘May,’ ‘Might,’ ‘Possibly,’ ‘Apparently,’ ‘Appears to,’ ‘Appeared to be,’ and ‘According to Some Reports’. These words and phrases serve various functions, conveying specific meanings, tones, or relations, and they introduce uncertainty into language, presenting conditions or possibilities that may not always align with facts or realities. Furthermore, the researcher also looked for phrases like ‘everyone agrees’, which suggests a general consensus without providing any evidence. He searched for phrases that raise serious doubts, such as ‘we don't know’ and ‘defying expectations’, which reflect interpretations. The researcher also examined adjectives such as ‘Controversial,’ ‘Shameful,’ ‘Hopeless,’ and ‘Well-liked,’ which add evaluative or emotional content to the sentences. Additionally, he searched for phrases that present a subjective viewpoint, such as ‘Democracy is a fragile experiment’ and ‘It is possible’. The researcher sought out quantifiers like ‘All, Many, Most, Every, A few,’ which do not provide a specific number but rather suggest a substantial number. Finally, he checked for the use of a direct quote in the nut graph, as it represents a specific individual’s opinion.

Through researcher’s analysis, he traced agenda-setting features by checking if the editor highlighted or emphasized certain aspects of a situation while omitting other perspectives. This involved examining words or phrases that conveyed the preferences and concerns of specific actors, as well as checking if the editor used specific terms, such as ‘increasingly fractious’, to characterize people or situations in a particular way. Furthermore, the researcher investigated whether an agenda was set based on an assumption that something might be the result of an action, even though it could only be one of the possibilities. Additionally, he assessed if the nut graph directed attention toward specific aspects of the story, potentially diverging from the main

narrative. The researcher also examined whether there was a shift in the tone of the news story, which could be used to convey information about the editors' preferences. He examined whether the nut graph emphasized the potential implications of an action or if the editors provided a reason for an action or situation, even though there might have been other important reasons. As part of his analysis, he examined if the nut graph emphasized the potential implications of an action and whether the editors provided a reason for an action or a situation, even though there might have been other important reasons. The researcher also checked whether the editor directly or indirectly implied a link between an occurrence and a person without providing clear evidence. Additionally, he investigated whether the editor used specific terms like 'embarrassment' to present an opinion and convey a specific viewpoint. Furthermore, the researcher examined whether the editor used a quotation from people as a nut graph, implying a personal perspective toward an occurrence. In addition to this, the researcher assessed whether the editor employed phrases like 'Libya is likely to', introducing a perspective that highlights potential political pathways. Finally, the researcher looked for phrases like 'if it did not ..., then at least ...,' which demonstrate an agenda-setting aspect by highlighting the potential impact of a situation.

3.4 Participants

The researcher conducted interviews with thirteen individuals, including nine editors, journalists, experts, and academics. The study participants can be categorized into three groups: a) those who were interviewed regarding the nut graph, b) those who were interviewed regarding the Libyan crisis, and c) those who were interviewed for the selection of suitable news media for the study. Email interviews were conducted for participants in both categories to provide the interviewees with more time and space to consider the questions. Additionally, one video interview was conducted with an academic concerning the Libyan crisis. Open-ended interviews were carried out for participants interviewed about the Libyan crisis, as well as for the participant from whom the researcher sought recommendations to select suitable news media. This approach allowed interviewees to express themselves more freely. In open-ended interviews ..., participants are permitted to speak willingly and in their own terms (Krippendorff, 2018). Conversely, structured interviews featuring a blend of closed-ended and open-ended questions were employed to explore the utilization of the nut graph in news articles. This approach was

necessary as the topic required a more detailed examination due to its technical nature in news writing. It is noteworthy that only a minority of interviewees were familiar with the concept of the nut graph, requiring the researcher to provide its definition in most instances. Structured interviews develop predefined question-answer pairs, and the researcher then examines their distributions (Krippendorff, 2018). A disadvantage of this approach is that potential concepts might be imposed on the interviewees. The researcher concepts are imposed on the interviewees, who cannot describe the reasons for their preferences among predefined responses and whose personal conceptions are ignored (Krippendorff, 2018). Meanwhile, the researcher attempted to mitigate the impact of this limitation by inviting interviewees to share any additional comments or explanations they had regarding the topic.

The participants involved in this study are:

- A web editor of Svenska Dagbladet, the editor expressed a preference for anonymity
- A Freelance journalist in Italy, the journalist expressed a preference for anonymity
- An editorial writer of Dagens Nyheter, the editor expressed a preference for anonymity
- Chip Scanlan, former writing program director, the Poynter Institute
- Erik Ohlsson, Middle East Correspondent of Dagens Nyheter
- Helena Lindholm, a professor of peace and development research at the University of Gothenburg
- Inez von Weitershausen, Head of Learning and Outreach - Center for Leadership in the Future of Work at The University of Zurich
- Luke Harding, Senior international correspondent in The Guardian
- Martin Schori, Aftonbladet deputy editor-in-chief and deputy responsible publisher
- Mourad Teyeb, Tunisian journalist and TV Producer
- Steven Lee Myers, Correspondent at The New York Times Company
- Victor Lindbom, Editor-in-Chief of Aftonbladet
- Youssef Sawani, Professor at the Department of Political Science University of Tripoli

3.5 Ethic of Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

In the context of ethical considerations related to the interviews, the researcher has made it explicitly clear to the participants that their participation in this study is entirely voluntary, with their comfort and well-being being of utmost importance. Participants have been informed that

they possess the right to withdraw from the interview process at any time without facing any consequences or needing to provide an explanation. Furthermore, participants were given the option to decide whether they wished to be named in the study or remain anonymous, and they were asked for consent before their names and affiliations were published.

It has also been emphasized that their decision regarding participation or withdrawal will not affect their relationship with the researcher or any organization associated with the study.

Furthermore, participants were informed that their responses will be used exclusively for research purposes. The researcher's contact information has been provided to participants in case they have any concerns or questions about the study or their participation. It was also stressed that their feedback is highly valuable to the researcher, and their contributions to this research are greatly appreciated.

To summarize, when I contacted them about the study, I mentioned my experience as a journalist, presented my research questions, described the methodology, mentioned my supervisor's name, and specified the university I am studying at.

3.6 Interview Guide

To determine the interview guide, the researcher consulted with an expert to ensure that the results align with the literature and research questions. During a video interview on April 19, 2023, Dr. Inez von Weitershausen, Head of Learning and Outreach - Center for Leadership in the Future of Work at The University of Zurich, suggested: 'You do want to make sure you cluster and prioritize your questions. To do so, it may help to identify three - or more - "broader themes or topics" that you'd like to address and which you can use to structure your interview guide.' 'First, it is important that - already before you start conducting any interviews - you do a thorough review of the literature about your topic. This will give you a good basis from which to select the right interview partners, and also give you better idea of what to expect from each interview. After all, you want to make sure you can speak to the respective person's expertise rather than ask general questions, she said.

'Secondly, when you begin your interviews, you want to inform the interviewee as comprehensively as possible about your project. This includes - at a minimum - that you clearly state your research question, the larger context (institution, department...) that your project is situated in and, if it applies, information on how the project is funded' she continued.

‘With academic audiences in particular you may also want to point out the method(s) you use and mention your supervisor. The purpose of this is that you help the interviewee understand your background, your intentions, and, in short, why they should speak to you (or not), Inez added.

‘Should you wish to conduct more research in the future, I would suggest that you reach out to potential interview partners per mail, then ask them to sign an informed consent form and, at the beginning of the interview, make sure they understand the purpose of their involvement and the conditions of their participation.’ she added.

‘Third, it is vital you create a good interview guide that acknowledges best practices for qualitative interviewing. (There are countless books on the subject). This allows you to be professional and respectful of your interviewee's time, while also getting the results you hoped for’ she concluded.

By considering the suggestions provided in this interview (where the number of interview questions was minimized and the questions became more specific), and after reviewing related literature on how to formulate research questions and conduct interviews, the researcher reached conclusions about the inquiries to be posed to the interviewees and how these questions should be aligned with the research objectives. Consequently, based on the interview guide, the researcher conducted interviews with several political experts and academics regarding the Libyan crisis, and also engaged with a group of editors and journalists concerning the nut graph. Distinct interview guides were formulated for each group, directly linked to the research questions.

The interviews with journalists and editors regarding the nut graph began with casual conversations, introducing the topic, and gradually transitioned into more focused inquiries aligned with the research questions. These inquiries encompassed their perspectives on the nut graph, their familiarity with the term, instances of its utilization in their news articles, their approach to crafting the nut graph, and their underlying reasons for its usage. Similarly, discussions with experts, academics, and journalists regarding the Libyan crisis followed a similar pattern: they initiated with brief exchanges to introduce the subject matter and then delved into specifics about the most significant and impactful incidents during the crisis, as well as how the media portrayed these events. Through this approach, the researcher aimed to gain deeper insights into the Libyan crisis to address the research questions more comprehensively.

Except for the interview with Dr. Inez von Weitershausen, email interviews were conducted for the interview part so interviewees had flexibility in terms of timing and they had enough time to respond more thoughtfully. All the interviews were done in English.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Occasionally content analysts accept as data only those units of analysis on which observers gain perfect agreement and get rid of those on which agreement could not be perceived. This is a quite problematic approach because it provides researchers the illusion of perfect reliability without affording them the possibility of dividing agreement due to chance from agreement established on the sameness of reading or observation (Krippendorff, 2018). To avoid what Krippendorff called the 'illusion of perfect reliability,' the researcher, in the first stage of the research, checked the nut graphs found in the news articles with David Crouch, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg. The feedback the researcher received from the lecturer, concerning both the number of news articles and the contents of them, helped increase the researcher's caution regarding reliability. 'You are looking at huge news events that often do not require a nut graph' David Crouch said to the researcher in a text message on 5 May 2023.

By utilizing reliable sources for gathering the news articles, Factiva and Mediearkivet, the study achieved a high level of data validity, making it trustworthy and authenticated. The validity of the search outcomes of an archive relies on the quality of the archive's collections and methods of access (Krippendorff, 2018).

3.8 Categorization and Analysis

The process of categorization, description, evaluation, judgment, or estimating descriptively undifferentiated units of analysis, thereby rendering them analyzable in well-defined terms (Krippendorff, 2018). During the initial phase, the researcher categorized the news articles into four groups: those containing the nut graph, those lacking the nut graph, articles reported by either all or at least two of the selected news media, and articles not covered by them.

In the analysis phase, the researcher separated the news articles that were covered by all or at least two of the selected news media and contained the nut graph. This approach enabled the researcher to conduct a comparative analysis of the nut graphs created by the selected news media for the same news events. Considering the research questions and the theoretical framework of the study (media agenda-setting theory), the researcher objectively analyzed the

contents of the nut graphs written for the same incidents about the Libyan crisis by the selected news media.

In fact, wartime propaganda analysts have adequate reasons to disregard manifest contents and overlook their truths. To infer the degree of popular approval for elite policies from enemy domestic broadcasts, the analysts must comprehend the part these broadcasts play in complicated communication networks in which the mass-media system and political system communicate with a population to make news acceptable (Krippendorff, 2018).

3.9 Process of Selection: Why and How

3.9.1 News Article, News Media, and the Case Study Selection Process

The selection of news articles occurred in two stages. In the first stage, the same five news articles about the Libyan crisis were gathered from Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times. In the second stage, 31 news articles were chosen, in which at least two of the selected news media reported the same incidents about the Libya crisis. This occurred because not all the selected news media included the nut graph in their news articles, prompting the researcher to increase the data to find answers to the research questions. Furthermore, the mentioned above news media were chosen as the researcher found it interesting to examine how news media from China, Russia, Sweden, the UK, and the US reflected news incidents differently through their nut graphs about the Libyan crisis.

Additionally, the researcher arrived at these choices after consulting with a few academics and media experts.

The concept of conducting a comparative analysis of nut graphs written by different news outlets arose when considering how these outlets covered news stories about three countries: Iraq, Syria, and Libya, as opposed to focusing solely on one country (Libya). The researcher engaged in consultation with one of his lecturers at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg, to refine the framework of this idea. After the conversation, the decision was made to narrow the focus exclusively to the Libyan case study. The primary rationale for selecting the Libyan crisis as the case study stemmed from the presence of NATO forces within the country during the crisis, which imbued it with an international perspective.

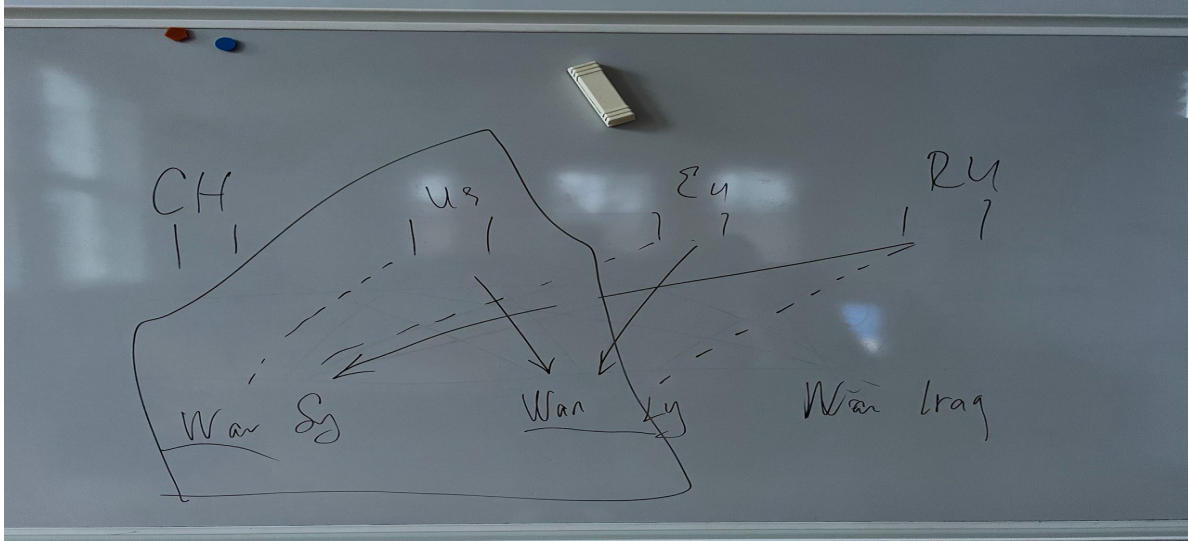


Figure 1 Taken by the researcher on 17 January 2023 at the University of Gothenburg during a consultation meeting with a lecturer. In the upper part of the picture, it is written China, the US, the EU, and Russia. At the bottom of the picture, it is written War in Syria, War in Libya, and War in Iraq.

3.9.2 Selection Criteria for News Media

Initially, the researcher intended to analyze the nut graphs written by one American, one European, one Russian, and one Swedish news agency—namely The Associated Press (AP), Agence France-Presse (AFP), Interfax, and TT, respectively. However, after a conversation with one of my lecturers at the University of Gothenburg who preferred to remain anonymous, the researcher modified the approach. First, the decision was made to focus on news media instead of news agencies. Second, the choice was expanded to include a Chinese news media outlet. This alteration was prompted by two main considerations. The first was the recognition of news media's substantial impact on their audience. News agencies are predominantly utilized by news media, and it was essential for the researcher to select news media outlets that directly influence readers' perceptions, even though the aim of the thesis was not to study media influence on the audience. The second was to include a Chinese news media outlet, thus providing a media perspective from the east, a recognized global power in Asia. The selection of specific news media relies on the researcher's purpose—for instance, to seize general trends in coverage or to compare distinctive types of coverage across media (Chong, & Druckman, 2007).

The decision to prioritize print news media over TV news media was made following consultations with several media experts. One significant factor influencing this choice is that

news articles from print news media typically feature an identifiable author. As Dr. Inez von Weitershausen, Head of Learning and Outreach at the Center for Leadership in the Future of Work at the University of Zurich, pointed out during a video interview on 19 April 2023, 'It is crucial to be able to verify the origin and authenticity of content. As of today, this is often more easily done with print sources as they often have an author's name associated with them. However, there are also plenty of digital sources that can be attributed to a specific author or source. Similarly, Helena Lindholm, a professor of peace and development research at the University of Gothenburg, expressed her inclination towards print media, stating in an email interview on 03 April 2023, 'I guess I would have chosen print media.' As a result, The New York Times, The Guardian, and Dagens Nyheter were selected after consulting with Helena Lindholm. 'If I were you, I would probably choose dominant news media. If opting for print media in the US, you might consider The New York Times or The Washington Post. For the EU, I am not entirely certain, but if Europe is the focus, including The Guardian could be beneficial. In the case of Sweden, Dagens Nyheter or Svenska Dagbladet would be suitable,' she conveyed in the same email to the researcher.

The choice of Global Times as a Chinese print news media was based on consultation with Stefan Brehm, Senior Lecturer at the Centre for East and South East Asian Studies at Lund University. 'Lacking Chinese language proficiency, I would recommend considering the Global Times,' he advised the researcher in an email interview on 13 April 2023. Furthermore, Rossiyskaya Gazeta was selected as a Russian print news media following consultation with an experienced Russian journalist, who preferred to remain anonymous. To make the final decision regarding the appropriate news media for the study, the researcher reviewed multiple news articles from Svenska Dagbladet, Izvestia, and The China Daily, and compared their news coverage with that of Dagens Nyheter, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, and Global Times, respectively. To examine the hypothesis that nut graphs written by Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times set agendas through the nut graph about the Libyan crisis, major incidents have been chosen. The researcher also examines Dagens Nyheter news articles about the same incidents during the Libyan crisis to check first; if there are any nut graphs in the articles, and second if it has been used as the media agenda-setting process.

3.9.3 Criteria for News Article Selection

Prior to finalizing the choice of news articles, the researcher engaged in discussions with several academics and experts on the topic of the Libyan crisis. Youssef Sawani, a Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Tripoli, suggested, 'I recommend you consider any news related to the first elections held after the fall of the Gaddafi regime!' This insight was shared with the researcher on 28 April 2023 through a LinkedIn text message conversation. Additionally, the researcher checked the Amnesty International report on Libya from 2012. This report centered on the victims of NATO strikes in the country, providing further context and information for the study.

In the initial phase, five news articles were selected to run a comparative analysis. These articles covered the stories of the death of Gaddafi in October 2011, the attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, and three articles related to NATO attacks in Libya. These selections were made after consulting with various Libyan experts. However, conducting a comparative analysis of the nut graph written by Global Times, Dagens Nyheter, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times for these news stories was challenging in the first phase. This difficulty stemmed from the fact that a majority of the selected news stories did not include nut graphs. Consequently, the examination of whether the chosen news media set agendas through their nut graphs was also hindered. In the subsequent stage, to support the hypothesis more effectively, a broader dataset of 31 news articles related to the Libyan crisis was collected. For this phase, the criterion was that at least two of the selected news media reported the same incidents or events. Through this expanded collection of data, the researcher observed that not all selected news media covered the same events and incidents during the Libyan crisis. This was evident even for significant news items, a phenomenon that will be further addressed in the analysis section.

3.9.4 Investigating the Second Research Question: Swedish News Media's Role as a Solution

While participating in news writing classes during his master's degree program, the researcher had a simple question in mind: Do Swedish news media use the nut graph in their news articles? The answer was unknown until he had a friendly conversation with a Swedish classmate, Heino Saku Ollin who had also studied journalism for his bachelor's degree at the University of

Gothenburg. The classmate said that Swedish editors in general do not use their subjective opinion in news articles; otherwise, they would not get published. Afterward, the researcher thought that maybe the Swedish news media do not use the nut graph in their news articles since the nut graph is mostly subjective so he started with this preliminary question and proceeded to interview a few Swedish editors and journalists to have a better understanding of the question. Finally, the researcher formulated the second research question based on the insights gained from the interviews. Therefore, the researcher came up with the idea that Swedish news media can be chosen as a solution part of the problem that the nut graph might bring with itself. This way the researcher could examine how a news article written by a Swedish media is different from other selected news media in terms of the nut graph.

3.9.5 Rationale for Dagens Nyheter Selection: the Solution Part

Following the email interview with Helena Lindholm, the researcher engaged in reading and comparing news articles related to the Libyan crisis, published by both Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet. Through a thorough analysis of their news coverage, the researcher stumbled upon a nut graph within a news piece from Dagens Nyheter. This discovery was particularly intriguing since the hypothesis posited that Swedish news media typically avoid using the nut graph in their articles. Hence, it became imperative to delve deeper into this case.

The second rationale behind selecting Dagens Nyheter as a solution component was twofold. Firstly, the editor of the news story was responsive to the researcher's email interview, granting an opportunity for comprehensive analysis. Conversely, contacting the writer of the corresponding news article in Svenska Dagbladet proved to be challenging. It is worth noting that an email interview was conducted with a Web Editor of Svenska Dagbladet, who preferred to stay anonymous, in an attempt to ascertain the news media's practice of including nut graphs in their news stories. Despite her earnest efforts to assist the researcher in finding answers, the specific question remained unanswered. In the email interview on 03 May 2023, she expressed, 'I will look into it further or connect you with someone who can answer.' However, the question remained unanswered. Moreover, it is essential to clarify that the participant's association with the news story occurred ten years prior to the email exchange. The participant requested that the researcher mention the fact that she has been working at Svenska Dagbladet for only one year.

In summary, the identification of a nut graph within a Dagens Nyheter news story, coupled with the responsiveness of its editor, led the researcher to conclude that selecting this media outlet was a more logical choice for the solution-oriented portion of the study.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 The Libyan Crisis

If the Libyan war was about saving lives, it was a catastrophic failure (Milne, 2011). On March 3, Barack Obama stated that the United States would join these actions and deliver humanitarian aid to the Libyan people. Obama also said that all military options were “on the table,” ... (Kellner, 2012). In March 2011, a coalition of countries led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began an air campaign in support of a series of uprisings against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (Keranen, 2016). But in the aftermath of the intervention, which toppled Gaddafi, despite some endeavors by NATO member states and repeated promise by the European Union (EU) to help Libya’s democratization process, the country fell into a spiral of violence, chaos and civil war (Marcuzzi, 2021). The intervention in Libya in 2011 was claimed to have been a triumph in two regards: on the one hand, the UN Security Council, by passing resolutions 1970 and 1973, had shown its capability to respond to humanitarian crises without any of the five permanent members of the council resorting to a veto. On the other hand, the idea of humanitarian intervention in its more recent impression of the ‘responsibility to protect’ was seen by some as having finally gained credit within the international community as a legal conception (Terry, 2015).

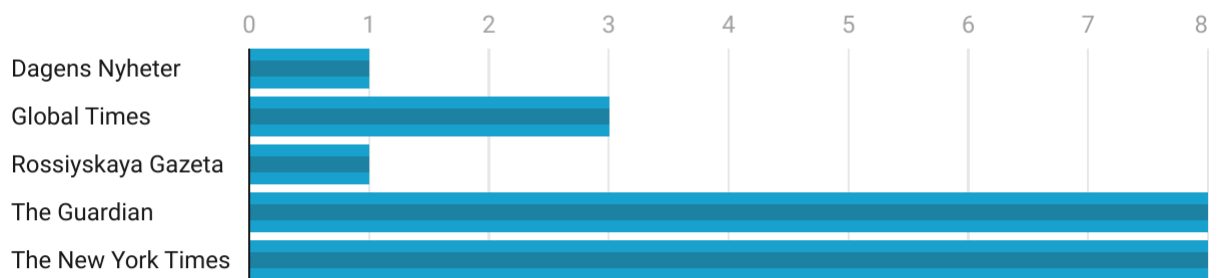
4.2 Agenda-Setting Through the Nut Graph in Five News Media Outlets: the Libyan Crisis

The researcher has collected thirty-one news articles, written by Dagens Nyheter, Global Times, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, The Guardian, and The New York Times, of which at least two out of the five reported on the same events. Among the thirty-one collected news articles, only nine news pieces had nut graphs by considering the fact that they needed to be formulated by at least two of the news media sources. The reason for implementing this criterion was to facilitate comparative analysis. In addition, fourteen out of the thirty-one news articles contained the nut graph written

exclusively by one of the selected news media, and eight out of the thirty-one news articles lacked a nut graph altogether. The following will present the nine nut graphs from the above-mentioned news media along with a comparative content analysis in the framework of agenda-setting theory. The news media are in order alphabetically, and the news articles are in chronological order.

Count of Nut Graphs by Five News Media in Nine News Articles

Number of nut graphs formulated by five news media in nine news articles



The numeral preceding each news media indicates the quantity of nut graphs employed by each respective source

Chart: Javad Maleki • Created with Datawrapper

1) NATO attacks Tripoli, on 19 June 2011

a- Global Times nut graph

‘If confirmed, the civilian deaths would be an embarrassment for the alliance, which has been leading the bombing campaign under a UN mandate to protect civilians.’

The phrase ‘the civilian deaths would be an embarrassment for the alliance’ is subjective and evaluative. Using the term ‘embarrassment’, the nut graph presents an opinion about how the alliance would feel if civilian deaths are confirmed. Regarding setting an agenda, the sentence does set a subtle agenda by suggesting that the potential civilian deaths would be a cause of embarrassment for the alliance. The use of the term ‘embarrassment’ conveys a specific viewpoint and implies a negative consequence for the alliance's actions.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘If it wasn't for NATO, we could have moved the combat line much further from Misurata," said Mohamed, a rebel spokesman, though it is far from clear that the rebels could have held their ground without NATO support.’

First, it needs to be motioned that The New York Times used a direct quote as the nut graph for its new article. ‘Sometimes—though rarely—even a quote itself can be the nut graph,’ (Davis, & Davis, 2012, p74).

The first part of the nut graph, ‘If it wasn't for NATO’ is a direct quotation from a rebel spokesman, which is an objective report. However, the second part of the nut graph, ‘though it is far from clear ...,’ introduces subjective language and presents an interpretation of the situation rather than just reporting facts. Regarding setting an agenda, the sentence does set a subtle agenda by presenting the rebel spokesman's statement, which attributes the progress to NATO's involvement. By including this statement, the nut graph implies a perspective that highlights the positive impact of NATO's support on the rebels' position.

By comparing the nut graphs of Global Times with The New York Times it is so obvious they set different agenda through their nut graphs. The first news media nut graph directly criticized NATO for the attack, and the second news media nut graph indirectly supported the NATO operation by quoting a rebel spokesperson appreciating the alliance's support. Moreover, looking into the content of both news articles carefully, the first used the word embarrassment to refer to NATO by concluding that the alliance was supposed to protect civilians. In the opposite way, The New York Times indirectly sided with the alliance by choosing to have an interview with a rebel spokesperson who was in favor of the NATO policy toward Libya.

2) Battle for Sirte, 16 September 2011

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘Nato is also anxious to get the war over, as its mandate runs out on 27 September, and France and the UK would prefer to have the war finished by then, rather than ask for an extension in what has proved a controversial operation.’

The sentence includes subjective language such as ‘Nato is anxious to ...' and ‘France and the UK would prefer to ...’ these statements convey the feelings and preferences of NATO,

France, and the UK, which make the sentence subjective in nature. Regarding setting an agenda, the sentence indirectly set an agenda by providing information about the preferences and concerns of specific actors, which could indirectly influence the reader's perception of the situation.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘Everyone agrees that the toll, whatever it may be, would have been much higher if Colonel Qaddafi's forces had held out in Tripoli for as long as people had feared.’

The nut graph is for sure subjective. The use of the phrase ‘everyone agrees ...’ suggests a general consensus without specific evidence to back up the claim. The nut graph is presenting an assertion about what people believe without providing concrete evidence or sources to support the claim of unanimous agreement. The nut graph set an agenda to convey the idea that there is a unanimous agreement among people about the potential outcome if Colonel Qaddafi's forces had held out in Tripoli longer.

Moreover, comparing the contents of nut graphs provided by these two news media it is clear that they set different agenda. The first news media nut graph refers to the NATO operation as ‘a controversial operation’, and the second news media nut graph suggests that the fatality toll would be higher if ‘Qaddafi's forces had held out in Tripoli’. It is clear through the contents of both nut graphs that there is no direct criticism of NATO but still, The Guardian referred to its operation as a controversial move. Instead, The New York Times like its nut graph in the previous news article directly supported NATO operation. It tried to convince the audience that the situation of the Libyan crisis would be much worse if it was not for the alliance attacks.

3) Qaddafi's Intelligence Chief Captured, 21 November 2011

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘Militia units surrounded a house where Senussi was holed up, near the town of Birak. The arrest means that all leading figures from the Gaddafi regime have now either been killed, captured or driven into exile.’ The nut graph starts from the second part of the paragraph.

The sentence is mostly objective as it presents factual information about the arrest of Senussi and the status of leading figures from the Gaddafi regime. Regarding setting an agenda, there are no clear indications of an explicit agenda being set in the nut graph.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘If Libya wants to try Mr. Qaddafi at home for crimes against humanity or other charges, while respecting international rules, its first step is to challenge the proceedings started in The Hague, which it has a right to do. Libya is not a signatory to the court, but its case has landed there on instructions from the United Nations Security Council.’

The nut graph is mostly objective as it presents factual information about Libya's legal options regarding the trial of Mr. Qaddafi and its relationship with the International Criminal Court (ICC). Regarding setting an agenda, there are no clear indications of an explicit agenda being set in this nut graph.

The first news media nut graph focuses on the importance of Senussi's arrest by saying that none of the Gaddafi regime's leading figures has power anymore inside Libya. Meanwhile, the second news media nut graph consisted of information about the capture of both Seif al-Islam el-Qaddafi, and the former intelligence chief of Libya, Abdullah Senussi. Then it chose to focus on the challenge Libya is facing to try ‘Mr. Qaddafi’ inside the country.

4) Libyan prime minister choose cabinet, 23 November 2011

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘The cabinet is likely to find approval from Libya's Western backers, concerned about hardline Islamists; President Mustafa Abdul Jalil had declared previously that sharia law will form the basis of a new constitution. But the failure to include Bilhaj raises a question as to how stable the new transitional authority will be.’

The nut graph is a mix of objective reporting and subjective analysis. The first part of the sentence ‘The cabinet is likely to find approval...’ presents factual information about the potential approval of the cabinet by Western backers. However, the phrase ‘President Mustafa Abdul Jalil had declared ...’ introduces a subjective evaluation of the president's declaration. In addition, the nut graph contains an agenda-setting feature. The phrase ‘President Mustafa Abdul

Jalil had declared ...' introduces a perspective that highlights the potential influence of Islamic law (sharia) on the formation of the cabinet. This aspect is presented as a factor that might affect the approval of the cabinet and the stability of the new transitional authority. By discussing this, the nut graph tries to shape the reader's understanding of the situation.

b- The New York Times nut graph

'The selection of Osama al-Juwali, the head of the military council in Zintan, to lead the Defense Ministry, perhaps the most critical post in the government, did not come as a surprise, but it underscored the weakness of the interim government.'

The nut graph is somewhat subjective. While it reports on the selection of Osama al-Juwali to lead the Defense Ministry, it includes evaluative language such as 'perhaps the most critical post ... and 'it underscored the weakness of...'. These phrases express the editor's interpretation of the selection. Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph describes a decision made (the selection of al-Juwali) and its potential implications (highlighting the weakness of the interim government), but it doesn't openly set an agenda.

Moreover, the first news media nut graph focuses on the probable support of the West from the Libyan cabinet while the second news media nut graph raised a question about the selection of Osama al-Juwali to lead the Libyan Defense Ministry. Both nut graphs showed concerns about the presence of hardliners inside the cabinet.

5) Ex-Gaddafi aide will be sent to Libya, 21 March 2012

a- The Guardian nut graph

'Senussi is wanted in France for a terrorist attack on a French airliner, which exploded over Niger in 1989 killing 170 people, including 54 French nationals. Although he has been convicted in absentia, experts say he would face a retrial if extradited to France.' The nut graph starts in the second part of the paragraph.

The nut graph is mostly objective as it presents factual information about Senussi's legal situation without openly promoting a specific viewpoint. In addition, there are no indications of an explicit agenda being set in this nut graph.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘If the decision is carried out, it will set Libya on a collision course with France, which suspects that Mr. Senussi, who was arrested in Nouakchott on Friday, had a role in the bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Scotland in which more than 50 French citizens died, and with the International Criminal Court in the Hague, which has indicted him on charges of crimes against humanity.’

The nut graph is mostly objective as it presents factual information about the potential consequences of the decision. Regarding setting an agenda, there are no clear indications of an explicit agenda being set in this nut graph.

Moreover, the news is about the extradition of Senussi to Libya although the first news media nut graph focuses on an assumption that what happen if ‘Mr. Senussi’ would extradite to France, and the second news media nut graph suggests that the possible extradition of Senussi to Libya will set Tripoli on a collision course with Paris. The first news media nut graph refers to it as a terrorist attack but the second news media nut graph just uses the word bombing.

6) ICC team detained in Libya, 13 Jun 2012

a-The Guardian nut graph

‘The Libyan attorney general's office said that the ICC detainees, who were organising Saif's legal defence, would be held for 45 days during the investigation, deepening the crisis in relations between Libya and the international community over the incident.’

The nut graph is somehow objective as it presents factual information, such as the statement from the Libyan attorney general's office regarding the ICC detainees and the duration of their detention (45 days). However, there is an indication of subjectivity in the phrase ‘deepening the crisis ...,’ as it implies an interpretation of the impact of the detainment on international relations.

In addition, the nut graph contains an agenda-setting feature. The phrase ‘deepening the crisis ...’ frames the situation by emphasizing the impact on Libya's relations with the international community and directs attention to the potential consequences of the actions taken by the Libyan side.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘We don’t know exactly what’s going on. But the court is weighing Libya’s request to try Mr. Qaddafi in Libya. **If it decides the country is not prepared to hold a fair and competent trial, it can order Libyan authorities to surrender him at The Hague. This episode raises serious doubts about the government’s fairness and its competence.**’ The nut graph is the bold part of the paragraph.

The nut graph is subjective as it includes opinions and evaluative language. The phrases ‘we don't know ...,’ ‘weighing Libya's request ...,’ and ‘raises serious doubts ...’ all reflect subjective assessments and interpretations. Regarding setting an agenda, there are indications of a critical perspective towards the government's handling of the trial, which could be seen as setting a critical agenda.

The first news media nut graph stresses on what happened deepened the crisis between Libya and the international community, and the second news media nut graph provided an assumption that Libya might be forced to send Seif al-Islam el-Qaddafi to ICC. The second media focused on the trial of Mr. Qaddafi, not the ICC detainees in Libya although the headline of the news article is also about ICC.

7) Election day in Libya, 8 July 2012

a- Dagens Nyheter nut graph

‘Democracy is a fragile experiment. Under Gaddafi, all parties were banned and the only existing political institution was himself. **But if the election is managed properly and the rivals respect the result, there is good hope for Libya.**’ The nut graph is the bold part of the paragraph.

The nut graph is somewhat subjective, as it includes evaluative language and expresses opinions. The phrase ‘Democracy is a fragile experiment’ presents a subjective viewpoint. Additionally, the statements ‘if the election is managed properly’ and ‘there is good hope for Libya’ reflect subjective assessments of the potential outcome. Regarding setting an agenda, there are indications of a positive perspective toward the potential for democracy in Libya, which could be seen as setting a pro-democracy agenda.

Moreover, the editor of Dagens Nyheter in the nut graph provided a hypothesis about the election in Libya that turned out to be true. The focus of the nut graph is on the importance of respect for the election results, and the political situation in Libya before and after the Gaddafi regime. As discussed in the study it is very important who writes the nut graph. Experience is the key for writing a very good nut graph, which helps the audience to understand it better.

‘Despite the fact that the Nationalist Alliance won the majority of votes, it was denied the right to form the government. This incident was an early indication of the failures and the crisis that ensued,’ said Youssef Sawani to the researcher.

Are you familiar with the term the nutshell paragraph (nut graph) and have you ever used it in the news articles you wrote for Dagens Nyheter? Moreover, have you ever heard anyone at Dagens Nyheter mention the term the nut graph? ‘No I have not,’ an experienced editorial writer who wrote the mentioned above nut graph for Dagens Nyheter and who expressed a desire to remain anonymous answered the questions in an email interview on 22 May 2023.

In addition, finding this nut graph inside one of Dagens Nyheter news articles about the Libyan crisis does not contradict the researcher’s hypothesis that the Swedish news media in general and Dagens Nyheter as a sample do not use the nut graph because the editor who wrote it is not familiar with the term; the nut graph. The paragraph he wrote has all the elements of the nut graph. Meanwhile, what the editor said to the researcher can explain why the nut graph is not a news writing technique in Swedish news media.

b- Global Times nut graph

‘If the Liberals’ lead over the Islamist parties from all over the country is confirmed, Libya is likely to proceed differently when compared to other Arab Spring nations such as Egypt and Tunisia, where Islamists have risen to prominence in the political regimes.’

The nut graph focused on the probable different approach that Libya would take from other Arab Spring nations regarding the Liberals’ lead over the Islamist parties in the election. The nut graph appears to be a mix of objective reporting and subjective analysis. The first part of the sentence ‘If the Liberals’ lead over ...’ reports on a potential outcome based on certain conditions. However, the second part of the sentence ‘where Islamists have risen to ...’ includes subjective

language and presents an interpretation of the political situations in Egypt and Tunisia.

Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph contains an agenda setting feature. The phrase ‘Libya is likely to ...’ introduces a perspective that highlights the potential distinctiveness of Libya's political path compared to other Arab Spring countries.

c- The Guardian nut graph

‘Libya's former interim prime minister Mahmoud Jibril has won a landslide victory in the country's first democratic election, early figures show, **defying expectations that the Muslim Brotherhood would sweep to power.**’ The nut graph is the bold part.

The nut graph focused on the false expectation about Muslim Brotherhood's popularity before the election. The nut graph appears to be objective. It reports on the outcome of Libya's first democratic election. However, there is an indication of subjectivity in the phrase ‘defying expectations ...’ this phrase suggests an interpretation of the election results rather than just presenting information. In addition, the use of the phrase ‘defying expectations ...’ in the nut graph does set an agenda. The phrase implies that there were certain dominant expectations regarding the outcome of the country's first democratic election, related to the Muslim Brotherhood's potential to win. This language can shape the reader's perception and draw attention to the significance of the election result in defying initial assumptions.

d- The New York Times nut graph

‘The violent protests against the vote here in Benghazi Saturday, in the birthplace of the revolt against Colonel Qaddafi, were a vivid demonstration of the challenges to unifying the country. **But the ultimate result may also have also served as a reminder of the determination of many Libyans to try to bring their nation together.**’ The nut graph is the bold part.

The nut graph provides a hypothesis by saying that the protests against the election in Benghazi were not a big challenge to the country's unification. It also stressed the importance of the Libyan people's determination to bring unity to their country through the election. The researcher found this nut graph subjective.

In addition, the nut graph contains an agenda-setting feature. The phrase ‘the challenges to ...’ highlights a specific issue, the difficulty in achieving national unity. This aspect draws attention to a significant challenge faced by Libya. Furthermore, the phrase ‘the determination of ...’ emphasizes the positive intent of the citizens, indicating a desire for unity. This positive perspective can influence how readers perceive the situation and can shape their understanding of the situation.

8) Trial of Saif al-Islam postponed, 10 September 2012

a- Global Times nut graph

‘But the arrest on Wednesday of Abdullah Senussi, the former spy chief known as "Gaddafi's black box", appears to have pushed that date back, postponing a trial that a lawyer from the International Criminal Court has already said is unlikely to be fair.’

The nut graph contains both objective and subjective elements and both factual and speculative descriptions. Referring to Abdullah Senussi as ‘Gaddafi's black box’ introduces subjective language. It is a descriptive term that may carry connotations about the information he possesses. The statement ‘appears to ...’ suggests an interpretation of the situation rather than a purely factual report. Regarding setting an agenda, there are no clear indications of an explicit agenda being set in this sentence. However, the use of the term ‘Gaddafi's black box’ could potentially carry a subjective viewpoint or bias, depending on the audience’s interpretation.

b- Rossiyskaya Gazeta nut graph

‘The extradition of al-Senussi to Libya, if it did not fundamentally change the case of Gaddafi's son, then at least at any moment can affect the course of the proceedings.’

The phrase ‘if it did not ...’ introduces a subjective condition in the nut graph. The determination of whether al-Senussi's extradition would change the case is open to interpretation. Moreover, there is an agenda-setting feature in the nut graph. The phrase ‘if it did not ..., then at least ...’ demonstrates an agenda-setting aspect by highlighting the potential impact of the extradition of al-Senussi on the ongoing legal proceedings.

c- The Guardian nut graph

‘If any person can know the darkest secrets of Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, it is Abdullah al-Senussi, now facing a dramatic trial in which the repression and crimes of more than four decades stand to be exposed for the first time.’

The nut graph contains subjective elements. The use of the word ‘if’ introduces ..., which is subjective in nature. In addition, the phrase ‘stand to be ...’ contains subjective language because whether the secrets will be exposed for the first time is open to interpretation. Therefore, the researcher found this nut graph somewhat subjective since it conveys a hypothesis rather than presenting objective facts.

Moreover, the nut graph does exhibit an agenda-setting feature. The phrase ‘the repression and ...’ highlights a significant potential outcome of the trial. By emphasizing on this, the nut graph shapes readers' understanding of the trial's importance and its potential implications.

9) Libyan protesters 23 September 2012

a- The Guardian nut graph

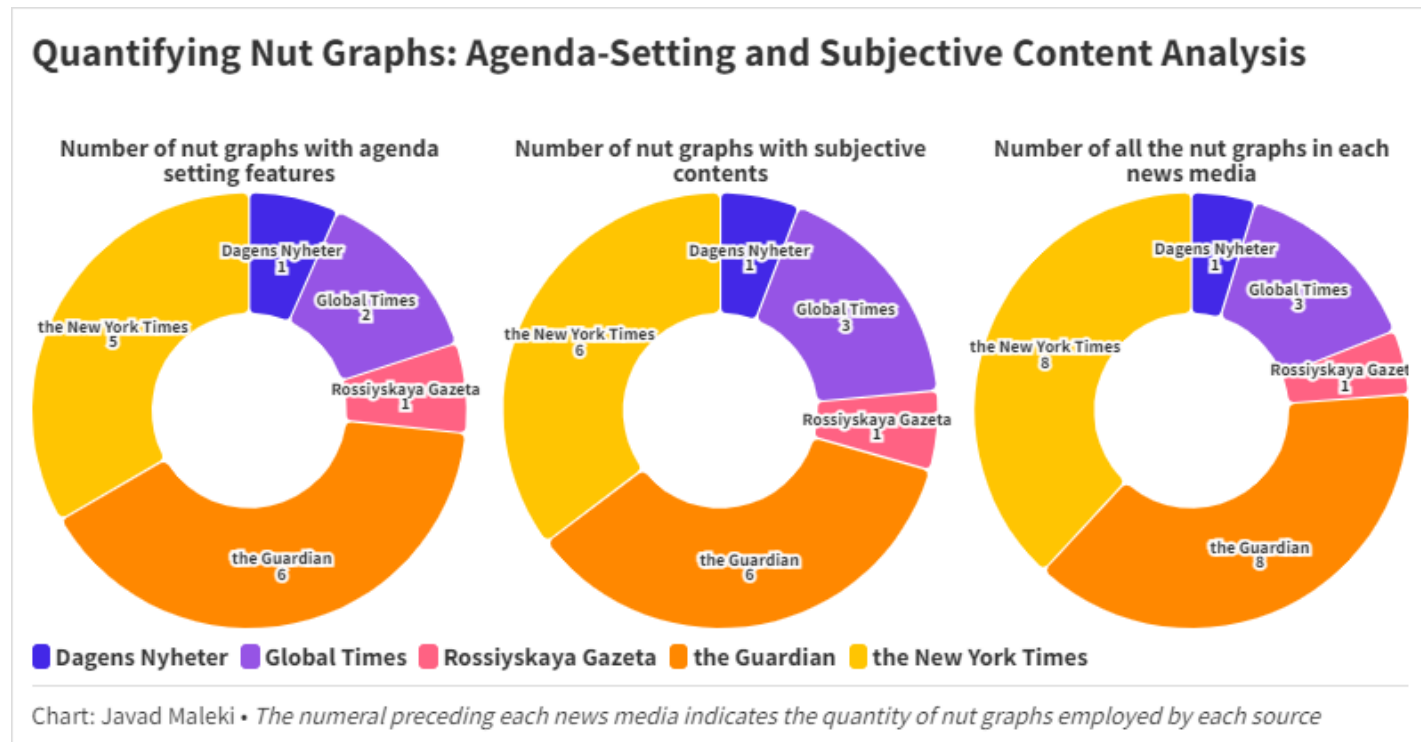
‘The action against Ansar al-Sharia appeared to be part of a coordinated sweep of militia headquarters buildings by police, government troops and activists after a mass public demonstration against militia units on Friday.’

The nut graph contains subjective elements like the phrase ‘appeared to be ...’ which introduces the subjective language and suggests an interpretation of the action against Ansar al-Sharia. Moreover, the use of subjective language in the form of ‘appeared to be ...’ might lead the audience to consider the information with a degree of uncertainty. Regarding setting an agenda, the agenda was set through the nut graph by an assumption that the protest against Ansar al-Sharia was related to the sweep of the group headquarters offices.

b- The New York Times nut graph

‘The killing of the ambassador, J. Christopher Stevens, a well-liked figure in Benghazi because he had worked closely with the rebels who toppled Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi last year, appeared to be the catalyst for the protests on Friday, though hardly its only cause.’

The nut graph contains subjective elements. The phrase ‘appeared to be...’ introduces subjective language and suggests an interpretation that the killing of Ambassador Stevens was the catalyst for the protests. Also the characterization of Ambassador Stevens as ‘a well-liked figure ...’ introduces subjective language as well which is based on perceptions and opinions. Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph set its agenda but not openly by providing an assumption that the protest against Ansar al-Sharia was related to the killing of The US ambassador.

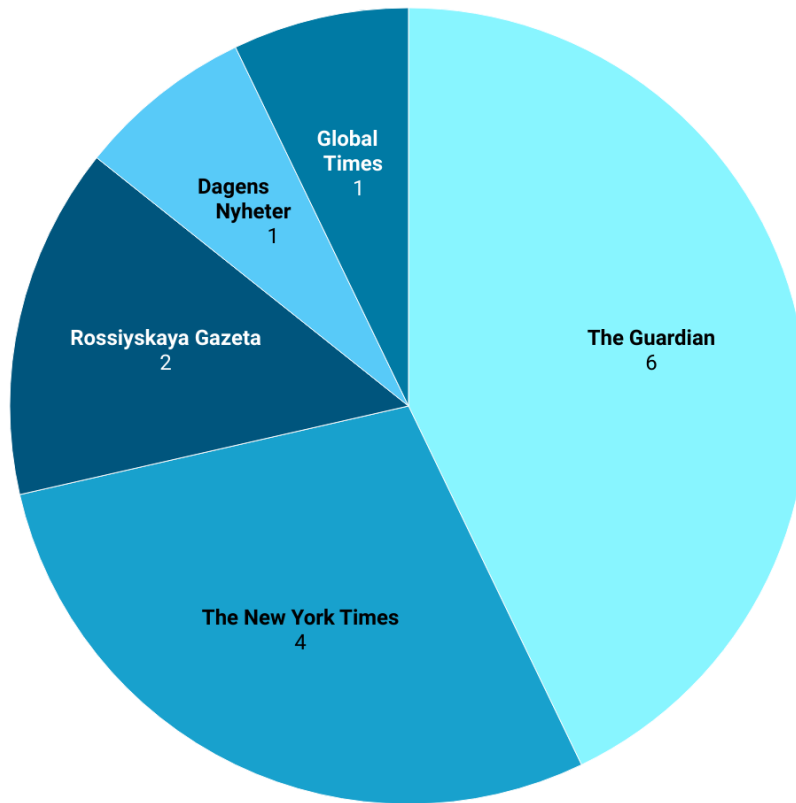


4.3 Examining Single Nut Graphs in Five News Media Outlets: Agenda-Setting Effects

Frequency of Nut Graphs in Fourteen News Articles Formulated Only by One of the Selected News Media

All of the chosen news media outlets reported on fourteen identical events related to the Libyan crisis. However, out of these, only one news media source included the nut graph in the news article

■ The Guardian ■ The New York Times ■ Rossiyskaya Gazeta ■ Dagens Nyheter ■ Global Times



The numeral preceding each news media indicates the quantity of nut graphs employed by each respective source
Chart: Javad Maleki • Created with Datawrapper

Additionally, fourteen other news articles were collected from the selected news media, which only one of them included the nut graph in the news articles about the same incidents on the Libyan crisis. The following will present fourteen nut graphs with content analysis in the framework of agenda-setting theory.

1) Saadi Gaddafi has fled to Niger, 11 September 2011

a- Dagens Nyheter nut graph

‘Despite Friday's promise to extradite the former Libyan dictator, many of Gaddafi's closest men consider Niger a safe place to flee to.’

The nut graph does not overtly set an agenda but it contains subjective elements like the word ‘many’ which is subjective as it does not provide a specific number but rather suggests a substantial number. Also, the nut graph hypothesis that Niger’s promise to extradite the former Libyan dictator is in contradiction with the country becoming a safe place for ‘Gaddafi's closest men’ may not be universally agreed upon.

Since the editor of the news article did not respond to the researcher’s email, it cannot be discussed if he is familiar with the term ‘the nut graph’ or not. This example of the nut graph also is not in contradiction with the hypothesis that the nut graph is not generally used by Swedish news media.

2) Arab spring: Time running out in Gaddafi's home town : Anti-regime forces move further into parts of Sirte Grave with 1,270 bodies found near Tripoli prison, 26 September 2011

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘As a mass grave containing 1,270 bodies was discovered in Tripoli providing a grisly reminder of the brutality of Gaddafi's 41-year rule, supporters of the regime launched a deadly attack from across the border with Algeria.’

The nut graph does contain subjective elements. It connects the discovery of the mass grave to ‘the brutality of Gaddafi's 41-year rule’ without providing any evidence from an international or independent investigation or facts. In addition, the nut graph set its agenda by providing an assumption that the bodies found in the mass grave were the direct result of Gaddafi's rule without referring to any facts about it. This could potentially influence the audience's perceptions of the event.

3) Sirte on the brink as last of Gaddafi men are cornered Sirte on brink as Gaddafi men cornered, 13 October 2011

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘With nowhere to escape and hemmed in from three sides, a hardcore of the defenders of Gaddafi's home town perhaps fearful of the treatment they believed they would receive if captured - continued to fight it out against hopeless odds.’

The nut graph contains subjective language like the word ‘perhaps’ which introduces subjectivity by suggesting uncertainty or speculation about the defenders' state of mind (being fearful). The phrase ‘the treatment...’ suggests the defenders' perception of potential consequences, which is subjective.

The nut graph presents the defenders' fight as continuing ‘against hopeless odds,’ portraying them as fighters in a difficult situation. This may evoke sympathy or admiration for their determination. Overall, this selective presentation set an agenda by emphasizing certain aspects of the defenders' situation and potential motivations while leaving out other perspectives. The nut graph suggests that Gaddafi's men continued to fight because they are fearful of their fate. It disregarded the possibility that any dictator can have true believers who are ready to fight to the death.

4) Qaddafi's Ex-Prime Minister Ordered Extradited to Libya, 9 November 2011

a- The New York Times nut graph

‘The extradition order came despite concerns by rights groups and foreign governments, including those that aided the former rebels who toppled Colonel Qaddafi, about extrajudicial killings and mistreatment of Qaddafi loyalists by vindictive militia members who had battled them in the eight-month revolution.’

The nut graph does contain subjective language like the word ‘concerns’ which indicates subjective opinions and worries held by rights groups and foreign governments. The phrase ‘extrajudicial killings...’ also implies a specific perspective on the actions of the rebels during the revolution. This framing implies a negative portrayal of the rebels' actions and sets an agenda to draw attention to the probable mal treatment of Qaddafi's Ex-Prime Minister by the rebels.

5) Qaddafi Son Being Held by Rebels, Rights Group Says, 21 December 2011

a- New York Times nut graph

Tuesday was the deadline set by the transitional government for out-of-town militias to leave Tripoli, where they had been staking out turf and skirmishing with one another since the Qaddafi forces were driven out in August. Few militia commanders appeared to have complied. Mokhtar al-Akhdar, the commander of the Zintan fighters at the airport, said the postwar Libyan state was still too weak. **"If the government has good people to secure the airport, then we will hand it over and go home," he said. "But they cannot even control the border with Tunisia. If we give the government the airport, they will destroy it."** The nut graph is the bold part.

The use of a direct quote from a rebel introduces subjectivity in the nut graph, as it represents a specific individual's opinion. By highlighting the disagreements between the Libyan state and the rebels although the headline is about 'Qaddafi Son Being Held by Rebels', an agenda is set through the nut graph, which is a direct quote from a rebel.

6) Libya names army chief as militias clash, 05 January 2012

a- The Global Times nut graph

'The appointment was announced as four fighters were killed in a gun battle between rival militias in Tripoli, **underlining the interim government's difficulties in controlling the increasingly fractious groups that toppled Muammar Gaddafi.**' The nut graph is the bold part.

The nut graph contains subjective language like the phrase 'underlining the interim ...' that presents an interpretation of the situation, indicating that the incident highlights challenges faced by the interim government. The first two sentences focus on the announcement of an appointment while linking it to an incident of violence between rival militias. By linking it to the nut graph about the interim government, it draws attention to the difficulties of controlling the militias. In addition, the use of the term 'increasingly fractious ...' in the nut graph characterizes the militias in a certain way, potentially influencing readers' perception of their behavior and motivations. In conclusion, the nut graph set an agenda by connecting

the appointment of the new army chief in Libya to the increase of division between militia groups in the country.

7) Former Libyan oil minister dies in Vienna under mysterious circumstances, 30 April 2012

a- Rossiyskaya Gazeta nut graph

‘In May last year, Ghanem broke with the regime of Muammar Gaddafi and emigrated to Italy. Recently he lived in Vienna, which he knew well from his previous job in OPEC as Deputy Secretary General of this organization. The two daughters of the deceased have Austrian citizenship. The deceased had an office in the old part of the city. Several commercial firms were registered on it. **According to some reports, Ghanem was suspected of possibly hiding the assets of the Gaddafi family.**’ The nut graph is the bold part.

The nut graph contains subjective elements like the phrase ‘according to some reports’ which indicates that the information about Ghanem's suspected activities is based on sources that are not specified, leaving room for subjective interpretation and uncertainty. The term ‘possibly hiding’ also introduces uncertainty and subjectivity, as it suggests that the suspicion is not confirmed. Regarding setting an agenda, by mentioning Ghanem's connections to OPEC, and his previous job in Vienna, the sentence may indirectly imply a link between his actions and his prior professional roles, potentially influencing readers' perceptions. By doing so and by providing an assumption that Ghanem was ‘hiding the assets of the Gaddafi family’, the nut graph set an agenda to prompt further investigation of the issue.

This assumption was not detected by the researcher in any part of the same news article reported by Dagens Nyheter, The Guardian, and The New York Times.

8) Tripoli airport attack raises security fears as elections near, 5 June 2012

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘The attack on the airport, which was apparently unguarded, has raised fresh questions about the government's grip on security, coming a month after another militia occupied the office of the

prime minister, Abdurrahim el-Keib, and little more than two weeks before planned national elections.’

The nut graph contains subjective elements like the phrase ‘apparently unguarded’ that implies an assumption or subjective evaluation of the airport's security status at the time of the attack. Also, the use of the term ‘fresh questions about ...’ indicates a subjective interpretation that the attack has raised doubts about the government's ability to maintain security. Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph focuses on the government's grip on security and connects the airport attack directly to the government's perceived lack of control, potentially setting an agenda to highlight government shortcomings in ensuring security although the incident could have other important social and political reasons.

9) Tunisia Extradites Former Qaddafi Prime Minister to Libya, 25 June 2012

a- New York Times nut graph

‘Mr. Mahmoudi’s extradition could establish a precedent for other countries that have given refuge to or arrested members of the ousted government of Colonel Qaddafi, who was killed by rebels in October.’

The sentence contains subjective elements like the use of the word ‘could’ which indicates a possibility or potential outcome, which introduces subjectivity as it is not a definitive statement. Also, the phrase ‘establish a precedent ...’ implies a subjective evaluation of the potential impact of Mr. Mahmoudi's extradition on other countries. Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph highlights the potential significance of Mr. Mahmoudi's extradition as it refers to other countries that have sheltered members of the former Libyan government and it seems to openly push a specific agenda by suggesting that the extradition of Former Qaddafi Prime Minister to Libya can encourage other countries to do the same with Qaddafi’s close men who got refuge there.

10) William Hague expresses concern over abduction of Libya Olympic chief Mon 16 Jul 2012

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘Elalem was taken from his car by armed men after they stopped him while he was driving in the capital. **No reason or ransom demand has yet been made public but the**

abduction, so close to the opening of the Olympic Games, underlines the precarious security situation in the Libyan capital. Hague, on a visit to Tripoli, said he had spoken to key officials and was concerned to hear the report of the kidnapping.’ The nut graph is the bold part.

The paragraph contains subjective elements as the phrase ‘underlines the precarious ...’ which presents a subjective evaluation of the abduction's significance, suggesting that it highlights the insecurity in Tripoli. This interpretation is based on the editor's assessment and does not provide objective evidence to support the claim. At the same time, the use of the word ‘concerned’ in relation to William Hague's reaction introduces subjectivity, as it reflects his emotional response to the report of the kidnapping. Regarding setting an agenda, the paragraph emphasizes the potential implications of the abduction by mentioning its closeness to the opening of the Olympic Games, which could suggest that it may have broader implications beyond the immediate incident. The nut graph potentially set an agenda to underscore the security issues faced by Libya although the news is about William Hague reaction to Elalem’s abduction. Moreover, the abduction could have different messages to the Libyan state or to world powers involved in the crisis.

11) Libya: Gaddafi loyalists blamed for car bombings as 32 people arrested, 21 August 2012

a- The Guardian nut graph

‘The attacks will test the mettle of the national assembly, which made improving security a priority when it assumed control this month from the national transitional council of opposition forces that toppled Gaddafi.’

The nut graph contains subjective elements as the phrase ‘test the mettle of ...’ that introduces subjectivity as it implies a subjective evaluation of the assembly's ability to handle security challenges. The term ‘mettle’ refers to a person's ability to cope with difficult situations, and its usage here is based on the editor's assessment rather than objective evidence. Considering setting an agenda, the paragraph focuses on how the attacks will test the national assembly's ability to cope with security challenges, potentially setting an agenda to highlight the assembly's performance in this regard.

While the paragraph mentions that improving security was a priority for the national assembly, it does not explore other factors or potential consequences of the attacks, such as public reactions to insecurity, which could be as important as the state's response.

12) Massive demolition of Sufi shrines in Libya, 27 August 2012

a- Rossiyskaya Gazeta nut graph

A large park will be built on the site of the residence of Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli. This was stated by Prime Minister Abdel Rahim al-Kib. By decision of the authorities, a monument to the torment of Libyan revolutionaries will appear in the center of the park. And on the site of the former palace of the head of the Jamahiriya, a library and a theater will be built. "This place, which was a symbol of despotism, dictatorship and fear, will turn into a symbol of pride and dignity," al-Kib said. **However, it is possible that then bulldozers will appear again!** The nut graph is the bold part of the article.

While the paragraph contains objective information about the planned construction, it contains the subjective nut graph at the end of the paragraph 'however, it is possible that then bulldozers will appear again!', and the overall tone of the paragraph becomes more speculative and uncertain. Regarding setting an agenda, the inclusion of the sentence about the potential return of bulldozers introduces a sense of doubt and raises questions about the stability in Libya. This shift in tone towards uncertainty could be seen as setting an agenda of caution or skepticism gives a sense to the reader that the same thing would happen in Libya again no matter what. In short, it left no space for hope.

13) Libya Mission Attack Kills U.S. Ambassador, 12 September 2012

a- The New York Times nut graph

'It is unclear if television images of Islamist protesters may have inspired the attack in Benghazi, which had been a hotbed of opposition to Colonel Qaddafi and remains unruly since the Libyan uprising resulted in his death. But Tuesday night, a group of armed assailants mixed with unarmed demonstrators gathered at the small compound that housed a temporary American diplomatic mission there.'

By considering the assumption that the attack in Benghazi might be the result of ‘television images ...,’ the nut graph does introduce a subjective element. The use of the words ‘unclear’ and ‘may’ indicate uncertainty and suggests a possible link between the television images and the attack, but it does not provide concrete evidence to support this claim. Regarding setting an agenda, the nut graph set the agenda by an assumption that the attack in Benghazi might be the result of television images of Islamist protesters although it could only be one of the possibilities.

14) Libya: Three months after election, PM is sacked, 8 October 2012

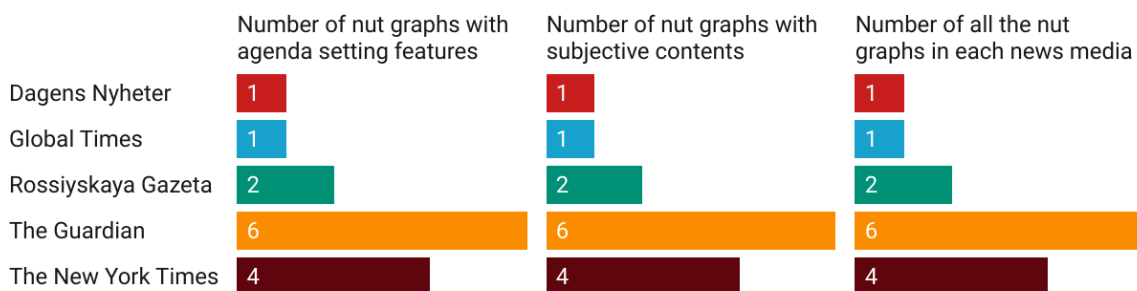
a- The Guardian nut graph

‘The result leaves the country without firm governance as it copes with warring militias, a moribund economy and the fallout from the killing last month of US ambassador Chris Stevens.’

The nut graph displays a degree of subjectivity by mentioning Chris Stevens. It implies that the nut graph highlighted a specific individual, which can introduce a subjective element by giving importance to particular details. Also, the nut graph implies an agenda-setting aspect by mentioning ‘Chris Stevens’ and by focusing on the consequences of an insecure ‘Libya without a prime minister.’ Both of these indicate that the nut graph is directing attention toward specific aspects of the story, which can influence the audience's understanding of the situation in Libya.

Number of the nut graphs with subjective and agenda setting features in fourteen news articles

All of the chosen news media outlets reported on fourteen identical events related to the Libyan crisis. However, out of these, only one news media source included the nut graph in the news article



The numeral preceding each news media indicates the quantity of nut graphs employed by each respective source

Chart: Javad Maleki • Created with Datawrapper

4.4 Swedish News Media With or Without the Nut Graph: Solution

After running several email-interview with editors of different Swedish news media including Dagens Nyheter it turned out that they do not use the nut graph in their news articles so in that perspective they are different from other selected news media. One Swedish editor who desired to remain anonymous told the researcher that he got familiar with the term when he was studying abroad. The researcher thinks that the way Swedish news media make news articles without the nut graph is more objective and it gives more space to readers to have their own understanding of news events. 'We do not edit TT articles at all, they are published automatically on Aftonbladet,' the news media deputy editor-in-chief and deputy responsible publisher, Martin Schori told the researcher in an e-mail on 3 May 2023 and in a telephone conversation on 8 May 2023. He also said that he has not heard the term 'nut graph' being used in Swedish news media.

'The news piece from Aftonbladet that you have attached is not written by a journalist from Aftonbladet. It's a text from TT News Agency, the national wire service in Sweden, that's been automatically published on Aftonbladet's website', an Editionschef at Aftonbladet, Victor Lindbom told the researcher on 02 May 2023 after the researcher found the nut graph in one of the articles published by Aftonbladet about the Libyan crisis. 'Nut graph is not a term we use at Aftonbladet and our editors doesn't deliberately include nut graphs in news articles. However, we always strive to be easily accessible and understandable in our news articles. And we put a lot of work into the lead ('ingressen' in Swedish). The lead should grab the attention of the reader and mention the most important and interesting elements of the story. It often provides short answers to the questions of what, where, who, when and how. And in the best case it is two or three sentences. Maybe that is the closest thing to nut graphs we have at Aftonbladet', said he said to the researcher on 12 May 2023 in another email. 'No we did not consider using a nut graph for this article. I have worked as a journalist for 44 years, four of them in the US, but I am not familiar with this certain technical term,' Erik Ohlsson, an experienced reporter at Dagens Nyheter replied to the researcher when asked why he did not used a nut graph in the news he wrote for the news media on 23 Sep. 2012 about 'Popular protest ended in attack on Sharia militia.'

Do articles published in Aftonbladet include a paragraph that besides providing answers to the questions of what, where, who, when and how, provide a reason for why the piece of news is

related to readers' lives? 'Of course we want to provide an answer to the why question. Why something matters and how it affects people. But not necessarily in the form of one so-called nut graph. Instead, we can add a fact box or a video explainer in an article. It can also be a supplementary article. For example a '5 bullet points' [like this one](#), a 'this has happened' [like this](#) or an analysis written by an editor or columnist [like this one here](#). In addition to that, we often talk about the 'what's in it for me' angle in the newsroom. We always strive to integrate the 'what's in it for me' philosophy in the majority of the things we do. With that said, breaking news is our primary focus at Aftonbladet. And we don't intentionally include a paragraph in the body text of the articles published in Aftonbladet which I guess you would categorize as a nut graph,' Editionschef at Aftonbladet, Victor Lindbom answered the question in an email to the researcher on 16 May 2023.

In addition, news articles published by Dagens Nyheter about the Libyan crisis rarely contained the nut graph, instead there was usually a part at the end of articles cited as 'Background' or 'Addition' with some historical, political, social or economic information related to the news. Moreover, Dagens Nyheter news story on the incident 'Assassination attempt against Prime Minister' on 26 May 2015, and Svenska Dagbladet news story on the same incident and on the same date do not contain nut graphs. These two pieces of news are almost exactly the same in content since they both used the same sources for the the news; TT and AFP.

4.5 Summary of Findings

The main finding of this study is that Swedish media editors, in general, do not include the nut graph in their news articles. The nut graph is not a common term in Swedish newsrooms. Therefore, if it is found in a news article, it is likely unintentional and without the editor's knowledge about the nut graph. Another finding is that since Swedish media outlets like Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet, and Svenska Dagbladet generally do not include the nut graph in their news articles, it suggests that the nut graph might not be as essential as it seems to be in news articles. From a broader international perspective, this study once again demonstrates, through reference to various books, articles, and the opinions of journalists, that the nut graph holds significant importance within news articles. It serves to aid readers in better comprehending the subject (Rich, 2015) and, as noted by (Stewart, 1998), can also operate in the opposite manner. Hence, it can be concluded that the impact of the nut graph relies on how and by whom it is

composed. A crucial point arises: editors must exercise careful consideration when addressing the subject matter of news articles. In alignment with (Matt Murray, 2022), they should avoid framing the nut graph around ambiguous phrases such as 'supposed to'.

When it comes to news about wars and international crises, every single word matters because the public mindset is generally built upon what they read in the news media. Journalists, like other people, have their own specific understanding of wars or crises. The researcher has witnessed many times that even among colleagues in newsrooms, there are different analyses when it comes to crucial issues like wars, and often they all need to write the nut graph, which explains why and how the subject is important. As news media generally need to maintain a uniform voice toward wars, the editors who write the nut graph might be directly or indirectly influenced by that policy or the media agenda, potentially leading to editorial manipulations or self-censorship. Moreover, relatively not many studies have been done in journalism research about the significance of the nut graph written by mainstream media about international crises. The researcher also could not find any specific articles within the framework of comparing the nut graph written by different news outlets to study the media agenda-setting process. More importantly, to find an answer to the question about the nut graph being fact-based or propaganda, it is necessary to focus on what (Franklin, 1993) mentioned. As (Franklin, 1993) said directly and others indirectly, it can be mentioned that the nut graph is a hypothesis supported by facts, but not necessarily all the important facts. It can be used as an editorial manipulation consciously or unconsciously, and directly or indirectly. Again as (Franklin, 1993) discussed if the nut graph would be written by a professional editor it can be very compelling. Although some journalists may be very proud of their storytelling talents but the relative study shows that it is not equivalent to a professional editor. Above all, for skilled storytellers, the line between truth and fiction is often blurred (Cialdini, 1984).

Is it possible to minimize the effects of the factors impairing the news flow, whenever such effects are found to be harmful? One may, with Harold J. Laski, be impressed by 'how intricate our problems are, how useless is the search for simple remedies'. One may, as he did, believe that 'our news system, in a word, is a reflection of our social system: there will be no vital change in the one unless there is a change in the other' (Östgaard, 1965, 17). And the researcher's questions about what (Östgaard, 1965) mentioned is that if the social system and the

news system are so interconnected so the editors who write the nut graph for crucial issues like international crises need to write it by considering the social system although it might not be the whole reality. What might happen after would be that people in different countries would have different opinions about an ongoing war, which is alright within the political and social systems but in the long run, might lead to public distrust of the media in general. The researcher found what was mentioned above through his journalistic experience in friendly talks with different people and journalists from different nationalities.

To conclude, the problem with the nut graph can also be reduced if self-criticism inside every news media becomes a regular culture. There is a need for self-criticism inside the media industry as Schramm (1957) emphasized its necessity. A profession grows not by asking how other professions are organized, but by questioning what type of behavior is required in order to carry out the public service responsibilities of the craft (Schramm, 1957).

Drawing from these findings, the responses to the research questions are as follows:

- How does the nut graph in the five selected news media outlets differ in terms of coverage of the same incidents about the Libyan crisis?

Based on the comparative analysis of a few nut graphs written for the same news events about the Libyan crisis, it can be observed that they were largely subjective and set significantly different media agendas, particularly concerning the NATO attacks. To delve into this matter further, The Guardian and The New York Times appeared to refrain from criticizing the alliance in their nut graphs related to attacks in Libya. In fact, in one of the news articles discussed within the analysis section, The New York Times endorsed a NATO attack by citing a rebel spokesperson. On the contrary, Global Times and Rossiyskaya Gazeta took an entirely different approach by openly criticizing NATO in their nut graphs for its attacks in Libya.

Moreover, in rare cases of nut graphs written by editors of Dagens Nyheter, the researcher found a more balanced reflection of the events in Libya, even when the nut graphs were subjective.

- How does the Swedish news media differ from other selected news media in terms of its nut graphs written about the Libyan crisis?

Unlike other selected news media, editors of the Swedish news media generally do not write the nut graph for their news articles. This was confirmed during interviews with a few editors from Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet, and Svenska Dagbladet. The nut graphs found in Dagens Nyheter's news do not contradict the researcher's hypothesis that the news media does not use the nut graph, because based on the interview with one of its editors; he is not familiar with the term 'nut graph'.

Finally, in order to address the question posed in the title of this study, 'Nutshell Paragraphs; Fact-Based or Propaganda' the researcher found through the literature, as noted by Franklin (1993), that the nut graph can present either a fact or a hypothesis.

5. Conclusions:

As (Stewart, 1998) mentioned, the nut graph was formulated for the first time by The Wall Street Journal, but no journalists thought that it would become a crucial part of news articles in many other international news media. No one anticipated that the nut graph would be taught at journalism schools all around the world. This transformation occurred because, on one hand, many news media find the nut graph intriguing, and on the other hand, they believed that they could convey their messages more effectively through the nut graph. Since the nut graph provides crucial information and states the problem, essentially answering the 'so what' of the story (Rich, 2015), it should be composed with particular care, particularly in news articles about international crises. The researcher discovered through the literature that it would be preferable to omit the nut graph altogether in news articles about international crises than to include a weak nut graph that might potentially mislead the audience.

Although the researcher found a few instances of media agenda setting in the nut graphs written by selected news media about the Libyan crisis, it cannot be conclusively stated, due to limited evidence, that they consistently establish agendas through their nut graphs. The researcher must avoid generalizations, as a few examples are insufficient to substantiate a hypothesis.

Additionally, it must be acknowledged that the researcher is not able to prove that every factor mentioned about the media agenda setting through the nut graph written by selected media about the Libyan crisis will have manipulative effects on the audience due to the same reason.

Moreover, the time limitation of the study might lead the researcher to make some general conclusions related to his journalistic experiences, based on thirty-one news articles, five news media, and one international crisis. More importantly, the researcher did his best to recognize and collect the nut graphs correctly based on his knowledge and according to the literature; however, he might have made mistakes in this process. For more reliable results, more variables need to be tested through a mixed-method study, and the nut graphs need to be checked with an expert. However, the researcher hopes that this study is a useful step in that direction.

To sum up, the researcher finds it useful and interesting to conclude this study by referring to a short story named 'Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street' written by the American writer, Herman Melville. The researcher believes that the public needs editors and journalists like one of the main characters of the story, 'Bartleby', with a critical mindset who have the courage to say 'I would prefer not to' (Melville, 1976, 12) write weak nut graphs. The public needs more journalists like James B. Stewart who are not just benefited from critical thinking but act like a solution journalist. 'If I could put a stake into the heart of the nut graf, I would' (Stewart, 1998, 156).

6. Recommendations for Further Studies

Even though there have been numerous discussions about the positive and negative aspects of the nut graph among journalists and academics, the scope of studies on this term is very limited. This indicates that there are many interesting topics, especially for the comparative analysis of the nut graph. For example, it is both important and interesting to study the ways in which the selected news media fit into Hallin and Mancini's media systems framework, based on their nut graphs written for news events of an international crisis like Libya. Another interesting topic would be to compare the nut graph of news media written for an international crisis and observe how they formulate it for their domestic audience compared to their international audience. Furthermore, it is useful to select news media from different countries by considering Hallin and Mancini's media systems framework.

Alongside research on the nut graph, digging into news articles from a year filled with significant international incidents, such as 2011, would also be incredibly interesting and could yield

valuable insights for the future. ‘In 2011, the Arab Uprisings, the Libyan Revolution, the UK riots, the Occupy movements, and the other major media spectacle cascaded through broadcasting, print, and digital media, seizing people’s attention and emotions, and generating complex and multiple effects that may make 2011 as memorable a year in the history of social upheaval as 1968 and perhaps one as significant’ (Kellner, 2012, 6, 7). Numerous significant incidents occurred during 2011, leading conspiracy theorists to ponder if ‘Big Brother’ (Orwell, 1990) set the entire agenda. Studies are essential to provide accurate information to the public and demonstrate that whatever transpired during 2011 had nothing to do with ‘Big Brother’.

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In closing, I would like to emphasize that the ideas and contributions of others, both cited and acknowledged, have been foundational in shaping this work.

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9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1: E-mail Interviews- Interview Questions in English

- The questions indicated in cursive were emailed to the participants.

- Questions related to news writing and the utilization of the nut graph within the context of Swedish news media:

- 1. Are editors of Dagens Nyheter familiar with the term "the nut graph," and do they use the nut graph in their news stories?*
- 2. Are editors of Svenska Dagbladet familiar with the term "the nut graph," and do they use the nut graph in their news stories?*
- 3. Are editors of Aftonbladet familiar with the term "the nut graph," and do they use the nut graph in their news stories?*

- The following question:

- 1. Why is the nut graph not utilized in Swedish news media? What are the reasons or factors that contribute to its absence in their journalistic practices?*

- The more specific questions:

- 1. How does Aftonbladet determine whether to edit news articles from TT News Agency before publication? Is there a standard procedure or specific criteria they follow?*
- 2. In the case of the paragraph (nut graph) mentioned in the news, could you shed some light on whether Aftonbladet edited it before publication or if it was automatically published?*
- 3. Could you please provide the reasoning behind your decision to include a nut graph in the mentioned news article?*

- Questions pertaining to The Guardian report on the NATO attack:

1. As you mentioned in the article the NATO air strike happened on 19 June 2011 but your article was published on 5 Sep 2011. I want to know why The Guardian did not report the incident in a timely manner.

- Questions pertaining to the selection of appropriate news media for the study:

1. For the research on media coverage of the Libyan crisis, which type of media would you prioritize: print media or news television channels? Why?

- Questions pertaining to the Libyan crisis and the news articles

1. Which significant news incidents do you suggest I select for analysis of the Libyan crisis?

9.2 Appendix 2: Video Interview, Interview Questions in English

-Questions pertaining to the Libyan crisis: 5 minutes

1. Which significant news incidents do you suggest I select for analysis of the Libyan crisis?

- Questions pertaining to the media coverage of the Libyan crisis: 5 minutes

1. How did the media portray and cover the Libyan crisis?

- Questions pertaining to the selection of appropriate news media for the study: 2 minutes

1. For the research on media coverage of the Libyan crisis, which type of media would you prioritize: print media or news television channels? Why?

- Questions pertaining to the interview structure of the study: 2 minutes

1. Could you provide insights into the interview structure of the study?

Input from the respondent: 2 minutes

Concluding inquiries: 2 minutes

Would you prefer to remain anonymous?