

# **(In)Security and terrorism: a comparative study between the online media BBC and Dabiq Magazine from the attacks in Paris**

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## **Abstract**

From a comparative perspective and a Foucauldian reflection, this article<sup>1</sup> aims to analyze the discursive constructions about international (in)security, produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Dabiq Magazine journalistic reports, in a way that it destabilizes itself. It is worth noting that the historical fact investigated corresponds to the November 13, 2015 attacks in Paris, in view of the media audience then produced. Thus, the article seeks to reflect on the following question: how did the BBC and Dabiq Magazine construct their discourses on international (in)security on the subject of terrorism? In face of this questioning, we have, as a reflection, that the discursive constructions of the online media occur according to two questions. On one hand, there is the transmission of ideas and values through the logic of “security”, “solidarity” and return to “normality”; In turn, from another spectrum, there is the construction of a sense of insecurity, tragedy and despair. In this sense, in order to undertake this study, methodologically were used bibliographical references on the topic of critical studies of international (in)security, terrorisms, discourse analysis. Thus, a detailed study was conducted

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comparing the layers of the online media, since both are based on their respective regimes of truth, power and knowledge.

**Key-words:** CSS. Terrorism. IE. Dabiq. BBC.

## Introduction

Since its inception, in the early 2000s, the Islamic State has continuously (re)shaped its structures until it became what we know today. Unlike many other groups associated with acts, methods and practices of terrorism, the Islamic State achieved notoriety not only for spreading terrorism<sup>2</sup>, but because it used (and uses) digital media and social networks to disseminate its core values, ideas and conceptions about the world. Also, it is important to notice that after 2014, when the establishment of a Caliphate was declared, the Islamic State's performance became more noticeable, mainly because of the regular activities of its combatants in the Middle East and its geopolitical expansion around the globe.

Over time, media activities carried out by the group also took form and strength, especially because Dabiq<sup>3</sup>, an online magazine, became one of its main marketing tools. However, despite Dabiq's popularity, we should bear in mind that the Islamic State has a much more extensive chain of media operations<sup>4</sup> that is conducted through plentiful platforms, such as online publishing, mobile apps, social media and videos. In such a way the group extols military achievements and religious beliefs for propaganda purposes.

We can say that the Islamic State aims to have an external, direct zone of influence that concerns the European continent. Hence, this zone of influence covers France, whose capital city, Paris, was the target of several attacks on November 13, 2015. Such events had strong media repercussions worldwide and also found their space in the terrorist group media. Bearing this scenario in mind, the November 2015 Paris attacks were used as a time frame to define the scope of our research. In addition, it is important to highlight that we conducted two comparative Discourse Analyses concerning Dabiq Magazine and the BBC<sup>5</sup> (one of the largest media corporations in Europe).

Considering both media have particularities regarding their hierarchies and regimes of knowledge, power and truth, the Discourse Analysis we execute here faces some

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2 In this article we do not intend to put into question conceptual debates regarding international terrorism. We only seek to analyse how online media (the BBC and Dabiq) constructed and carried out several practices and actions through their respective journalistic narratives on (in)security, specifically when dealing with terrorism as a subject matter.

3 Dabiq Magazine is published in English. However, the Islamic State also releases online content in other languages such as Turkish, French and Russian. Here, we chose to analyse only the English content.

4 Within this media division, there is a radio station (Al-Bayan) broadcast in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Al-Bayan also has some daily bulletins reported in other languages such as English, French, Russian and Turkish. This media division owns Amaq News Agency which reports the Islamic State's actions inside and outside the Middle East. There is also Al-Hayat Media Centre, a media in foreign language responsible for magazines, videos and mobile applications.

5 On the one hand, we chose the BBC because of its global audience, which in 2017 registered, on average, about 372 million people. In addition, the BBC reaches almost every country. This way, the BBC was chosen in order to provide us a more European vision and not only a French perspective. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/reports/ara/archive#heading-201516>. Accessed on: 1 feb. 2019.

challenges. Taking this into account, this article seeks to address the following question: how did the BBC and Dabiq Magazine, having “terrorism” as a subject matter, constructed their discourses on international (in)securities? After deep reflections, we consider that the discursive constructions made by these online media took place because, on the one hand, there was the transmission of ideas and values through a logic of “security”, “solidarity”, and return to “normality”. However, on the other hand, there was a construction of a (in)security perception and, as a consequence, a subjective feeling of unsafety, tragedy and despair. We also recognize that both considerations are not exclusive, but mutually complementary.

To that end, this article is divided into three sections. In such a way, first we examine the importance and the contributions of Critical (In)Security Studies (CSS) and Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) considering their role regarding non-state actors and, especially, the impact of the Islamic State through (and on) the media. Secondly, this study deals with the theoretical/methodological importance of the poststructuralist Foucauldian discourse analysis. Finally, in the last section, this article conducts a comparative discourse analysis having Dabiq Magazine and the BBC as case studies. In this sense, through an interdisciplinary lens, an intersection between Critical (In)Security Studies, Critical Terrorism Studies, Discourse Analysis, and Media Studies are carried out.

## **Critical (In)Security Studies (CSS) and Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS): poststructuralisms, Islamic State and online media**

Until the late 1980s, Realism and its ramifications treated the State alone as the most important actor in international relations. In such a way, the State was considered its crucial subject matter. Also, under the auspices of Behaviourism<sup>6</sup>, and anchored by positivist methods and analysis based on objectivity, impartiality and neutrality, the realist perspective dominated the field concerning international security. Remarkably, this theoretical approach understood (and still understands) that the State is the one that produces (in)security. In this sense, there was not (and there is not) room for debates outside state-centric limits (BOOTH, 2007).

However, after the end of the Cold War (1991), studies of international (in)security<sup>7</sup> have undergone substantial backlashes, changes and innovations because of several challenges regarding the ability of States to solve the conflicts that had arisen. Alongside with new theoretical approaches, these inflections on the Architecture of the International System brought considerable benefits for (in)security studies such as new theoretical/methodological contributions which have revolutionized the field and paved the way for the establishment of Critical Security Studies (CSS).

<sup>6</sup> However, we should bear in mind that, after a few decades, a group of so-called neoclassical realists began to distance themselves from Behaviourist perspectives. In this sense, they retook perspectives of classical realism presented by Edward Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Raymond Aron.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of desecritization seeks to depoliticize agendas/themes/processes of International (in)security that once were relevant (BUZAN; WEAVER; WILDE, 1998).

Under a post-positivist perspective, scholars such as Buzan, Wæver and Wilde (1998) developed works on (in)security and pointed out that subjectivity and partiality broadened and relativized actors and agendas that were previously marginalized by traditional perspectives of the realist school and their derivatives<sup>8</sup>. The Copenhagen School, to which these authors belong, approached the concept of securitization<sup>9</sup> and desecuritization<sup>10</sup>, and began the process of politicizing issues/agendas/processes linked to the State and also those detached from the State agenda (BUZAN; HANSEN, 2009).

Together with the possibility of expanding new themes and agendas regarding international (in)security, the Copenhagen School allowed the emergence of new schools<sup>11</sup>, such as Paris<sup>12</sup> (with Didier Bigo<sup>13</sup> and Jef Huysmans<sup>14</sup>, in 1990) and Aberystwyth<sup>15</sup> (with Ken Booth and Wyn Jones, in 1991). These schools brought new methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies and enlarged the field of international studies (BIGO; TSOUKALA, 2008; HUYSMANS; SQUIRE, 2009; KRAUSE; WILLIAMS, 1997; WEAVER, 2004; NEOCLEOUS, 2008).

After this brief review of critical (in)security schools and the presentation of their respective theories/visions, we should notice that, under the auspices of globalization, the impacts of information and communications technologies led to an increase of studies regarding terrorism as a subject matter to be discussed in the (in)security agenda. This way, along the following lines we point out that in a scenario also marked by the so-called New Wars<sup>16</sup>, a myriad of new analyses – such as those about terrorism(s), its practices

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8 In this sense, agendas such as Human Security, Environmental, Energy and Terrorism Studies gained space and, over time, became a subfield in International Relations (BUZAN; HANSEN, 2009).

9 We understand securitization as a means of politicizing international (in)security themes/ agendas /processes, since such an agenda deals with threats/ risks / fear. In theory, any public issue / speech / question can be instrumentalized by State and non-State actors so that politicization takes place (BUZAN, WAEVER, WILDE, 1998).

10 The concept of desecuritization seeks to depoliticize agendas/themes/processes of International (in)security that once had relevance (BUZAN; WEAVER; WILDE, 1998).

11 It is important to notice that all aforementioned schools (those related to CSS) have several theoretical influences ranging from Constructivism, Feminism, Poststructuralism and even Gender Studies applied to international (in)security. In this sense, many theorists understand that there are no theories of international (in)security, but International Relations theories that are applied to the field of international (in)security (BOOTH, 2007; BUZAN; HANSEN, 2009).

12 Historically, Paris has been a center of theoretical development inspired, in particular, by sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and philosophers such as Michael Foucault. Paris aim is to produce detailed empirical research through practices that are carried out by several international, regional and national agencies / organizations. according to different standards and processes on international (in)security (BOOTH, 2007; WEAVER, 2004).

13 Didier Bigo is a well-known author of Paris School, mainly because he developed *Cultures & Conflicts*, a journal that published a series of important works involving the merger between internal and external security. His work addresses the intersection between police, military and border agents and their respective organizations that exercise control, surveillance and monitoring.

14 Jef Huysmans is also a well-known name of Paris School. By working with many other authors, Huysmans produced new ideas of threat by constantly connecting immigration, organized crime and terrorism(s) (WEAVER, 2004; BIGO; TSOUKALA, 2008; HUYSMANS; SQUIRE, 2009).

15 Aberystwyth has had a wide movement, that emerged from many sources, inside and outside Europe. Two leading figures in Aberystwyth's Critical Security Studies are Ken Booth and Richard Wyn Jones. Historically, one of the main works produced by this school was an edition organized by Keith Krause (Geneva) and Mike Williams (then in Portland, Maine). In general, authors belonging to Aberystwyth consistently rely on the idea of emancipation, especially regarding dialogues built with authors and remnants of the Frankfurt School, such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Walter Benjamin. (KRAUSE; WILLIAMS, 1997; WEAVER, 2004; NEOCLEOUS, 2008).

16 See Kaldor (1999).

and theories – can be presented and not necessarily associated with the state dimension (PISOIU; HAIN, 2018).

Since the Cold War era, between 1970 and 1980, and prior to the Critical Security Studies emergence, numerous studies on terrorism have been carried out according to Western orthodox visions. Since 1980, and mainly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, several theoreticians have started to question orthodox studies on terrorism(s). Based on different ontologies, epistemologies and methods, their aim was to access analyses on terrorism(s) that allowed reflections in the light of post-positivist theories about the theme. Within the British International Studies Association (BISA), in the UK, at the renowned Welsh School, a group of scholars built a Critical Studies on Terrorism working group (CTS), which produced academic papers on terrorism(s) by multiple approaches, especially those focusing on the immanent critique of emancipation (JACKSON, 2009a; MCDONALD, 2007; STUMP; DIXIT, 2013).

Both CTS and CSS considerations on terrorism(s) benefited from studies on language, discourse and aesthetics, according to poststructuralist analyses, especially Foucauldian reflections – a kind of “Copenhagen School” of Critical Terrorism Studies (JACKSON; SMYTH; GUNNING, 2009; STUMP; DIXIT, 2013). From this short review, we find that in general CTS sought for autonomy vis-à-vis CSS.

Historically, and especially after the September 11 attacks, multiple speeches designed by several Heads of State and by mass media began to impact the global international (in) security agenda. This has happened especially because of a spectacle of images through massive visual constructions on terrorism(s) and, a posteriori, counterterrorism speech. It was before (and after) the events of September 11 that we came to understand terrorism as a discourse, whose language produces different forms of violence on a routine basis (JACKSON, 2004, 2009a).

Under the discursive strategy, terrorism actions began to be stimulated mainly using communication and language. Thus, we can understand that political actors’ discursive actions who spread terror are constructed according to their regimes of truth, knowledge and power. In these media actions, actors seek to exercise a dominant influence (power), based on capillary practices, on multiple audiences using mass media and their respective discursive techniques.

In this scenario, through multiple discourses and Speech Acts<sup>17</sup> regarding the international (in)security agenda, one of the characters that has become increasingly present in magazine covers and newspapers around the globe was the Islamic State (whose religious discourse is based on Wahhabism, a branch of Jihadist Salafism). As far as the Jihadist Salafism is concerned, there is the need for a brief historical review that follows. Currently,

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17 Speech Acts are affirmations made through discourses and described from a given reality, that is, they cannot be judged as false or true. Speech Acts are also discursive strategic actions that use sociological or filosofical ways of persuasion. Since they are based on specific rules/norms, speech acts can also silence, marginalize and, therefore, exclude (BALZACQ, 2011; VULTEE, 2011; KAUNERT, 2011).

there are two perspectives that have contributed to the outbreak of the jihadist thought. The first one is associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, a group founded in 1928, in Egypt, which understood that the caliphate should be the government system in the Islamic world and that there should be an Islamic reform in order to restore its purity. The second branch is Salafism, which has a Sunni origin and also addresses the Islamic religion purity. In this branch, there is a quest to eliminate idolatry and to affirm the uniqueness of God (Tawhid) (BUNZEL, 2015; COCKBURN, 2015; NAPOLEONI, 2015).

Within Salafism there is Wahhabism, a religious movement that exerts a substantial influence in the Islamic State. Wahhabism consists in returning to the origins of Islam, and it treats with contempt and hostility those Muslims who do not have the same ideological vision. Thus, jihadist Salafism arose from the combination of these inclinations, and subsequently reached the Islamic State through Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian who in the 1980s went to Afghanistan to fight alongside the mujahedin against the Soviet Army (BUNZEL, 2015; COCKBURN, 2015; NAPOLEONI, 2015).

When the United States invaded Afghanistan, in 2001, Zarqawi<sup>18</sup> (leader) and his followers were forced to move into Iraqi territory. Not long before, in 2002, a group called Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad (JTJ or Organization of Monotheism and Jihad) emerged. However, it was only in 2004 that Zarqawi pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda and the JTJ became al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). In 2006, the Mujahideen Shura Council was structured. The Council sought to unite AQI and other jihadist groups active in the region. This was AQI's first step to form a caliphate. Despite Zarqawi's death (caused by an American air strike), the group remained active. However, when Abu Umar al-Baghdadi became the new appointed leader, AQI was renamed again and became the Islamic State of Iraq (BUNZEL, 2015; NAPOLEONI, 2015).

The Islamic State sought to co-opt individuals who would honour the causes and aspirations promoted by the group. In such a way, the Islamic State invested in exploiting the media (traditional and digital) to mobilize public opinion worldwide. The path taken focused on disseminating journalistic content, especially videos, and establishing a network communication. In addition, Islamic State's marketing focused (and focuses) on destabilizing and even deconstructing Western media speeches (news reports and stories) whose high circulation of journalistic content point to a unidirectional view on terrorism and 'forgets' the West historical debt during, and even after, the end of the 'colonial rule'.

As Huysmans (2006) points out, (in)securities are phenomena politically and socially constructed. Both mainstream and alternative media emphasize discourses on (in)security through language, aesthetics (photographs), framing<sup>19</sup> and many other resources. Language games based on TV and print media aesthetics create and construct an imaginary relied on representations that evoke images such as anarchy, chaos and barbarism. There is a

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18 The first contact with al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden took place in 2000. However, Zarqawi initially had other priorities and refused to be a part of al-Qaeda (BUNZEL, 2015).

19 See Goffmann (2016).



marketing of terror through social networks, especially when counterterrorism speeches frame the enemy (terrorists) like those who are in a global war against the West. This way, Heads of State statements, disseminated by the media, attest that the axis of evil must come to an end, as the former US President George W. Bush (2001-2009) stressed (SHAPIRO, 2005; REINHARDT, 2018).

In this sense, we emphasize that there is a growing need to consider the importance of (in)security studies, terrorisms and media through discourses produced by multiple state and non-state actors of world politics. Both BBC and Dabiq Magazine media address subliminal messages based on the nature of political discourses on terror and terrorism(s). That is a tactic to reach their aims, mainly after 2001, when terrorism reached 31,000 incidents with approximately 64,000 deaths, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (STEPANOVA, 2014; STAMPNITZKY, 2013).

In CSS and CTS, academics like Hansen (2011) study and reflect on media, (in)security and terrorism(s) according to the concept of visual securitization. Hansen (2011) understands that through visual securitization images produce ambiguities about (in)securities. Thus, through visual genres (irony, satire etc.), several imagery representations can emerge. Visual securitization can emanate from traditional discourses on security, which stigmatize the Other (like the Islamic State) as a devilish, barbaric, evil threat. According to Hansen (2001), another way of approaching visual securitization can derive from strategies based on contempt for the Other and can be translated by the use of adjectives such as weak and small. A third way of securitization can arise through familiarity, that is, from representations such as the divine and the sacred. In addition, we can visualize the fourth way of representation through the idea of suffering. In this case, there is a focus on oppressed, threatened, starving images.

As we observed, images and their political implications produce multiple impacts and forms of violence through their textual genres, that is, according to verbal and non-verbal languages presented in discourses (HANSEN, 2011). Considering these perspectives, we can address many questions: 1) Who defines an individual, a state and/or a group as a terrorist? 2) Why are there countries that are not called terrorists even though they exercise as much violence as terrorist groups? 3) How does the media operate (re)producing stereotypes about those framed as terrorists? 4) How do the covers of heterogeneous media construct imaginaries about terror and terrorism? 5) How do the BBC and Dabiq Magazine regulate their regimes of knowledge, power and truth? 6) How did Dabiq Magazine find a way in traditional and digital media to produce power, knowledge and truth? 7) How does Dabiq Magazine differentiate itself from the journalistic content produced by the BBC?

## **PostStructuralism, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: media, (in)security and terrorism(s)**

An astronomical technological media development took place by the end of the twentieth century onwards. This process was marked by the emergence of new media, such

as the internet, mobile phones and the Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). Consequently, the status and the consumption of information suffered several transformations. New strategies, including the field of private security, began to be organized in order to guarantee the establishment control survival over information, as well as traditional print and television presses survival, which faced a harsh competition with a multitude of blogs, websites, social networks and IPTVs. These new media resources reconfigured information production and consumption transnationally and transgovernamentally<sup>20</sup> (SLAUGHTER; HALE, 2010).

In general, International Relations considerations about media, (in)securities and terrorisms, especially in CTS and CSS, rely on interdisciplinary approaches. This collaboration is anchored by areas such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy and cultural studies. In such a way, it puts in question languages, narratives, speeches, aesthetics, semiologies envisioned by the media (digital and traditional), States and International Institutions. Also, it is important to notice that multiple forms of violence (normal, normative and exceptional) are developed not only by several actors of world politics, but, at the same time, by a variety of academic productions that rely on the identity/difference problematique (OLIVERIO, 1998; ALTHEIDE, 2006; DEBRIX, 2008; HODGES, 2011). However, it is also important to consider theoretical and methodological differences that CSS and CTS show, through their theorists, when evoking interdisciplinary approaches on subjects such as media, (in)security and terrorism.

Dabiq Magazine is an example of this globalizing<sup>21</sup> movement of international order transformation and questioning. Its content is published online every two months and produces the Islamic State speeches according to its regime of truth, knowledge and power. To do so, these news reports rely on multiple propaganda and marketing techniques. In turn, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is another means of communication that has gained relevance in the last years due to enlargements and innovations it has reached. Nowadays its structure can be compared to those of Global News Agencies like Reuters and France-Presse. In addition, the BBC belongs to one of the regions that has been suffering from terrorist attacks claimed by members of the Islamic State. In this sense, we chose both media because we consider them essential to understand, through a semiological approach, how these different journalistic styles sometimes rank, silence and produce regimes of knowledge, power and truth from their respective frameworks and aesthetic compositions.

Hansen (2011) highlights the importance of visual and (in)security studies in a world where images can be disseminated with a wide circulation that allows ambiguous interpretations. In this sense, increasing symbolic representation strategies can be built through the use images. According to Hansen (2011), in general, verbal and non-verbal discourses (re)produced by images can build and legitimize the sense of danger and threat.

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20 Transgovernamental networks are informal institutions that link regulators, legislators, and other actors across borders in order to operationalize global governance (SLAUGHTER, 2010).

21 We share Held e McGrew's (2002) perceptions about globalization.



On the one hand, studying visual securitization requires reflections on how discourses are constructed within the (in)security spectrum and, on the other hand, it requires emphasis on symbolic power produced, sometimes ambiguously, by images (HANSEN, 2011). Given the meanings and the impacts produced in society through and beyond linguistic representation, objects, subjects and structures acquire relevance. In this sense, discourses can be used to reinforce certain world views (re)produced by actors of world politics. Foucauldian poststructural reflections increasingly gained space and legitimacy, in CTS and CSS, especially because both understand languages and discourses as ways of producing truths, knowledge and power within the international community (JACKSON, 2009a, 2009b).

In epistemological terms, discursive narratives present themselves through a foundational approach. Meanwhile, at the political level, they perform distinctively as self-regulated or self-asserted. When we look at the Western logic, it is possible to find ways to destabilize discourses that legitimize domination and have political and moral implications (DEVETAK, 2007). Discourses, like a book, do not present, at least clearly, its essences; actually, from their very first lines to their final reflections, they exhibit relative and variable units. Therefore, discourses cannot be considered immediate and homogeneous units (FOUCAULT, 1997).

According to Foucault (1997), when we examine the media and their behaviour in politics world, we can observe criticisms to “prevailing” universal discursive rules. But at the same time, it is possible to recognize that the same media can silence subjects and voices by rescuing old discourses or employing “new” ones (FOUCAULT, 1997). Media sometimes can also incite violence through stereotypes and by producing hierarchies within discourses and their languages, especially in the covers they release through traditional or online methods.

These covers are anchored on several semiological elements – such as sign, meaning, signifier, channel, medium, message. In this sense, they establish, with different audiences, ways of sharing information, but not necessarily of producing communication and vice versa. Considering the field of (in)security, we understand images on the online covers of the BBC and Dabiq Magazine as discourse products derived from social and political practices (SALTER; MUTLU, 2013; STUMP; DIXIT, 2013; ARADAU et al, 2015). Additionally, through discourses we can observe the existence of domination elements, constructions, hierarchies and power. Therefore, newspapers become important tools of/for discourse analysis, since stereotypes are constructed and disseminated in time and space.

As Hansen (2006) points out, language belongs to the social, political and cultural dimension of a society. Language represents an unstable system that evidences signals through identity and difference construction. Also, through language, it is possible to see political discourse implications marked by specific constructions and subjectivities. The media works with different language types; hence, they act ambiguously. In such a way, in order to think about discursive language, one must observe the place of particular subjectivities and

identities (re)production. At the same time, one must observe the exclusions and silencings produced by BBC and Dabiq Magazine.

When we take Discourse Analysis into account, we need to pay careful attention to every statement in order to recognize the narrowness and singularities that is proposed within its message. This way, Discourse Analysis makes it possible to demarcate the surfaces of the first emergencies, the instances of delimitation, and even to reach the grids of specification (FOUCAULT, 1997). According to Doty (1993), when we think about discursive practices, it is important to emphasize the linguistic construction of reality. The productive nature of language does not depend on, or coincide with social actors' motivations, perceptions, intentions, or understanding (MILLIKEN, 1999).

Over time, Discourse Analysis allows us to understand that discourse practices are not fixed on a stable centre basis. Discourse practices consist of disperse modes of subjectivation. That is why we opted, in this article, for a Foucauldian archaeological discourse analysis, since this approach do not seek to define thoughts, representations, images, themes, obsessions hidden or manifested in discourses, but to understand discourses themselves as practices that obey rules (FOUCAULT, 1997).

## **A comparative discourse analysis: Dabiq Magazine and BBC**

### **Dabiq Magazine**

We started our analysis on Dabiq Magazine issue 12, November 18, 2015. This issue has 66 pages, but we only investigated the content concerning the Paris attacks. Hence, it is important to highlight that the analyses carried out were based on the cover, the prologue's figures and captions, and on the issue that starts on page 25 and ends on page 28. Before showing the results of our study, we should emphasize that the images used by Dabiq Magazine about the Paris attacks were extracted from Global News Agencies and tampered with in order to destabilize and/or even reverse the historical discourses produced by the West over the Middle East. In this sense, Dabiq used its resources to determine the photographic compositions (subtitles, colours, frames) according to its subjectivities and visions of the world. Along the following lines, we present the magazine content respecting the sequence of their presentation. This way, the first figure we show and analyse is the magazine cover.

In Dabiq's cover, we can observe the (re)production of some senses. In the first place, the title says: "JUST TERROR". Its meaning refers to Allah's Shari'ah (law) followed by the Islamic State militants. One of the Shari'ah's decrees establishes that punishment must reach out to belligerent crusaders and come from places unexpected by them (BUNZEL, 2015; NAPOLEONI, 2015). The idea of justice inferred in this discourse may also be associated with the French-led air strikes against the caliphate. Then, there is the idea that any actions against them is a *just* punishment in the eyes of Allah and in the politico-military sphere.

Figura 1 – Dabiq Magazine Cover #12



Source: Associated Press (AP).

We can also make a second interpretation by focusing on the colours used in the title. As we can observe, the word “Terror” is written in red, a colour that reminds us of aggressiveness and blood. The word “Just”, in turn, is written in white, which brings a sense of purity and peace. This way, what is just is pure and blessed. However, terror is an aggressive and bloody way to reach justice. We also noticed that the title is written with capital letters, a practice in journalistic writing that seeks to draw the reader’s attention.

As for the cover's photograph, one observes darkened edges and, in contrast, a clear focus on the person being rescued. The firefighters look worried, and their expression can lead the reader to think that the attacks were successful. In such a way, not only physical injuries are shown; psychological wounds are also a focal point. The passage we can observe in the prologue may point to such a conclusion: "*The divided crusaders of the East and West thought themselves safe in their jets as they cowardly bombarded the Muslims of the Khilāfah*" (DABIQ MAGAZINE, 2015, p. 2). A fourth remark concerns the removal of a woman that was supposed to be in the right corner of the figure. Since this woman was not "properly dressed", that is, since she had no veil, that might be the reason for this modification.

As for the prologue, it has a rich textual content and also presents some figures. As we pointed out before, we focused on some fragments related to Figure 1. In addition, we contemplated other figures referring to the Paris attacks. We can notice that Figure 2 includes the following caption: "*The coward François Hollande*", which clearly refers to former president of the French Republic, François Hollande, elected in 2012.

**Figure 2** – Dabiq Magazine #12, p. 2



Source: Agence France-Presse.

As we can observe in Figure 2, the two men in front of the president apparently are his security guards, since one of them is armed. However, we can also point out that these are not uniformed men. As for the term "coward", it is due to François Hollande being escorted (or, depending on the interpretation, being hidden, since his body can hardly be seen, and his face is covered by a shadow) by armed men and wearing bullet proof vests. In addition, the landscape around these men is blurred, which draws our complete attention towards the centre, where the French president is.

Figure 3 is captioned as follows: "*The Scene after the Khilafah's daring raids in Paris*". In this figure, we can see a restaurant called *La Belle Equipe* after the gunmen attack. Lifeless and injured bodies are lying on the ground and firemen are working. A

reflector is used to highlight the face of a frightened young man. This way, a dramatic scene is captured. Like Figure 1, Figure 3 concentrates on bloody bodies, firefighters and frightened faces, and once again Dabiq tries to imply the idea of a successful action driven by the Islamic State.

**Figure 3** – Dabiq Magazine #12, p. 2



Source: Dabiq Magazine.

As for the caption, we can emphasize the word “daring”. According to our interpretation, this word can be connected to adversities the Islamic State had been facing to advance throughout Europe. When revisited, the prologue presents the idea that although international intelligence is at war with the Islamic State, the attacks in France have been successfully executed. The word “incursion”, in turn, suggests a military action and, at the same time, may refer to the idea of invasion. The prologue also says: *“Eight knights brought Paris down to its knees after years of French conceit in the face of Islam”*. According to our interpretation, this passage refers to a state of (national) emergency in which the actions of the eight-armed men were able to promote a war scene with only assault rifles and explosive belts (DABIQ MAGAZINE, 2015, p. 2).

In Figure 4 we can read: *“The nightmare in France has only begun”*. The photograph of a man wearing a bloody shirt talking on his cell phone with a frightened face and being escorted by a policemen frames the horror brought by Paris attacks. Also, the threat expressed by the passage indicates France became a target of the Islamic State – a situation derived from France-led air raids on the Caliphate we already analysed in Figure 1. There is another passage in the prologue that expresses pride after the shock caused on the French population: *“Thus, the Islamic State dispatched its brave knights to wage war in the homelands of the wicked crusaders, leaving Paris and its residents shocked and awed”* (DABIQ MAGAZINE, 2015, p. 2).



**Figure 4** – Dabiq Magazine #12, p. 2



Source: original Reuters figure.

There is also a section in issue #12 entitled “*A selection of military operations by the Islamic State*” which highlights some operations carried out by the terrorist group in several regions of the globe. We emphasize this passage since this discourse defends operations where the group succeeded through the Caliphate’s geopolitical expansion. An expansion that can also be interpreted as a way of massacring, terrorizing and humiliating enemies of Allah (DABIQ MAGAZINE, 2015, p.25). Between those Islamic State-led military operations that went “right” are 2015 Paris attacks.

**Figure 5** – Dabiq Magazine #12, p. 28

**France** – On Friday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Safar, 8 soldiers of the Khilāfah carried out an operation in the heart of French crusader territory. The operation involved multiple simultaneous attacks with explosive belts and assault rifles on various targets including the Stade de France stadium, where the crusader president Francois Hollande was attending a soccer match, and the Bataclan theatre for exhibitions, where hundreds of French mushrikīn had gathered for a music concert. The attacks, which included other targets around Paris and succeeded in killing hundreds of crusaders and wounding even more, shook the world and reminded the nations of kuffr that the Islamic State will continue to stand firm in the face of their transgressions and retaliate with fire and bloodshed in revenge for the honor of the Prophet ﷺ and the multitudes killed and injured in crusader airstrikes in the lands of the Muslims.

Source: Dabiq Magazine.



Figure 6 is captioned as follows: “*Carnage on the streets of Paris following the Islamic State’s blessed assault*”. Like the other figures analysed earlier, we can observe elements of concern and/or a sense of urgency that reaffirm the terrorist attacks impacts. We also remark there is one person is blurred. Once again, it is a woman and this procedure was made for the same reason as in Figure 1.

**Figure 6** – Dabiq Magazine #12, p. 28



Source: Reuters original figure.

In addition, deaths are associated with Crusaders who carried out air strikes on the Caliphate. Our discourse analysis on Dabiq paid careful attention to its textual and photographic nuances. This way, along the following pages, we conduct the same discourse analysis study of the BBC's content. We rely on the same goals and parameters approached on Dabiq.

## **BBC**

The BBC covered the Paris attacks between November 13 and November 18. The company also used material provided by other Global News Agencies. The BBC's search system provides several videos of survivors sharing their experience and telling how they managed to escape the attacks alive. Among this content, it is possible to watch mobile footage of victims or those who were near the places attacked. There are also some international video stories focusing on feelings such as solidarity and compassion for the victims. In general, news reports released by the BBC analyse how social media can be regarded as a way to help or support the people who were harmed by the attacks. Facebook, for example, allowed their users to upload profile figures with the colours of the French flag (blue, white and red) with the motto "*Je suis Paris*".

News reports about these attacks encouraged a return to other analyses and parallel stories. In this sense, the BBC endorsed allusions to other attacks around the world. Issues on (in)security gained notoriety, especially those concerning refugees increasing arrivals in Europe. The BBC also explored the (in)security increase and the (un)safety feeling in several European countries regarding military strategy changes towards the Islamic State. However, although it is important to analyse these video reports, in this article our focus lies in textual and photographic analysis.

The first source we analyse was released on November 14, 2015 and written by Frank Gardner, a BBC security correspondent since 2002 and a Saudi Arabian shooter victim in 2004<sup>22</sup>. The news report is entitled: "*Paris attacks: Islamic State militants change tactics*". This title implies that the Islamic State started to promote attacks beyond the Middle East. Gardner (2015) says: "*But militants are well aware of their transnational appeal to jihadist violence in Europe and elsewhere*". The word "appeal" seeks to disqualify Islamic State's action, since it refers to a last resort that seeks to draw attention when attacking Europe or other places outside the region of Islamic State's direct influence.

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<sup>22</sup> Frank Gardner was shot six times in June 2004 while filming an *al-Qaeda* militant's house in Riyadh.

In this sense, the actions that took place outside the usual territory are treated in the news report as a result of air strikes in the region dominated by the group. However, the air strikes are considered victorious as they sought to eliminate Islamic State leaders. Also, the news report highlights new actions outside the Islamic State centre of gravity, that is, in Iraq and Syria. Thus, as the news report continues, we observe the presentation of a background to explain actions such as the attacks in the Middle East that took place around November, 2015 – mainly the emblematic Turkey-Syria border issue, since this region has gained relevance as it is the space where jihadists coming from Europe cross to join the Islamic State.

The news report we are analysing shows three figures; however, only two of them address the Paris attacks. Figure 7 has the following caption: “*Security has been stepped up across France in the wake of the attacks*”. It is a figure that associates the heavily armed military personnel at an airport with the process of entering the country. Hence, there is a clear reference to conflicts over the refugee influx. Figure 8 is captioned as follows: “*Across France and beyond, tributes are being paid the victims of the attacks*”. It also shows two young men graffiti on one wall: “*Pray for Paris*”. This figure was extensively shared through the social media and became widely known.

**Figure 7** – Gardner (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.

**Figure 8** – Gardner (2015)



Source: Associated Press.

The next news report examined was also released on November 14. It has the following title: “*Paris attacks: A new terrorism and fear stalks a city*”. At the beginning, there is an allusion to the attacks on Charlie Hebdo, on January 2015; hence, it establishes a clear parallel with what happened on the streets of Paris in 2015. The author of this article also notes that the attacks have reached Europe through Paris, a city where there would be no such ferocity. In such a way, we can perceive that the author considers these events normal only when they happen in the Middle East.

According to Schofield (2015), Paris attacks point to a new type of terrorism characterized by a massive, mortal belief loop. The author also stresses that the French society (possibly) would react sympathetically to police armament for those who are not on duty. At the same time, the author points out that the French society also claimed for gun ownership, as they felt unsafe and afraid. According to Schofield, leaving the French population under fear, armed and divided was the central goal of Islamic State militants.

This news report also has two figures (Figures 9 and 10). In the first one, we can observe a restaurant that was attacked. In front of the restaurant there are flowers which symbolize the solidarity of the French people. In the second figure, we see armed soldiers on the streets of Paris, more precisely in front of Notre Dame Cathedral – a Christian church and famous Parisian tourist location. In this sense, it is possible to notice a message of protection together with a Christian symbol.



**Figure 9** – Schofield (2015)



Source: Press Association.

**Figure 10** – Peter (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.

It is also possible to consider the angles and the framings of this journalistic material. In Figure 9, the angle chosen is perpendicular, which allows us to see the restaurant's entrance, all the flowers left there, the restaurant's name and people walking by the street next to the restaurant. Such a scene shows a return to daily life normality in contrast to tragedy remnants (flowers, and the dirty ground, apparently, with sand). In the second image, all the grandeur of Notre Dame Cathedral is seen from a bottom-up positioning. This way, an armed military protects the base, in the right corner there is an agglomeration of people that has returned to everyday life at that tourist region.

The next news report we analyse was released on November 14, 2015. Like the previous reports we saw here, it points out the possibility of a new type of terrorism, since it is entitled: "*Paris attacks: A new type of terrorism?*". Peter (2015), who authored it, deals with possible reasons in that raid targeting Paris. As we already pointed out, there is the hypothesis that Paris attacks were a retaliation for the French-led air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. However, in this passage, Paris attacks are not described by the author as a means to assign the group a victory message. According to Peter (2015), the choice of civilian targets intended to kill randomly as many people as possible. In his analysis, Peter considers that in France this barbaric behaviour is completely unknown and unacceptable – unlike what happens in the Middle East, where it seems to be the natural way of political life.

In this news report we can see three figures. The first one is a map showing where the attacks took place. The second figure shows a police car and a caution tape and is captioned as follows: "*Police are on the highest alert as the hunt for possible accomplices continues*". In such a way, the message this passage shares is that the police is on the streets working to protect the citizens of Paris.

**Figure 11** – Peter (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.



The news report “*Paris attacks: Grief, anger and defiance on city streets*”, released on November 18, 2015, deals especially with the testimonies given by victims’ relatives and survivors. Burrridge’s (2015) news report has figures that reinforces the solidarity that has spread all over Paris. In Figure 12 caption we can read: “*The Bonne Biere was one of the venues targeted in Friday’s attacks*”. Although the location is different, the flowers left there share the same intentions and messages. We can also notice that in this figure there is a French citizen reading the honours given by many other people. At the same time, this person is, herself, honouring the victims.

**Figure 12** – Burrridge (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.

The same happens with Figure 13, which caption says: “*Flowers and tributes have been left outside Le Carillon bar in Paris*”. The photo focuses on a rose, a symbol of love, and all the other flowers surrounding it occupy half the figure and reinforce, according to our opinion, the message of love and solidarity within French society. Finally, in the last photograph, Figure 14 is captioned as “*The attacks have left the people of Paris in shock*”, the same reference remains, but it is displayed slightly differently because besides several flowers we can see a figure of two women, who were possibly victims of the attacks. This message of empathy is moving as it clearly shows the faces of two young victims.

**Figure 13** – Burrige (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.

**Figure 14** – Burrige (2015)



Source: Agence France-Presse.

### **The differences and similarities between the BBC and Dabiq Magazine: the logic of discursive strategy**

If we consider the content produced by the BBC, we can observe that there is a discursive (re)production referring to the idea of “salvation” performed routinely by Europe and the United States in countries/regions regarded as villains/ enemies. In such a way, western media have sought to create patterns in the social imaginary anchored in Western

ethical and moral values. This way, stereotypes that connote/denote ideas about “villains/enemies” emerged and were established. In this discursive framework, there is also an exhaustive pathological discursive (re)production about the Islamic State and its terrorism practices. In turn, this (re)production reaches other groups that carry out terrorist practices (even if they have different dynamics, strategies and goals) and the Middle East, its strategies and mechanisms of content diffusion.

Through daily news content the BBC conveys ideas/values relied on the logic of “security”, “solidarity” and “normality” as a way of combating Islamic State ideas (those of terror and terrorism). In such a way, the BBC content (news reports, images and videos) is based on so-called universal values (rules). However, even if the BBC (re)produces such discourses, it also (re)produces, in its content, feelings of insecurity, unsafety and chaos.

Regularly, discourses constructed by the BBC evoke images associated with ideas of progress (telos). As Foucault (1997) would say, a discourse inspired by Darwinian evolutionary views is constructed under Western history. For the French philosopher, we must destabilize the histories that human sciences universalized in modernity. In this sense, to break with the evolutionist, teleological discourses, is to indicate the *discontinuum*, i.e., there is no linear political, social, and economic history.

However, unlike the BBC, the Islamic State, via Dabiq Magazine, asserts that the West “forgets” several genocides perpetrated by European and American actors over the Middle East. These actors, Dabiq argues, were directly and indirectly authorized at various historical moments. Dabiq also evokes images of wars of independence carried out by Middle Eastern countries, and, by doing that, tries to show that stories and images about humanitarian operations carried out by the West over the Middle East under the motto of “peace”, “progress” and “democracy” routinely tries to erase memories of the atrocities perpetrated in the past and still repeated on a daily basis.

Hence, Dabiq Magazine (re)produces feelings of insecurity, unsafety, despair and chaos as much as the BBC. In this sense, regarding their respective political perspectives, both seek to rescue “normality”, “security” and “solidarity”. These “normalities” (re)produced by the Islamic State through Dabiq Magazine are supported through the discourses they undertake. Therefore, regimes of knowledge, truth and power produced by Dabiq aim to destabilize the international imaginary about the Middle East. Documents and images about Arabs and Muslims reiterate an essentializing process promoted by the West through multiple processes of coloniality which continue to exert several forms of violence over the population of Middle Eastern countries.

As we already mentioned, all figures used by Dabiq Magazine have been taken from Global News Agencies and then tampered with according to the Islamic State’s interests. The colours used in the images, the captions, the angles chosen, the photographic compositions generally selected by journalists from both media (the BBC and Dabiq) seek not only to determine how the reader is going to contemplate the content but also try to disseminate their world understandings (even if they do not always succeed).

According to Barthes (2015), journalistic photographs are messages with denotative and connotative senses, in which the obvious and obtuse become paradoxical. However, although they are paradoxical, these photographs communicate with a public that is no longer passive. In this sense, Barthes (2015) says that to produce media content is to study human groups, to define their aims, attitudes, and to connect their behaviour with the society to which they belong. Therefore, to understand a photographic message (discourse) is to carry out sociological and even philosophical analysis.

When we revisit Foucault (1997, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) and his reflections on discursive practices, we may infer that, both Dabiq and the BBC's statements present paradoxically antagonistic and analogous regimes of knowledge, truth and power, since both seek to convince international public opinion through the appreciation of an (in)security culture. (WELDES et al, 1999). However, we should also notice that the BBC is under the protection of States and International Institutions that legitimize and normalize certain practices of violence, while suppressing practices similarly violent (like those carried out by the Islamic State). While the former are protected, the latter must be suppressed and leave space only for accepted rules/laws.

In all cases studied here, we observed that discourses can (re)produce and spread several forms of violence and terrorism(s), especially symbolic violence. Therefore, according to a Foucauldian strategy, we sought to establish connections between disparate media, that is, Dabiq Magazine and the BBC. In other words, instead of trying to homogenise the contradictory, we tried to look for connections within the heterogeneous. Moreover, all the content produced by both online media framed terrorists and terrorisms according to a misogynistic and heteronormative logic. Not only they produced considerations on racial, ethnic, gender and class issues, these discourses evoked and legitimized images that reinforce misogyny and naturalize heteronormativity. Therefore, according to Puar (2017), these issues do not create tensions involving gender and terrorism(s).

## Conclusions

This study analysed online media discourses produced by Dabiq Magazine and the BBC on the 2015 Paris attacks. We did so from a comparative, Foucauldian perspective and, as a result, we destabilized these constructions. As already mentioned in this article, verbal and non-verbal media discourses show ambiguities through language games. In both Dabiq and the BBC, we observed a transmission of ideas and values through logics of "security", "solidarity" and "Return to normality". At the same time, both media constructed a sense of insecurity, unsafety, tragedies and despair, though. In this sense, these language games were played through the nexus identity/difference.

After the analysis, we observed that both the Dabiq (Islamic State) and the BBC, within their respective perspectives, produced regimes of knowledge, truth and power that are antagonistic and at the same time alike, as they seek to co-opt public opinion. Also,

since all the photographs used by these agencies came from Global News Agencies, the difference in their use was due to compositions and distortions suffered while constructed and disseminated. We also noticed that while the BBC is able to legitimize and normalize certain process of violence and terrorism due to Western support provided by States and International Institutions, the same does not happen with Dabiq Magazine.

Although the West, through the BBC, tried to suppress discursive practices about the Islamic State produced by Dabiq Magazine, it did not stop producing discourses in order to normalize certain practices of violence, while still neglecting practices similarly violent (those produced by the Islamic State). Also, heteronormative discourses observed in framing terror and terrorist actions/practices in both media were considered a way of disciplining, monitoring and controlling audiences, since it happens through violence naturalization and normalization. This way, when we consider issues on gender, we notice that they remain being silenced.

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