Framing the Ebola Outbreak: Systemic Influences on News Coverage

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FRAMING THE EBOLA OUTBREAK: SYSTEMIC INFLUENCES ON NEWS COVERAGE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by

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For Chimzzy: Although still in utero, you remain the real MVP.
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ABSTRACT

Using a media systems comparative framework, I investigated the relationship between systemic characteristics and news coverage of international events. Leveraging a highly salient event: the Ebola outbreak, I extended the Hallin and Mancini Model to non-western democracies. This dissertation explored differences in media coverage of Ebola across media systems. Findings revealed that characteristics of media systems inform how news about an event is framed by reporters. By investigating news influences, this dissertation broadly sheds light on the latent influences of politics and culture on what audiences receive as news.

My results showed that liberal media systems such as those found in the U.S. or the U.K. were more likely to adopt advocacy and partisanship in coverage. I also found that the liberal media systems were more likely to use health expert sources in coverage of health issues rather than elite political sources. I found no difference in the overall type of frame used. Both systems used more of episodic frames than thematic frames.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

On March 25, 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported an outbreak of the Ebola Hemorrhagic fever in four southeastern districts of Guinea, a country in West Africa. At the time of the announcement, there were 86 suspected cases and the case fatality ratio was 68.5 percent (CDC, 2014). The outbreak proved it had the capacity to cross borders by spreading to two other West African countries, namely Sierra Leone and Liberia, with a few cases reported in Nigeria, Senegal and Mali (CDC, 2014). Months later, the outbreak jumped international borders, showing up in patients in the United States and Europe. This outbreak would eventually be called the deadliest in history, infecting over 24,794 people and killing more than 8,763 people (CDC, 2015).

Although the international media gave the outbreak little coverage initially, the outbreak garnered attention when several health experts and international organizations expressed fear that the epidemic might become a global health issue. In fact, following the first travel-associated case of Ebola disease in the United States in a Liberian-American, news regarding the outbreak dominated the U.S. media raising public concern and interest in the epidemic. Prior to the first U.S. case, the WHO Director-General, Margaret Chan on August 8, 2014 declared the West Africa outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) under the 2005 International Health Regulations (Kennedy, 2014). Immediately, governments all over the world set in motion policies varying from strict border control to limited air travel and refusal of non-citizen entry (Paul, 2015). While the WHO emphasized the risk of travel restrictions and argued that the epidemic had not escalated to warrant such
stringent measures, public opinion differed on how best to handle the outbreak and other attendant policy issues. These divergent policy approaches may be in part attributed to differences in media coverage of the epidemic.

Studies have shown that the public depend on the mass media for political information, (Graber, 2002; McCombs and Reynolds, 2009; Terkildsen and Schnell, 1997). This dependence on mediated information suggests that the media has great potential to influence public opinion on policy (Golan, 2006; Gadarian and Albertson, 2014; McCombs, 2000). Scholars have investigated the effects of exposure to media content on people (see Comstock, Chaffee, and Katzman, 1978; Klapper, 1960; McLeod, Atkin, and Chaffee, 1972; Wertham, 1954). In fact, the early 1970s saw extensive research on the social effects of mass media. This research trend has continued to date. Many mass communication theories have evolved from the study on effect. For example, the uses and gratification theory evolved from effect studies and it examines how people use the media and the gratification they get from it (see Palmgreen, 1984; Rosengren, 1974). Another off shoot of effect studies is the cultivation theory, which investigates how media affect our perception of the real world (see DeFleur and DeFleur, 1967 Gerbner et al., 1968; Siegel, 1958). Agenda setting and framing, which I discuss extensively in this dissertation, also developed from effects studies and was first studied in McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theories are primarily concerned with how news affects policy.

The above studies, establish that media content does have effects on behavior and world perception. Content is however influenced by characteristics of individual media systems. For example, in an authoritarian media system, means of mass communication are controlled by the government and journalists are obligated to be loyal and act as propagandists for the
government (Sierbert et al., 1956). These governmental stronghold invariably determines news. Similarly, Hallin and Mancini (2004), also agree that what we conceive as news, is often the result of the intricate relationship between political systems and media systems. For instance, a media system that is characterized by less government subsidy will be more market oriented and therefore more likely to set the agenda for political communication. While a system that depends on subsidy from government will most likely pander to the demands of the ruling political parties. Furthermore, Entman and Paletz (1981) argue that power holders manipulate news because journalists rely on an elite group of sources for information. This reliance on elite sources subject news to the manipulations of nonjournalists. A consequence of this is that journalists inadvertently present biased information to the public.

Systemic influences on news content are particularly important when discussing salient and uncertain international health issues like the Ebola outbreak. The nature of the event itself vis a vis a mysterious outbreak can also elicit a cultural determinism of news framing. A culturally determined news narrative infuses news with a single self-perpetuating perspective (Kamalipour, 1997). The CDC called the outbreak the deadliest, because it eclipsed an earlier outbreak in 1976, the year the virus was discovered. Furthermore, the disease is also incurable and has a high fatality rate. These evidence-based attributes of the outbreak make it salient in people’s minds, thereby creating a perfect environment for not only agenda-setting effects but also an environment that stimulates culturally determined news bias. A particular study showed that in most cases, public concern and media coverage are strongly correlated with each other while neither of the two is strongly correlated to technical seriousness (Schinirring, 2008). Extant literature suggests that agenda setting has the most influence when there is high need
for orientation (Matthes, 2006, 2008; McCombs, 2005). A high need for orientation arises when an issue has high relevance and high uncertainty to the public; both characteristics describe the Ebola outbreak.

Studying the Ebola outbreak in a comparative context is significant because it exposes systemic biases and loopholes that affect global response to PHEIC. A study like this is particularly important because it reveals how a combination of societal forces such as culture, politics, economy etc. shape public discourse about an issue. Furthermore, the overall tone and frame employed in news coverage determine attitudes toward government policies regarding the event. For example, in an earlier study I investigated emerging frames in Ebola coverage during the 21 days following the first American diagnosed with the disease (Duru, 2013). I found that the focus of coverage was on what political actors were doing to curb the spread (societal efficacy), and little coverage on what individuals might do to prevent infection (individual efficacy). By failing to cover such individual-level efficacy, the media provokes public anxieties which in turn, affect policy attitudes (Gadarian and Albertson, 2014).

This initial study used a smaller timeframe and did not compare coverage systemically. Therefore, it does not capture the core of this dissertation, which is to examine how characteristics of media systems influence coverage. These things matter because they shed light on how news content is generated in different media systems. To remedy this, I investigate the outbreak on a broader level and through a comparative framework.

In this dissertation, I build on this study by first examining coverage of the Ebola epidemic over a longer period of time and second, by extending the scope to include additional frames and relevant attributes of coverage such as the use of expert opinions, and partisan
viewpoints, contrast narrative etc. Broadly, I argued that news media coverage of the Ebola epidemic matters. By studying media coverage of the recent Ebola outbreak, I examined the extent to which attributes of media systems influenced news framing in the context of a highly salient and uncertain international event. In so doing, my research brings clarity to the complex relationship between characteristics of media systems and news coverage of Public Health Emergencies of International Concern (PHEIC). I employed a mixed-method approach to the study because it gave me the flexibility to address a variety of research questions and hypotheses. More specifically, I use a comparative case study approach to provide in-depth qualitative insights into the types of frames used in coverage so as to both add nuance to my discussion of coverage and also to build an accurate coding instrument. Furthermore, I also employ a quantitative content analysis to allow me collect more data and test set hypotheses.

The empirical portion of this dissertation proceeds as follows: First I do a survey of literature, then I develop a framework for the study, before I set forth hypotheses. Second, I use an in-depth qualitative content analysis to identify the different types of frames used in two of the three media systems in the world as delineated by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Specifically, I examine the differences in coverage between the liberal media system (U.K. and USA) and the polarized pluralist media system (Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia). Third, using a quantitative content analysis, I identify the attributes that are most commonly occurring in news frames. Initial analyses suggest several attributes of coverage stand-out, including expert opinion and partisan slant. In the process I find that the use of partisan frames and advocacy in the coverage of the outbreak varied by media system type. The liberal media system which consisted of the U.S. and the U.K. in this study, were more likely to use partisan frames and advocacy in
coverage than the polarized pluralist media system. I also found that the liberal media systems were more likely to use health expert sources than the polarized pluralist media system. My dissertation adds to our understanding of systemic influences on international coverage of a PHEIC. This dissertation also sheds light on the structure of global health system, investigating how series of institutions, laws, and strategies integrate to shape news coverage, and the normative implications thereof.

What distinguishes this research from previous studies on framing and attribute agenda-setting is that very few studies (Beaudoin, 2007; Jung et al., 2012; Luther and Zhou, 2005) examine an international epidemic through the lens of an international media comparative framework. In fact, these scholars applied nation level comparison to their studies and I found no study that used a systemic level comparison such as I employed in this dissertation. Leveraging this unique case study: the Ebola epidemic, I uncovered the ways in which systemic differences affect news coverage which may in turn internationally affect policy. I expect that this line of inquiry will contribute to literature that highlight systemic influences on news framing of diseases of epidemic proportions. In other words, by comparing five media organizations in five countries, from two media systems, I shed light on different patterns of coverage unique to the media in each system and in so doing, explain the social, economic and cultural determinants of news coverage in the context of a global health crisis.

In the chapters that follow, I detail my arguments and present my theoretical framework. I lay out the extant literature on framing and attribute agenda setting in chapter 2. In chapter 3, I present my theoretical framework and variables of interest which I derive by synthesizing the media comparative models developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and
D’Angelo et al. (2013). In chapter 4, I discuss my method of data collection, my research methodology and design, case selections and rational, coding procedures, hypotheses and methods of data analysis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 contain the results of the qualitative textual analysis, qualitative content analysis and a discussion of key findings, implications and limitations of the dissertation.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Media Coverage of Health Issues

The news media is the primary source of health information and is the primary channel through which society gains awareness about health issues (Duhe and Cho, 2009). For example, Dolan et al. (2004) found that a significant number of patients indicated that they rely on news media more than other sources for general health information. Mainstream media are often the first sources from which people, including health experts, learn about advances in modern medicine. For instance, in a study investigating where people get information about avian flu, 80% of respondents revealed they got information regarding avian flu from the television (Nisbet, 2006 cited in Duhe and Cho, 2009). Consequently, individuals are able to make social-level risk judgments and informed decisions concerning their health from information which they gather from the media (Dudo, Dahlstrom and Brossard, 2007). News coverage has far reaching normative and empirical consequences, and this has prompted scholars to examine media coverage of health-related issues from diverse perspectives.

Major newspapers and network channels give global health emergencies priority (Armstrong, Carpenter, Hojnacki, 2006). Health emergencies such as Ebola virus, Zika virus, etc., dominate national news headlines in the Unites States and beyond. News organizations assign reporters to health beats and rely on them for updates on health issues (Otten, 1992). Celebrities and interest groups are not left out of this frenzy because they wield prevalent influence in public policy debates concerning health. For instance in 2012, a host of A-list celebrities from entertainment, fashion and music from around the world embarked on a global campaign to eliminate seven tropical diseases by the year 2020.
It is therefore safe to say that diseases spark public interests and capture people’s attention, including the attention of lawmakers, newsmakers and the general public because of its nature (Armstrong, Carpenter and Hojnacki, 2006). As a matter of fact, information leaked to elite media outlets reach a larger number of policymakers in Washington with a faster turnaround time than information sent through the formal channels (Otten, 1992). William Roper, who is a former CDC Chief, acknowledged that he leaks information to the media if he needs prompt response from Washington (Otten, 1992). Emphasizing the importance of the media in the dissemination of public health awareness, Otten quoted Roper thus “The CDC depends on people who fix our appropriations and make decisions about us knowing what we do. The media not only communicates to the general public but to the White House, Congress and people who lead public opinion” (Otten, 1992, p. 113). This is evidence of the power the media wield in informing people about health issues. Most importantly, what the media reports about epidemics and how the media reports an epidemic has the capacity to affect citizens as well as lawmakers.

Mass media is a unique tool that moves people to action especially when health is concerned. Scholastic evidence abound that illustrate the power the media has in shaping policy concerning health. For example, Netter (1992) argued that the mass media should not carry the burden of educating people about HIV/AIDS, nevertheless he found evidence that means of public communication provide a vital mechanism in the global fight against AIDS. In fact, numerous health policies have been enacted because certain medical issues emerged from the media agenda, triggering changes in policy (Longest, 2005). Discussing media coverage and
Health is important in this work because of the established link between media emphasis on issues and policymakers acceptance of the issue as important to warrant action.

Today, with the 24 hour news cycle and the speed at which global information is disseminated, there is an established link between media attention to an issue and policy response known in political media effect studies as the CNN effect (see Belknap, 2001; Gilboa, 2005; Livingston, 2011; Olsen, Carstensen and Hoyen, 2003; Robinson, 2005). The CNN effect, created by political scientists, captures the relationship between the power of the media and foreign policy. It illustrates the helplessness of policy makers to control the pace of foreign policy decisions. This is the direct result of the enormous influence of the media to demand instant responses from officials thereby directing and shaping the when and how of foreign policy (Strobel, 1996).

Work on the CNN effect has been widely documented not only in foreign policy response, (see Belknap, 2001; Gilboa, 2005; Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2005) but also during international crisis (see Olsen, Carstensen and Hoyen, 2003). For example, Robinson (2002), found evidence that the media was influential in the decision to use force during the Bosnian war. The thesis that the media were driving foreign policy was given legitimacy after lawmakers intervened in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo following a persistent media attention to the humanitarian sufferings in these regions (Robinson, 2005). Similarly, Olsen, Carstensen and Hoyen (2003), posit that the amount of emergency assistance rendered in a humanitarian crisis depends on the intensity of media coverage, especially when the situation occurs in countries with little or no strategic importance to the aid-giving countries.
The effect of news coverage on policy is not limited to foreign policy alone. It is evident in health policy too. As far back as in 1987, a journalist by name Walt Bogdanich wrote an award winning investigative piece on the rampant misdiagnoses of cervical cancer in women because of ill-equipped laboratory technicians. This story quickly galvanized congress to pass an amendments that prescribes a minimum standard of professional training to laboratory technicians (Otten, 1992). Drawing attention to the policy implications of news coverage of health, Colby and Cook (1991) affirm that news coverage of health problems affect mass audiences as well as policymakers. They established that a shift in news framing of HIV/AIDS led to policy prescriptions regarding the disease. They posit that before 1987, media coverage of HIV/AIDS was less about governmental intervention and more about public reassurance. This initial framing boosted morale at the individual level but was ineffective policy wise, resulting to a slow response to the disease. However, following a change in the tone and frame of coverage, public opinion shifted, and AIDS became a regular item on the policy agenda (Colby and Cook, 1991).

Additionally, Nelkin (1991) argued that public perception is vital in shaping individual and societal response to diseases. The media are a major source of public perception and Nelkin’s review of coverage of AIDS shows that though the print media exaggerated risks, they also provided the public awareness which was instrumental in shaping behavioral and policy outcomes. These studies taken together suggests that the media is powerful in galvanizing policy makers into action on a variety of issues. This is important for this dissertation because the intensity and tone of coverage could have an association to the level of assistance given to the Ebola affected nations and even policy involving local healthcare reforms.
Apart from studies investigating the effects of coverage on policy and on behavior, other studies have focused on identifying frames and examining the circumstances in which diseases get media attention. As scholars have often mentioned, the media play an agenda setting role by drawing attention to certain issues and also by framing the cause and solutions of these problems. Armstrong, Carpenter and Hojnacki (2006), in demonstrating the agenda-setting role of the media argued that the media bring certain diseases to the spotlight while keeping others hidden from the public eye. For example, a decision to give attention to a particular disease is determined by who the disease affects and how many people it kills. In fact, they conclude that less attention is given to diseased that affect black people than diseases that affect white people. When the media give less attention to a disease, they inadvertently reduce the policy response time frame. In other words, policy makers may not identify the disease as important enough to warrant a policy.

Furthermore, health coverage has also been shown to have inter-media agenda setting. Inter-media agenda setting refers to the influence of elite media agenda on lesser media organizations (Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). Investigating this phenomenon in news coverage of HIV/AIDS, Brodie et al. (2003) analyzed about 9,000 news stories from major print and broadcast sources in the U.S, which included four national newspapers, three regional papers, and three major network news programs. They found that while there had been a decline in news coverage, this reduction coincided with a new HIV/AIDS narrative in the society. In the past, the disease was cloaked in a “certain death” narrative, which over the years has evolved to a chronic but manageable disease frame. This change in narrative led to a decline of interest
in the disease by elite media. By removing it from the top shelf, elite press is attributed to have necessitated an overall decline in coverage.

Furthermore, Bardhan (2001) investigated transnational news coverage of HIV/AIDS and found that wire services play a key role in overall international framing of the disease. In his words, “mainstream transnational wire services are instrumental in bestowing and maintaining certain ideologically driven frames on AIDS–HIV representation at a global level” (p. 302). Through the study, they discovered a shift in international news framing of HIV/AIDS, from a “biomedical” narrative that was the focus of coverage in the 1980’s to a narrative driven by socioeconomic, public policy, and human-rights frames.

These studies suggest that through framing and agenda setting, the media can make an epidemic important enough to warrant a policy. It is therefore essential to investigate the implication of news coverage of epidemics on policy and behavioral outcomes. It is even better to examine epidemics cross nationally. Investigating trans-national news narratives regarding epidemics should be revived despite its complex nature (Bardhan, 2001). Issues of accountability, cultural tradition of news outlets, and the nature of today’s global news were barriers touted to have led to the abandonment of trans-national news studies (Bardhan, 2001). These barriers are no longer exist in the current news ecology. Avoiding transnational examination of news regarding important health epidemics led to a knowledge gap created by the over simplification of narratives derived from a single experience. The problem with this kind of narrative is the failure of global health programs and policies, established without comprehensive information. Studying frames and its attributes in news coverage of public health crisis using a comparative framework sheds light on the nuances of global response in
these situations. To this end, I discuss agenda setting and framing as concepts used to establish the overall importance of this study for policy.

**The Concept of Agenda Setting**

The amount of attention the media gives an issue has an effect on how the public perceive the issue. The public recognize issues as important if they receive ample media coverage (Baumgartner and Jones, 1995; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Although the news media does not deliberately set the agenda, the topics and the manner of presentation they choose have an inadvertent effect on the opinions of the audience (McCombs, 1997). Therefore, I apply the agenda-setting concept to this dissertation as a framework to facilitate discussions about elements of coverage and its effects thereof.

The agenda-setting blueprint was laid out by Walter Lippmann his seminal work *Public Opinion* (1922). He argued that the media is the window through which we view the world. According to Lippmann, the political world we have to deal with is beyond our reach, and we cannot experience this world directly, so we depend on the media to create a pseudo-impression of this world, so we can have pictures in our head (Lippmann, 1922). The media over the years, have become the arena where political elites grapple for the support of the public. Lippmann’s theory of the world outside and the pictures in our head evolved to become what we now know as media effects. Increasingly, political elites use the media to create meaning via agenda-setting and framing. Other scholars following Lippmann’s blueprint generated evidence of agenda setting and its effects (see McCombs and Shaw, 1973; McCombs and Weaver, 1973; McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Scheufele, 2000; Weaver, 2007).
Since the first study in 1972, agenda setting has evolved as a theory and has branched out into stages. The original study was the basic agenda setting. Basic agenda setting deals with the transfer of salience from the news media to the public (McCombs, 2005). Thus, by giving an issue special time and prominent space such as making it a lead story in broadcast media and a front page story in print, the media tells people what they should consider as important issues. In shaping public opinion, the first step the media takes is to transfer salience from an event or issue to the public (McCombs, 2005). McCombs and Shaw studied the agenda-setting influence of the mass media during the 1968 presidential election. They randomly selected 100 people from a list of registered voters in Chapel Hill, NC and tried to match what the voters understood as key issues in the campaign with the content of the media they consumed using interviews and content analysis. They found that patterns of coverage were almost perfectly correlated with issues participants presented as most important in the election cycle (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). This pioneer study introduced research in this area of media studies.

Following the initial study by McCombs and Shaw, agenda-setting research took off and has been studied across issues and nations using diverse methodology. It was Iyengar and Kinder (1987, 2010) who provided evidence for agenda-setting causation. In a series of classic experiments, they demonstrated the impact of news on perception of issue importance. By deciding how much an issue should be emphasized, de-emphasized or ignored, the media select what issues deserve consideration in the society. McCombs and Shaw (1993) argue that agenda setting has expanded beyond the initial purview, which looks at the relationship between media agenda and public agenda. Subsequent research in that area has moved beyond basic agenda setting to investigate conditions in which agenda setting effects take
place. The current media landscape has created limitations for basic agenda setting. In the past, people had limited choices for news and information, therefore, it was easy to capture the agenda-setting effects of the media. However, the proliferation of media outlets has created many options such that people select what information they expose themselves. The array of media choices have created a fragmented audience that was hitherto lacking. These array of news outlet have diverse agenda making it difficult to have homogenous media agenda.

The limitations outlined above has led to predictions of the demise of agenda setting. However, agenda-setting effect does not happen in a vacuum. There is a psychology to agenda setting which scholars have tagged as need for orientation (McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1980). The need for orientation as conceptualized by McCombs and Weaver (1973) provides an explanation for why some individuals actively seek information and are predisposed to agenda-setting effects, while others are not. Need for orientation embraces the concept of relevance and uncertainty, which can be high, low or moderate (Matthes, 2006; McCombs, 2005). According to Matthes, when an issue is of little concern to an individual and the person is certain about it, then the need for orientation is low. On the other hand, a moderate need for orientation arises when an issue is low in relevance and high in uncertainty. Consequently, high relevance and low uncertainty leads to a feeling of efficacy, resulting in a moderate need for orientation. Additionally, when an individual considers an issue of high relevance and high uncertainty, the individual experiences a high need for orientation, which results to a high agenda-setting impact of the news (Matthes, 2006; McCombs, 2005). This discussion on the agenda-setting psychology is pertinent to this study because of the nature of the case study. The outbreak has a high relevance because it is a health issue and people are
concerned. Also, it has high uncertainty because very little initially was known about the pathology of the disease. Thus, the Ebola disease is an embodiment of an issue that constitutes a high need for orientation.

Agenda-setting research has also evolved to explore the questions of who sets media agenda or the sources of media agenda (McCombs, 2005). This area of research investigates what role the media, elite and public play in shaping media agenda. A key question researchers ask is, “if the media sets public agenda, who sets media agenda” (McCombs, 2005, p. 548). There has been research focused on indexing, which argues that what we see as media agenda, is nothing but a reflection of elite debate about issues (Bennet, 1990; Bennet, 1994; Bennet, Lawrence, and Livingston, 2006). Proponents of indexing argue that the media agenda is heavily influenced by elite discussions about an issue. Similarly, inter-media agenda setting theory has also emerged in response to the question of who sets media agenda. Several scholars have investigated the idea that elite media organizations set the agenda for local media organizations (see Golan, 2006; Meraz, 2011; Sweetser, Golan, Wanta, 2008; Vliegenthart and Walgrave, 2006). Next I discuss attribute agenda setting. Beyond informing us about an issue, the attributes of the issue which the media emphasize tell us how to think about an issue. Thus, a discussion of extant literature on attribute agenda setting is important to the framework of this research.

**Attribute Agenda Setting**

When the media devote time and space to an issue, people perceive such issues as important. For example, the 1972 Chapel study illustrates the importance of media attention to issues and people’s subsequent perception about those issues. Similarly, issues consist of
characteristics, and when the media emphasize these attributes, they make them salient in the minds of the public such that they employ these attributes when they evaluate or make decisions about the issue. Therefore, attribute agenda setting is the connection between news coverage and public opinion. Because attribute agenda setting makes certain aspects of coverage salient, it provides an excellent underpinning for my examination of elements of coverage. I examine attributes of coverage and investigate how they are shaped by broader societal factors. The comparative framework that I use here enables me to figure out which of the attributes of coverage are commonly found in media systems.

Attribute agenda setting captures the link between agenda setting and public’s attitude towards political issues (Kim, Han, Choi and Kim, 2012). For each object discussed in the media, some attributes are highlighted while others are ignored or de-emphasized; the emphasized attributes of the issue become the factors that influence our understanding of the object (McCombs, 2005, p.4). It concerns the emphasis placed on certain attributes of an issue, and is based on the assumption that when certain qualities of an issue are emphasized and made prominent in news coverage, such issues become salient in people’s mind (Kim et al., 2012). So, by emphasizing attributes of a political candidate, such as his position on an issue or his professional background, such emphasis will affect the importance the public place on such characteristics, thus leading to evaluations of the candidate based on the attributes.

Consequently, the media does not just set overall agenda; they play a role in the selection of particular attributes of a candidate or an issue (attribute agenda-setting) from which the public shapes their opinions about the candidate or the issue. Although the media
does not necessarily impose an opinion on voters, by emphasizing attributes, they influence how voters perceive political candidates (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey, 1997).

Furthermore, research on attribute agenda-setting explores a limitation of the basic agenda-setting which is the relationship between frequency and effect on public opinion (Hobbs, 2001). At the basic level, agenda-setting research proved the existence of similarities between media agenda and public agenda. However, it does not show how agenda-setting affects attitudes. At the second-level, agenda setting explores how attribute salience affect attitudes, beliefs and behavior (Hobbs, 2001). By laying emphasis on certain attributes of an object, we pay closer attention to those attributes, which in turn, informs the details of “the pictures in our heads and of subsequent attitudes and opinions grounded in those pictures” (McCombs, 2000, p. 14). In other words, attribute agenda setting influences our attitude about issues.

Studies on attribute agenda-setting have found that by emphasizing certain attributes, the media shapes public opinion (see McCombs, 2005). Weaver (1981) in the study of the 1976 presidential election found a positive relationship between the attributes of Ford and Carter accentuated by the Chicago Tribune and those attributes emphasized by the Illinois voters. Similarly, Golan (2007) also found support for his hypothesis that certain attributes made salient in political ads, will be positively related to the salience of issues in public opinion. The media plays an important role in how much citizens are informed, and this is important because of the established correlation between levels of knowledge and political participation (McLeod, Scheufele and Moy, 1999).
The impacts of the media on what citizens think about issues has been widely documented by scholars (see Golan and Wanta, 2001; Wanta, Golan and Lee, 2004; Kim, Scheufele, and Shanahan, 2002; Kiousis, 2005; Kim et al., 2012). While basic agenda-setting transfers the salience of an object and have been used to measure what issues and which candidates are trending in media messages, attribute agenda-setting involves the transfer of the salience of substantive attributes such as the description of candidates personality, and their stand on issues; and affective attributes, which explores the area of tone such as negative, positive an neutrality of the attributes emphasized (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey, 1997).

Numerous studies on attribute agenda-setting has shown the link between attributes of an issue made salient in the media and implications on individuals evaluation of issues, political attitudes and behavior (see Balmas and Scheafer, 2010; Kim et al.,2012). Some other studies have looked at agenda-setting in local, national and international media and issues. Others have examined attribute agenda-setting in the context of wars, diseases and elections. Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) examined the attribute agenda setting concept in a local context. They explored how the media covered a local issue; particularly looking at how the attributes of the issue made salience by the news coverage influenced the importance of the attributes among readers. Using an opinion research and a content analysis of the local newspaper, they found that by covering certain attributes prominently, the media increases the salience of these attributes among readers. This finding provides support for the effects of attribute agenda setting on readers’ evaluation of issues (Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan, 2002).
Studies have also investigated patterns of attribute agenda-setting at the international level. Attribute agenda-setting has been studied in various nations with diverse media and political systems. Kim et al. (2012) examined attributes of television news coverage of a controversial government’s regulation in South Korea, i.e., a proposal to relocate the nation’s administrative capital. Specifically, Kim and her colleagues’ content analyzed television news coverage to determine attributes of the issue given prominence by the media. To ascertain the effect of such coverage on the citizens, they used an opinion survey to assess the importance people place on these attributes when they evaluate an issue. As expected, their findings provided evidence that the degree of emphasis placed on attributes of an issue influences the salience of same attributes in the mind of audiences. Additionally, they found that heavy viewers of news easily recalled certain attributes more than light viewers. They also found evidence that attribute agenda-setting can also prime individuals to use certain pieces of information in decision-making about issues. Therefore, the study suggests that a consequence of attribute agenda-setting is priming, and it plays an important role in shaping “public opinion and consensus building about controversial issues” (Kim et al., 2012 p. 54).

Moving away from traditional methods of agenda-setting research, Rill and Davis (2008), investigated attribute agenda-setting in the context of a war. They designed an experiment to test attribute agenda-setting using the Israeli-Hezbollah war in Lebanon. Their experiment demonstrated a significant effect for how the media framed Israel and Hezbollah in the war in Lebanon and how participants framed the two countries. According to Rill and Davis, “participants associated different ideas, actions, and descriptors with Israel and Hezbollah based on the different frames that the participants consumed” (p.618). So, participants who
read negative frames about Hezbollah described the country as aggressors and terrorists, while those who read positive frames about Israel described Israel as a “victim of Hezbollah rocket strikes” (p. 613). In contrast, participants felt Israel was destroying Lebanon if they read a negative frame about Israel, while those who were exposed to positive frames about Hezbollah were more likely to describe it in terms of its “humanitarian and monetary aid to victims of the conflict” (p. 612).

In a recent study, Muddiman, Stroud, McCombs (2014) investigated the link between attribute agenda-setting and public opinion about Iraq in a fragmented media environment. Specifically, they examined the link between exposures to partisan media content on public opinion about Iraq, using content analysis and survey method. They found evidence of partisan leaning in the coverage of Iraq with 64% of CNN and MSNBC favoring the Democratic Party argument about Iraq and Fox News significantly favoring the Republican Party rhetoric. Furthermore, they found that the attributes of an issue highlighted in the particular media individuals watch predict opinion rather than attributes highlighted in the media in general.

Likewise, in an earlier study, McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) investigated attribute agenda setting during the 1995 Spanish regional and municipal elections, focusing on the images of the candidates presented in the media and the images the voters in the capital city of Navarra had of the candidates in the election. The researchers examined the images of the candidates put forward by the representing political parties, they further organized the candidates’ images according to the substantive and affective dimension of attribute agenda-setting. The substantive dimension was made up of three categories (candidates ideology and position on issues, qualifications and experiences and their
characteristics and personality), while the affective dimension was made up of positive, negative and neutral descriptions of the candidates. Finally, the researchers conducted a content analysis of two local daily newspapers, the major regional news program and a Spanish national television, political advertising in the newspaper and television. Their analysis yielded results that showed significant attribute-agenda setting effects.

In sum, attribute agenda setting studies have explored elements of issues and candidates (Hester and Gibson, 2003; Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan, 2002; Kiousis, Bantimaroudis and Ban, 1999; McCombs et al., 1997). It has also been studied in an international context (Kim et al., 2012; Rill and Davis, 2008; McCombs et al., 1997; Muddiman, Stroud and McCombs, 2014). Methodologically, most agenda-setting research have used a combination of content analysis and survey (see McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Muddiman, Stroud and McCombs, 2014). Some researchers have departed from this methodological strategy, designing experiments to further explore the agenda-setting phenomenon (see Iyengar and Kinder, 1988; Kiousis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban, 1999; Rill and Davis, 2008). Local and international communications scholars are continuously investigating the relationship between the news media and public evaluations of issues and candidates especially in a fragmented media environment and with technological evolution changing the public sphere. This dissertation follows this trend, adopting qualitative content analysis, quantitative content analysis to explore the attributes of the Ebola coverage emphasized by the international media and its implication on citizens’ evaluations of policy issues. Framing is another concept that I use in this dissertation, and I discuss it next to provide a more holistic representation of my framework.
News Framing

Framing theory is premised on the fact that an issue can be viewed from various perspectives. An issue can have more than one value and consideration depending on how it is presented (Chong and Druckman, 2007). To understand framing as used in communication studies, Entman (1993) in his seminal work asserts that frames “involve selection and salience” (p. 52). According to him, “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation for the item prescribed” (p. 52). Framing makes use of the applicability model of information processing. The applicability model, “refers to the outcome of a message that suggests a connection between two concepts such that, after exposure to the message, audiences accept that they are connected” (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007, p. 15). It therefore has a selective function, where certain issue attributes, judgments, and decisions are suggested as important in a frame.

Journalists frame events by selecting and highlighting some features of the event, while omitting others, thereby forming clusters of themes. News frames are usually a reflection of a journalist’s values and ideologies and, to an extent, economic forces (Shen, 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that journalists do not frame stories in a vacuum. Media frames are based on the dictates of the social system within which they operate. Media framing has been conceptualized in many ways. The study of frames evolved from psychological and sociological approaches. The psychological approach investigates framing in the context of cognitive structures, which reflects “changes in judgment engendered by alterations to the definition of judgment or choice problems”. It involves the examination of cognitive and behavioral
influences on media content. While the sociological perspective approach framing as the use of “storylines symbols, stereotypes in media representations” that are used in communication (Iyengar and Simon, 1993 p. 369). Sociological approach to framing explores the societal factors that influence media content. Framing gives political leaders and journalists enormous power to shape public opinion (Perloff, 2014).

There are other definitions of framing that are important for a rounded understanding of framing. For example, Gamson and Modigliani (1987) defined media frame as a “central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events ...suggesting what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (p.144). In other words, frames provide a basis in which we create meaning out of information. Scheufele (1999) asserts that frames can be conceptualized as media frames and individual frames. Media frames are patterns journalists use to gather, organize and present information to the public. According to him, media frames are ‘working routines for journalists that allow the journalists to quickly identify and classify information and to package it efficiently for their audiences” (p. 106). Therefore, how an issue is presented in the media “systematically affects how recipients of the news come to understand events” (p. 107). Individual frames on the other hand, are the patterns that audiences use to comprehend news. In comprehending news, individuals use existing clusters of schemas to process information. According to Entman (1993), “individual frames are clusters of ideas that guide individual’s processing of information” (p. 53). Similarly, McLeod et al.(1987) defined an individual frame as a “cognitive device that operates as non-hierarchical categories that serve as forms of major headings into which any future content can be filed”(p. 10).
Overall, frames guide how individuals process alternatives and by evoking existing perspectives and viewpoints, frames direct how people define problems.

Shen (2004) argues that framing effects occur by emphasizing a particular fragment of a broader issue, causing the audience to focus on the part thereby constructing opinion based on the fragment. Similarly, Price and Tewksbury (1997) assert that news framing activate “some ideas, feelings and values rather than others” and “can encourage particular trains of thought about political phenomena and lead audiences to arrive at more or less predictable conclusions” (p. 483). Thus, frames are argued to prime ideas in the mind of the reader which can be readily accessed when processing information. Shen (2004), also argues that because people do not have standardized attitudes on political issues, they depend on the media to form opinions. They however, constantly change sides on issues depending on how an issue is framed in the news. Shen further asserts that framing will have an effect depending on the interactions between individual frames and media frames. Thus, “a framing effect is more likely to occur when the media frames interact with the viewer’s existing cognitive elements, rendering related concepts more salient and more cognitively accessible than others” (Shen, 2004 p. 402). Framing effects occur when frames are consistent with existing beliefs and values (Boyles et al., 2006; Brewer, 2002; Shen, 2004; Shen and Edward, 2005).

Various studies on framing suggests that framing influence beliefs. For instance, Druckman (2001), argues that public opinion about an issue depends on what frames elites use when they talk about the issue. In his study, Druckman found that when the Ku Klux Klan’ permission to conduct a rally on a campus was framed as a free speech issue, participants were more tolerant of the rally. However, when the same issue was framed as a public safety issue,
participant became less tolerant of the rally. Similarly, Nelson and Oxley (1999), found that when a land development controversy in Florida was framed as an economic issue, participants held more positive attitude towards it than when it was framed as an environmental issue. In another study, Iyengar and Kinder (1991), also found evidence of framing effect when they investigated frames and poverty. Building on these studies on effects of frames on attitudes, this dissertation investigates differences in frames, and differences in the attributes of frames in the news coverage of the Ebola outbreak across media systems. By investigating this, I shed light on how one singular event is framed differently as a result of system characteristics.

Agenda setting and framing are key theories in this study because of their studied effect on people. Via frames, the media aims to persuade individuals to pay more attention to a particular aspect of an issue. According to Entman (2005), framing is always present in any media message because it is an unconscious process and journalists do not decide when and how to frame. Also, framing has implications for outcomes. Price et al. (1997) noted “by activating some ideas, feelings and values rather than others, then the news can encourage particular trains of thought about political phenomena and lead audience members to arrive at more or less predictable conclusion” (p. 483). Attribute agenda setting on the other hand, emphasizes certain attributes of an issue thereby priming consideration based on these characteristics. Thus, frames are overarching themes while attributes are particular characteristics of these themes. Using both concepts, I examine how the media framed coverage and elements of the frames they emphasized. Both theories provide a practical context within which to explore the impact of systemic forces on news coverage of Ebola and its overall influence on policy. This combination of theories is unique to this dissertation.
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical and philosophical framework underpinning this study is social constructionism. As an epistemological stance, constructionism suggests that truth does not exist, however, meaning is created through human experiences. What we understand as knowledge is not objective but it is socially constructed based on the interaction between human beings and the world in which they exist (Crotty, 2004). Furthermore, media messages are crafted to reflect the realities of the journalists and the producers (Wick, 2005). Van Gorp (2007) argues that the constructivist approach to frame building is interactive in nature such that frames influence journalists as much as journalists use frames. In his words, “There is an interaction between the journalist’s (un)conscious selection of a frame- out of the cultural stock of frames- as the result of the individual belief system, and the influence of additional factors inside and outside the media organizations”(p.67). In other words, what we perceive as news from the media is heavily influenced by combined forces inherent in society.

I use constructionism as a philosophy in this research to suggest that news is not politically, economically or ideologically neutral. It is a socially constructed product and regardless of journalists’ best intentions, news is not objectively created, nor is it politically, economically, or ideologically neutral. Mass media influence the construction of social reality by framing images of reality in a predictable and patterned way (McQuail, 1994). Consequently, I argue in this dissertation that the elements and frames used in the coverage of the Ebola outbreak is a reflection of the realities in different media systems. These realities and their characteristics interact with individual beliefs to affect news coverage. The principal assumption
is that the political and media structures of a country influence how journalists frame news and the attributes thereof.

Therefore, I develop a theoretical framework for this dissertation using framing, attribute agenda setting and models of international media comparative studies. Using this framework, I focus on how systemic differences shape the coverage of the Ebola outbreak.

**Media Comparative Studies**

This dissertation is a media system comparative analysis of news coverage of the Ebola outbreak. I take a systemic comparative approach in this dissertation because it exposes the social, political and cultural effects of systems of news coverage by revealing latent aspects of coverage that may be otherwise hidden. A one nation approach to the study of Ebola might reveal an oversimplification of frames thus concealing less obvious but important aspects of coverage (Bardhan, 2001). Using a one nation approach in the study of epidemics embraces ethnocentric universalism ideals such that the experiences of one nation is projected on others. By using a comparative approach I shed light on other but interesting aspects of coverage and reveal how these elements come together to affect policy. This approach is unique and complex, so a detailed historical and conceptual background is pertinent for better understanding of the framework.

Comparing news coverage of events of global significance has been ongoing in the field of mass communication. Comparative research is any study that compares two or more nations regarding a common event (Edelstein. 1982, p. 14). It is when an event is compared across defined systems, which can be historical or geographical (Blumler, McLeod, and Rosengarten, 1992). Esser and Hanitzsch (2012), acknowledge that a comparative study should compare a
minimum of two macro-level cases, such as systems, cultures and markets. Similarly, Esser (2013) asserts that “comparative research differs from non-comparative work, in that it attempts to reach conclusions beyond single cases and explains differences and similarities between objects of analysis against the backdrop of their contextual conditions” (p. 116). I introduce these scholars here, to help explain the critical characteristics of a study that qualifies it as comparative and to lay the groundwork for a better understanding of the framework used in this dissertation.

The study of comparative media systems occupy an important place in the history of mass communication research. It has come a long way and has evolved to become an advanced methodological approach to the study of communication. It is no longer at its infancy like Blumler and Gurevitch (1975) classified it. It has evolved theoretically, methodologically and culturally. A clear indication of the maturation of this approach to communication research is in the number of countries, the number of books and articles published and the sophisticated research designs that have been used to compare communication across nation (Esser, 2013). In outlining the growth and maturation of comparative communication, Esser posits that in the past, comparative research merely presented country wide perspectives on an issue, allowing readers to draw conclusions. Kohn (1989), classifies this type of research as the “nation as object” approach to cross-national comparison whereby the researcher just seeks to understand particular countries for their own sake, or as an avenue to explore similarities and distinctions. Comparative research has evolved beyond the nation as object, this growth is marked by the improvement in methodological approach.
An example of the improvement in the area is seen in Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, Weaver, Barkin and Wilhoit (1991). They used the two-nation comparison approach to explore agenda control and formation. The researchers investigated the dynamics of the interaction between media and elite forces in the formation and control of agenda. Semetko and his colleagues, compared the 1983 British general election and the 1984 America presidential election. By using the comparative approach they gathered insight into the role cultural factors play in how political agenda is formed. The authors found that professional ideological differences of the British and America press were major determinants of how agenda is formed in the two countries. Other scholars have also conducted studies using two-country comparison (see Benson, 2005; Stromback and Dimitrova, 2006; Pfetsch, 2001). The argument that a pairwise comparisons have limited generalizability, led to medium and large N studies in the field (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012).

Aside from the theoretical and methodological advancement of comparative research, over the years, comparative research has also evolved in cultural contexts. At the initial stage of comparative studies, the focus was on what Esser and Hanitzsch (2012) labeled The U.S. and the rest of the world. This era saw a concentration on U.S. centric approach and “the juxtaposition of the modern West and traditional East” which was informed by the rivalry between two ideological blocks (p. 8). This paradigm dominated media research in the 1950’s and 1960’s exemplified by the work of Sierbert, Peterson, Schramm (1956).

The second period was shaped by the political debate in UNESCO over media representations of the developing world in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Scholars like Schramm (1964) noted the imbalanced flow of news among nations. They argued that much
attention is given to more developed nations and less attention given to the less-developed countries thereby ignoring or distorting important realities. These UNESCO debates fueled a movement for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Thus, international communication research in this era was dominated by the news flow inequalities between the global north and south (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 9). During the 1980’s, international communication research shifted its focus from news flow imbalances to reflect the political changes of the time, exemplified by the integration within the European Union (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 9). This era which has been labelled as The West and the West by scholars marked the methodological advancement of comparative research. Presently, international communication research is gradually moving towards the west and the global paradigm, and scholars are beginning to compare and evaluate media systems across the world. This era of the west and the global embraces comparative research that has become more collaborative, involving scholars from all over the globe. It highlights the advent of newer technologies that has encouraged a truly global community. However, very little research in this area involve the African continent (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 9). This gap in comparative studies is why this dissertation is significant in the comparative research discipline.

It is essential to understand why comparative analysis is still key in mass communication studies especially in a globalized media environment shaped by the forces of newer technology. Esser and Hanitzsch (2012), argue that comparative research is valuable because it provides an avenue to test theories across different settings which is important for concept clarification and verification. Furthermore, it saves scholars from overgeneralizing from a single experience. Just like Hallin and Mancini (2004) similarly argued, comparative analysis is important because of
the ethnocentric nature of extant literature. In their words, “literature is ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers to the experience of a single country, yet it is written as though the model is universal” (p.2). Therefore, a comparative approach to research defies ethnocentric claims of a single experience as universally applicable (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012, p. 4).

Additionally, analyzing news comparatively is important because it brings to the fore the conceptual similarities and the differences in news coverage (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). First, it exposes aspects of global media that is different from one another and similarities in international journalistic practices. Second, it allows us to explore and test hypotheses about the relationships between and among social issues, and how they play out in various social and cultural contexts (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Duton and Vedel (1992) assert that comparative analysis allows researchers to “explore universal factors”, “develop theoretical explanations that can apply across social systems, “understand how communication works in other countries” and finally “assess the technical arguments that are used to legitimize policies” (p. 87). Esser (2013), synthesizing extant goals of comparative research assert that comparative studies provide “contextual descriptions of a set of systems or cultures”, “recognition of functional equivalents”, “establish classifications and typologies” and finally, comparative study provides a platform for explanations (p. 116). By explaining the goals of a comparative study, I shed light on the importance of examining news coverage via a comparative platform. This is particularly vital for countries in Africa that have mostly been ignored in comparative studies. This dissertation will expose differences as well as similarities that abound between democracies in the global North and democracies in the global South.
Traditionally, mass media comparative studies were divided along ideological lines that originated from the Hutchins Commission. In 1956, Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their seminal work, *The Four theories of the Press*, laid out a broad framework for media comparative analysis. They delineated four normative theories based on democratic and non-democratic conception of the role of the press in society (Fardigh, 2010). A fundamental question the authors asked was, “why is the press as it is in different countries?” (p.1). The premise of their work is that the “press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political system within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted” (p.1-2). Generally, understanding aspects of society such as the political system is tantamount to understanding how the press functions (Siebert et al, 1956). Following these arguments, Siebert and his colleagues proposed four media systems that operate in the world, namely authoritarianism, libertarianism, soviet-communist, and social responsibility theories of the press.

The authoritarian tradition holds that the state should control and direct citizens because citizens are not competent enough to make important political decisions. The government is given the authority to control society as well as channels of mass communication, which is regarded as an instrument of social control. In this system, the ruler has an “ordained right” to coerce obedience from his/her subjects (McKenzie, 2006). Under a system based on authoritarian governance, the role of the media is mainly to disseminate information at the command of the sovereign. An authoritarian media is characterized by state control over the media, censorship, punishment, and immunity of the state. The authoritarian
ideals and practices is traced to the ancient philosopher Plato and his writings in the *Republic*. Plato’s argument in the *Republic* is that a state achieves success by depending solely on the wisdom of what he called the philosopher kings (Plato Republic 360a 1-2). Machiavelli in the *The Prince* is also credited with the authoritarian ideology. His writings in *The Prince* advocate for the preservation of authority by any means necessary giving rise to the popular Machiavellian expression of the end justifying the means (Machiavelli, 2010).

On the other hand, the libertarian tradition sees man as a rational being, capable of making his own decision and with inherent natural rights such as the right to pursue truth and happiness without interference (Sierbert et al, 1956; McKenzie, 2006). An important attribute of this philosophy is the idea of the free market place of ideas, where market forces guarantees the emergence of truth. This philosophy can be traced to seventeenth century England and was proposed in John Milton’s *Areopagitica*, where he introduced the concept of the self-righting process. He argued that only through the free exchange of ideas will truth emerge (Milton, 1644). Other works credited with expounding libertarian ideals include John Locke’s *Two Treatise of Government* and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* and Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (McKenzie, 2006). Libertarianism is characterized by private ownership of the media, fair competition and self-regulation.

The third media philosophy identified by Sierbert et al is the communist philosophy. This rose out of the exploitation of laborers by business owners (McKenzie, 2006). It holds that the state should act as the care taker of the society. Therefore, in this system, a centralized government controls the mechanisms of supply and demand. Individual needs are not considered important is this system, rather everybody is supposed to work together for the
greater good of the society. Communist philosophical ideals can be traced back to Karl Marx and George W. F. Hegel (McKenzie, 2006). According to the proponents of this system, the role of the press is to perpetuate social policy rather than the search for truth. It is mainly characterized by state ownership of property, and the use of the media as a tool to teach communist doctrine.

The final philosophy identified in *The Four Theories of the Press* is the social responsibility theory. This philosophy has its roots in the libertarian tradition, it however places a bigger emphasis on the responsibility the press owes the society rather than on freedom of the press. This theory requires the media to “regulate” itself and the government to step in when the media fails to do this. Social responsibility argues that the media exists to serve the public and hold media owners to some level of accountability. This system is traced to the outcomes of the Hutchins Commission. It is characterized by factual coverage, balanced opinion, and clarification of societal goals and desires (Hutchins et al, 1945).

The four theories of the press which formed the foundation of comparative media studies has been influential, (see Hallin and Mancini, 2004), it has also received many criticisms (see Lowenstein and Merill, 1971; Nerone, 1995; Richani, 2012; Thussu, 2009). For example, Lowenstein argue that *The Four Theories of the Press* is outdated and should be improved to capture current realities in the modern world (Lowenstein and Merrill 1971). Similarly, Nerone (1995) contended that the theories should be revisited because of the apparent oversimplification of the concepts. Additionally, Thussu (2009) dismissed it as just one theory with four examples while Richani (2012) argued that the theories discussed by Siebert et al, pits other media systems against the liberal media system thus establishing a hierarchy of systems.
The apparent limitations of the four theories expounded by Siebert and his colleagues have spurred scholars to move away from them in comparative studies. Other scholars have tried to come up with additional models of media comparative analysis. For instance, Ostini and Fung (2002), reviewed past media comparative typologies and attempted to develop a new model for comparing media across nations. They incorporated the value systems of journalist such as journalistic autonomy and the structures of state. They argue that including these factors makes for a better appreciation of societies and their press systems. Similarly, Yin (2008) re-examined *The Four Theories of the Press* and argue that it is impossible to use the theories as a guide to understand media systems in Asia. Ying proposed a two-dimensional model along the axis of freedom-responsibility coordinates. According to him, this model provides a more balanced press model that explains media systems around the world which incorporates levels of press freedom and press responsibility. This dissertation follows this current tradition, and moves away from comparison that embraces the use of four theories as a framework.

Current in the field of media comparative study is the Hallin and Mancini model. This model was developed half a century after the debut of *The Four Theories of the Press*. Hallin and Mancini (2004) revisited the question posed in *The Four Theories of the Press*. In an attempt to answer the question, they laid a typology that determined the relationship between media and politics using 18 media systems in North America and Europe (see Appendix E). Hallin and Mancini examined the historical, political and social development of each of the 18 countries under review and based on their findings, suggested four media dimensions and five political dimensions on which the media systems of these nation-states can be differentiated. The four media dimensions are the role of the state which deals with the extent of state
involvement in channels of mass communication such as censorship, ownership and subsidies.

The second dimension is professionalism. This deals with the degree of autonomy, professional values and norms and public service orientation of journalists in these countries. The third dimension, deals with political parallelism. This involves the degree of press partisanship, regulation of public service broadcasting, and political involvement of media personnel. Finally, the structure of media markets, which involves the development of a mass press, circulation rate, demographic differences in newspaper reach.

The framework also incorporated five political elements. The role of the state context in the framework explores the idea of media existence in a liberal democracy or a welfare democracy. This dimension investigates the extent to which a media system is market oriented. A market oriented media system does not depend on government subsidy and therefore is able to set agenda without government interference. The second political dimension distinguished between the consensus vs. majoritarian dichotomy. This explains the party formation in a system. The majoritarian party system has a clear opposition, which might encourages partisanship hence the need to incorporate this dimension. The third dimension explores individual vs organized pluralism. This element looks at how political representation is organized in a system. The fourth dimension differentiates between states with rational-legal authority that is, states that have independent and autonomous administrative unit that is free from political and economic influences and states that operate a clientelist system, where “access to social resources is controlled by patrons and delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various forms of support” (p.58). The final dimension is the difference between moderate and polarized pluralism. This element distinguishes between nations that have lower
ideological differences, higher acceptance of the political system and high consensus and
nations with low consensus and high challenge to the legitimacy of existing political system.
This final dimension determines the extent to which a system is polarized. Political systems that
have lower ideological differences, are less prone to criticize government, thus less prone to a
polarized media that is partisan. While high ideological differences might extend into media
organization’s editorial policies, thus affecting news.

Based on these four media dimensions, and five political dimensions, the authors
distinguished between three types of media systems in the world, the Mediterranean or
Polarized -Pluralist model, North/Central Europe or Democratic –Corporatists Model and the
model found in countries such as France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain as a system with an
elite-oriented press, low circulation rate and a media dominated by television. Also, polarized-
pluralist countries are characterized by late democratization and a strong political parallelism
such that there is a strong link between journalists and political actors. Journalism in this type
of system is less professional and journalists do not have autonomy. In contrast, the
democratic-corporatist model is defined by the early development of its mass press with high
newspaper circulation and strong journalistic professionalism. However, this model has a
moderate external pluralism and low autonomy where the government intervenes to protect
free press rather than restrict it. This model found in countries such as Austria, Belgium,
Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland features a long
tradition of democracy. The liberal model found in the Britain, US, Canada and Ireland, is
classified by a strong democratic tradition with a strong free press. It is further
characterized by an early development of a mass-circulation press, a strong professional press, it has low political parallelism such that there is a weak link between the media and political parties. The press in this system is controlled by commercial interests with little or no government intervention and boasts of a strong journalistic professionalism.

According to Hallin and Mancini, these three media systems are ideal types and they are mostly shaped by history and political circumstances. Therefore, they speculate that “considerable variation exists among countries grouped together under a single system” (p. 11).

Although several scholars have pointed out the limitations in this framework, especially its applicability to other non-western countries, (see Hardy, 2006; Hallin and Mancini, 2012; Richani, 2012; Jackubowicz, 2010), it still remains the most widely used framework in international media comparative studies. Many scholars have adopted this framework in comparing news coverage in western countries (see Wessler, Skorek, Konigslow, Held, Dobreva and Adolphsen, 2010) and non-western countries (see D’Angelo, Pollock, Kiernicki and Shaw 2013). This dissertation is based on these characteristics of the media systems delineated by Hallin and Mancini as outlined here. Overall, this study investigates how these different characteristics shape news coverage of an event of international significance. I follow the trend by extending it to non-western countries, specifically sub-Saharan Africa countries. The goal here is to establish the extent to which systemic differences contribute to how news is framed. Table 1 below summarizes the characteristics of the media systems used in this dissertation.
### Table 1. Characteristics of North/Atlantic or Liberal Model and Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Liberal Model (U.K. and USA)</th>
<th>Polarized Pluralist Model (Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political System</td>
<td>Early democratization, weaker welfare state especially in the U.S. Strong rational-legal authority and weak clientelism Liberal democracies characterized by a free market press</td>
<td>Late democratization, periods of authoritarianism and strong welfare state. Weak rational-legal authority and strong clientelism. Welfare state democracies characterized by press subsidies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**African Media Systems**

The Hallin and Mancini (2004) framework described above utilizes models premised on media systems in western democracies. Their framework, however, does not capture the typology of media systems that operate in Africa. Since this dissertation attempts to compare coverage of a global health issue between established western democracies and nascent African democracies using a media systems framework, I incorporate Hallin and Mancini’s framework with the African media systems typology developed by D’Angelo, Pollock, Kiernicki...
and Shaw (2013). D’Angelo et al. (2013), developed a typology of press-state relations with four countries in South of the Saharan Africa by integrating the Hallin and Mancini three media systems framework and Nisbet and Moehler’s five political communications systems for South of the Saharan African countries. In so doing, I extend Hallin and Mancini’s framework to non-Western media systems.

D’Angelo and his colleagues tracing the history of the press in South of the Saharan African countries illuminates the fact that most countries in the region have variations of the Hallin and Mancini’s polarized pluralist system, which is the kind of system prevalent in some Mediterranean countries. Based on the media and political dimension which Hallin and Mancini used, D’Angelo and his colleagues assert that the broadcast media in South of the Saharan African countries are controlled by the state, the print media are owned by the state and private individuals. Just like their Mediterranean counterparts, the political parties use the media to further political agenda, thus there is high instrumentalization and high political parallelism marked by external pluralism. The south of the Saharan African nation’s fundamentally have similar characteristics to what Hallin and Mancini referred to as the polarized pluralist media system.

Furthermore, D’Angelo et al. (2013) separated the polarized pluralist model in this region into three variants of the model. The first variant is the Contained Democracy found in Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda. This model has a mixture of private and state ownership of broadcasting, privately owned newspaper, high professionalism and press autonomy, and low external pluralism. The second model is the Instrumentalized Democracy found in Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania. This media system is characterized by mixed ownership
of broadcasting, low to moderate professionalism and autonomy and newspaper more ideologically aligned with political parties. The final model is the Repressive Autocratic model, and it is found in Ethiopia, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Rwanda. The Repressive Autocratic Model is characterized by state ownership of broadcasting, a heavily supervised and regulated but privately owned newspaper, low professionalism and press autonomy and strong press ideological alignments (p. 11). Although D’Angelo et al. broke down the polarized pluralist model found in Africa into further variations (for a comprehensive breakdown, see Appendix F), for the sake of simplicity, this dissertation will study three South of the Saharan African countries under one umbrella: polarized pluralist media system.

Integrating the Theories

To clarify, I argue that how each media system frames Ebola and the attributes they make salient will depend on the political and media structure of the system. Thus, this dissertation uses a theoretical framework built on the Hallin and Mancini model, integrating framing and agenda setting literature to examine how patterns of coverage unique to each system contribute to public opinion formation. This framework explains how elements of political systems such as political history, structure of government, role of state, clientelism, pluralism integrate with media structures such as press orientation, professionalism, press partisanship and extent of government intervention to shape how the international media covered the Ebola outbreak.

The assumption that informs this framework is that news takes on the form and coloration of the social, economic and political structure within which it operates (Sierbert et
Thus, this framework helps explain how systemic characteristics shape communication in such uncertain circumstances and its effects thereof. Figure 1 below shows a framework that I developed which details the relationship between characteristics of media systems and how these characteristics might inform news framing the Ebola outbreak and the attributes of the frames thereof. Additionally, it shows the relationship between these attributes and policy/individual agenda.

**Conceptualization of variables of interest**

To clarify the attributes of Ebola coverage that I will examine comparatively, I present and discuss the variables that I am investigating in this dissertation, and the literature supporting the basic assumptions underlying my hypotheses.

**Advocacy, objectivity and partisanship**

Advocacy as a journalistic norm has been a contentious topic in journalism studies. It entails journalists taking on the role of activists to speak on behalf of less privileged groups, motivated by the desire to address societal disparity (Janowitz, 1975). The inherent desire to advocate for disadvantaged groups motivates journalists to frame news coverage in a way that elicits these desired outcomes (Waisbord, 2009). In his examination of the development of advocacy journalism around the world, Waisbord(2009) distinguished between the traditional ‘journalist as advocate’ model of reporting whereby journalists express their own political and personal interests, and another form of advocacy which he called civic advocacy where groups influence news coverage in order to change public policies (Waisbord, 2009).
These civic advocacy groups use the news media to increase the power of the masses and make governments and institutions responsive to the plight of the common man. Consequently, by using advocacy journalism, civic organizations manipulate news frames to create awareness and inspire public discourse regarding key issues thus influencing public opinion (Waisbord, 2009). Accordingly, through advocacy journalism, groups contribute extensively towards public discourse and media framing of health issues (Waisbord, 2009).

Following the Hallin and Mancini Model, Waisbord (2009), posits that the evolution of different press systems especially regarding press-state relations has led to the development of advocacy journalism in polarized pluralist systems. He argued that a range of macro and political factors such level of democracy, dependence on subsidy etc. can influence the

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**Figure 1: Relationship between characteristics of media systems and issue framing.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004)</th>
<th>Media Framing of Ebola</th>
<th>Attributes found in the Ebola Frames</th>
<th>Effects of Ebola Framing on attitudes and policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political/Media Characteristics of the System</td>
<td>Media Framing of Ebola</td>
<td>Attributes found in Ebola Frames</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presence of advocacy journalism in media systems. In liberal systems such as the United States, advocacy journalism has not taken root because media organizations embrace objectivity as a journalistic norm (Waisbord, 2009). Furthermore, objectivity has continued to be the yardstick mainstream press use to access the merits of advocacy journalism. The norm of objectivity took root after the First World War because journalists saw the need to separate their craft from public relations and propagandists that abounded at the time (Schudson, 2003). Objectivity thus became the ideal that journalists in America aspire towards. By embracing objectivity, the US media reject advocacy as a norm by referencing the values inherent in objectivity and political detachment, it has nonetheless managed to sneak into mainstream media. For instance, Fox News has taken up the role of advocating for right wing ideologies.

While objectivity have firmly taken root in the liberal media system, journalistic norms are in transition in the global South and there is no consensus on what is applicable in this area. Waisbord (2009), argues that “neither objectivity nor partisanship holds a tight grip (p. 375). However, certain characteristics of polarized-pluralist systems such as press instrumentalization and late democratization found in most polarized pluralist systems encourage advocacy. Although there is no firm agreement that the global South embraces either objectivity of advocacy, when news room policies does not restrict it, journalists in the south tend to embrace advocacy.

I investigate how journalists in the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist media system took on the role of advocacy journalism via partisanship as opposed to advocacy journalism the civic route in the coverage of the Ebola outbreaks. Thus, I hypothesize that:

H1a: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in use of advocacy journalism by media system type.
H1b: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in use of partisan frames by media system type.

**Anti-West Narrative**

Historically, there has been an anti-western and anti-liberal political undercurrents in Africa. This stems from the continents’ perpetual fight against cultural imperialism by the West. This inclination of African states to view western nations as a threat to their interests and sovereignty is rooted in past colonial experiences and historical fact (Boone and Batsell, 2001). Any help by the West is generally considered a concealed attempt to further weaken nations struggling with social and economic problems (Boone and Batsell, 2001). This pervasive mistrust of the West is borne out of bitter experiences in the hands of the West. For example, when cigarette was introduced to Nigeria from England, each park contained money used as an incentive to encourage use. Eventually, after people had been hooked on the product the monetary incentives stopped (for more on this see Reese, 2014). This created the impression that persists till date that the West is unwilling to do anything for Africa for free.”

This suspicion of the West in Africa is stronger when issues of health is involved. There has been instances in the past where western pharmaceutical companies have used Africans as lab rats for laboratory experiments (Yahya, 2007). For instance, in 1996, Pfizer conducted a trial of a meningitis drug that went bad. The trial killed 11 children and others suffered different degrees of paralysis, brain damage and speech problems. The drug was later pulled from the market because it caused severe liver damage in humans. The idea of vaccination that brings up the images of British colonial occupation of Africa especially in the North which is the Muslim

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1 Vaccinating Africa Against American Interests: Hesitation and even rejection of Western vaccination efforts in the Islamic world reflect larger issues of trust with the West, especially the U.S. http://www.mintpressnews.com/vaccinating-africa-against-american-interests/191566/.
stronghold in Nigeria. People are hesitant to embrace Western support because of this inherent distrust. The head of Kano State Polio Victims Trust Association said “Almost a century after the introduction of Western education, there are still parents who don’t enroll their children in school because they believe it is a ploy to convert them to Christianity, and the suspicion has its roots in the British conquest. It is the same sentiment playing out with the polio vaccine.” Similarly, Mamman Nababa a Kano resident argued the same by referencing instances of Western exploitation of their powers.²

Additionally, there are accounts of Bulgaria nurses and a doctor that allegedly infected children with HIV in Libya.³ Although these health practitioners were sentenced to death in Libya, they were later released to avoid an international diplomatic incident. According to Washington (2007), there are other cases where western medical “miscreants” have intentionally caused harm in the guise of providing much needed health care. For instance, in 2000 a cancer researcher in South Africa was fired because he experimentally used high doses of chemotherapy on black breast cancer patients without their consent. Also in Zimbabwe, a Western anesthesiology was convicted of killing 5 people including 2 infants by administering lethal doses of morphine. These instances of medical atrocities by western health practitioners in which most of them have gotten away with have created such fear that African’s boycott important health policies because of this sense of insecurity about western intentions. For

² Roots of polio vaccine suspicion: See web address http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2013/04/04/roots-polio-vaccine-suspicion
instance, WHO policies to fight polio in Nigeria met stiff resistance because of this brimming doubt (Yahya, 2007).

Moreover, Boone and Batsell (2001), asserts that opinion leaders have helped perpetuate this anti-west narrative. For instance, a famous Nigeria musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti repeatedly claimed that AIDS was a disease made up by Western doctors to reduce African birthrate. Similarly, former South African President Thabo Mbeki and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe both used their position to try to convince the public that AIDS was merely a propaganda instrument devised by Western nations to distract the continent from more important matters. These hostile protectionist reactions and strong anti-western sentiments shape how African democracies respond to global health issues.

However, regardless of the anti-west sentiments in the African continent, African nations get aid from international organizations such as WHO, IMF etc. Most African nations have come to depend on foreign aid for survival. However, even with the influx of foreign dollar, very little has been done to develop a vibrant healthcare that has the capacity to tackle public health emergencies. Improving the capacity of countries to respond to emerging diseases is important in order to stem cross border transmission and outbreaks (Kruk, 2008). To this end, donors have committed millions of dollars in grants and loans to support response capacity. Despite these foreign donations, African continent is still incapable of handling such large and deadly outbreaks. Consequently, when faced with such crippling situations they will accept help from western states, irrespective of how they feel about the West. Based on these, I expect that:

H2a: Media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media system will be characterized by an anti-west narrative.
H2b: Media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media will be characterized by expectations that the international community will help.

H2c: Both systems will frame Africa as incompetent and incapable of handling the outbreak.

**Contrast Narrative**

Competing frames offer rival perspectives on an issue, thereby presenting different problems and solutions. National interests trump journalistic norms in uncertain cases of global significance. In fact, Nossek (2004) asserts that the closer the reporters are to a given news event in terms of national interest, the further they are from being objective. Despite changes in global politics, when it comes to issues of national safety and concern, journalists erect national boundaries giving coverage and “ours” vs “them” frame (Nossek, 2004, p.364). The media in every system will present a “we” that are civilized and charitable and a “them” that are uncivilized and evil (Neiger and Zandberg, 2004).

Entman (1991) confirmed this argument when he analyzed U.S coverage of the KAL and Iran Air incidents. Analyzing two issues of *Times* and *Newsweek*, and the CBS Evening News in a two weeks period, Entman discovered that events that could have been reported similarly, were depicted using different words and images. In the Korean Airline Flight, which was shot down by Soviet military, U.S media coverage of the incident framed the incident as a calculated plot by the perpetrators, out rightly blaming them of being morally bankrupt. While in the case of the Iran Air that was shot down by U.S military, the media in the U.S framed the event as a mistake that usually occurs when dealing with complex technology. These two very similar events received different frames by the same media system.
Additionally, other scholars have noted the influence of national interests in news framing. Like I have consistently argued throughout this study, newsmakers operate within a culture with prescribed how information is presented. Therefore, when reporters from different nationalities or media systems cover the same events, the stories can be framed differently (Neiger and Zandberg, 2004). For example, Yang (2003) comparing U.S and Chinese newspapers coverage of the 1999 NATO airstrikes in Kosovo found a contrast in narratives. The U.S press framed the strike as a humanitarian gesture targeted at saving Albanians from a miserable situation at the hands of Serbians, thus giving the airstrikes legitimacy. The Chinese press on the other hand framed the event as an attack on Yugoslavia’s sovereignty, thus challenging the legality of the NATO airstrikes. Furthermore, Yang found that the Chinese press devoted time condemning the action and used Chinese and Russian sources while the U.S media devoted time and space discussing refugees and air war and depended on U.S and NATO sources. This contrast in narrative may be attributed to national interests in Kosovo.

We can gather from these studies that journalists represent societies in which they exist and as such, news is constructed in line with realities associated with the culture (Mason, 2007). By this logic, journalists frame issues in ways that positively portray the system within which they operate. I therefore argue that framing of this epidemic will differ across systems such that each media system will represent its territory in favorable light. Drawing on framing theory, I hypothesize thus:

H3a: Compared to the polarized system, coverage by the liberal system will place more emphasize on international efforts.

H3b: Compared to the liberal system, coverage by the polarized system will emphasis local efforts.
Episodic vs. Thematic framing

Most news coverage frame issues in either episodic or in thematic terms (Iyengar and Simon, 1994). Episodic frames are mostly coverage that involve specific instances and events. Accordingly, this type of framing is compliant with the economics of news cycle which values compelling visuals and real time coverage of hard news stories (Iyengar, 1992. Episodic coverage will report the immediate rather than the historical. When news is framed episodically, audiences tend to attribute responsibility for a problem to individuals portrayed in the story rather than on complex underlying societal failures (Bennett, 1998). Thematic coverage on the other hand, situates issues in general or abstract contexts, is more analytical and details the historical background of the event being covered. It looks beyond the immediate to explore origins of the problem and the larger social, economic and political contexts. A striking difference between the two frames is that episodic frames depict the immediate and tangible evidence, while thematic presents historical facts (Bennett, 1998).

Many studies have found that episodic frame dominate U.S media. According to Iyengar (1991), this type of frame was dominant in the coverage of the Vietnam War, international terrorism, electoral campaigns etc. Iyengar argues that news coverage of elections is more game oriented and less coverage about ideology and policy platforms candidates support. Similarly, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) argued that strategic framing of politics as more of a horse race, emphasizing the game aspects of politics dominates over in-depth and information rich issue frame in US media coverage of politics. Iyengar’s analysis of U.S network coverage of terrorism indicated that 74% of news stories where episodic while 26% were thematic.
This overwhelming interest in episodic coverage is in part attributed to the time and financial demands of a thematic coverage of an event. According to Picard (2004):

The primary content of newspapers today is commercialized news and features designed to appeal to brand audiences, to entertain, to be cost effective and to maintain readers whose attention can be sold to advertisers. The result is that stories that may offend are ignored in favor of those more acceptable and entertaining to larger numbers of readers, that stories that are costly to cover are downplayed or ignored and that stories creating financial risks are ignored (p.61).

An attribute of the liberal system is that it depends less on government subsidies and is more market controlled, therefore, this characteristic of the liberal media system produces a high demand for episodic news. Television news depend on advertising dollar to survive and is therefore time constrained to cover news thematically. They mostly depend on breaking news and easily covered news stories. It is therefore safe to propose that attributes of the system that makes episodic coverage attractive will influence coverage of the Ebola outbreak. Using Iyengar’s framing typology (1991), I examine the degree to which both media systems used episodic vs. thematic framing in their coverage of an international health crisis. Thus I present the following:

H4: Coverage of the outbreak will differ in the use of thematic v. episodic frames by media system type.

The Role of Sources in News Framing

Journalists depend on others to tell them the news. People they depend on for information are usually institutional representatives such as “government officials, corporate spokesperson, academics, experts and authorities on particular events of subjects” (Mason, 2007, p. 109). These informants are referred to in the journalism industry as elite sources and
information transmitted by these sources becomes news. Thus what is delivered as news is the story of the interaction between reporters and officials (Schudson, 1991). Moreover, sources also have some influence of how news is framed by journalists (Liebler and Bendix, 1996), making it a key aspect of the final news product.

During times of crisis, news media scholars have found support for the idea that US news media index news coverage to reflect the range of voices that exists within government. Bennet (1990) proposed this argument when he explained the relationship between media and government in his indexing hypothesis. He argues that what is reported about any given issue, is an “index” of the range of voices and viewpoints of government official which journalists and media professionals turn into stories and editorials. I find this important because a reliance on elite or authoritative sources slant coverage in favor of one side, thus influencing how audiences receive news. Other researchers have found also found evidence of the media’s inclination to rely on elite sources (see Gans, 1979; Cook, 1998). According to Entman (2004), reporters are mostly disinclined to challenge these elite sources and also most time downplay non-elite voices. Who journalists use as a source determines what our realities are (Mason, 2007). Thus sources are crucial in how the world perceive volatile events such as the Ebola outbreak. This study investigates the extent to which newspapers in two media systems used elite political sources and health expert sources in coverage. Thus, I hypothesize as follows: H5a: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of elite-sources by media system type. H5b: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of health expert sources by media system type.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

This section discusses the features of this dissertation such as methods of data collection and analysis, date randomization, coder training and inter-coder reliability. To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to add empirical evidence to the ongoing debate on the effects of news coverage of health issues, by investigating frames and attribute salience comparatively. This study sheds light on how characteristics of media systems contribute towards media narratives in events of international significance using a mixed methods approach which includes a quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis.

First, I use the comparative case study to provide in-depth qualitative insights into the types of frames used in coverage across media systems so as to both add nuance to my discussion of coverage and also to build an accurate coding instrument. Then, to test the proposed hypotheses, I conduct a quantitative content analysis using the coding instrument derived from the qualitative study to generate data on the frequency of frame types and their corresponding attributes. This data will allow me to test hypotheses and uncover additional differences between media system coverages. With this objective, the next section describes each stage of the analysis and rationale behind the methods.

Case Selection

The Hallin and Mancini model offers a framework to examine how elements of each systems work together to influence coverage. In most comparative studies, the nation state is the most common unit of analysis although it does not have to be (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012). Other elements of a national system can also be used as a unit of analysis in comparative
research. One of the four approaches to comparative study delineated by Kohn (1989) is the nation as a component of a larger international or transnational system. According to Livingstone (2003), this system sensitive approach is “exemplified by theories of cultural dependency, imperialism and globalization, this approach compares nations insofar as they are (assumed to be) systematically interrelated due to some underlying process ...” (p. 15). It was Hallin and Mancini (2004) that eventually synthesized the concept of a nation as a component of larger system. This dissertation borrows heavily from Hallin and Mancini and focuses on media systems as the unit of analysis.

In this dissertation, I analyze newspaper articles from national newspapers from three West African countries (Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia). These three countries represent the polarized pluralist media system according to the D’Angelo et al (2013) modified version of Hallin and Mancini (2004) model. I also analyze newspaper articles from The United States and The United Kingdom to represent the Liberal model. I choose these three West African countries because they were affected by the outbreak. Although Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea were the most hit by this outbreak, I replaced Guinea with Nigeria because Guinea is a francophone nation and most of its nationally representative newspapers are written in French. I chose Nigeria to replace Guinea because although Nigeria had few cases, it trails immediately after these three. Furthermore, I chose the United States not only because of the few cases of Ebola diagnosed, but also because of the international influence of the US media. Similarly, the United Kingdom was chosen because of its historical influence in West Africa and also the influence it wields on international media.
The universe of the study is all newspaper articles printed from March 25, 2014 to October 31, 2015. This time frame covers the start of the epidemic according to the CDC (2015), until the end of data collection. I picked these dates to capture the evolution of frames from the onset until the point of data collection. The Newspapers selected are, ThisDay (Nigeria), Concord Times (Sierra Leone), The Inquirer (Liberia), The New York Times (USA) and The Guardian (UK).

ThisDay is published by THISDAY Newspaper Limited and has carved a niche in business and political reporting. The award winning publication and the “paper of record” in Nigeria was founded in 1995. It is the preferred newspaper of choice for business and political elites in Nigeria. The daily newspaper is owned by Nduka Obaigbena and has a daily circulation rate of 100,000. Concord Times was founded in 1992 and is the leading publication in Sierra Leone. The paper positions itself as having a “reputation for top quality, fair and unbiased reporting.” Its founders deny any political affiliations and therefore are able to maintain high editorial independence. Concord Times is circulated nationally and in some parts of neighboring Liberia. In 2007, it was ranked as the most popular newspaper in Sierra Leone by the BBC World Service Trust and Search for Common Ground. The Inquirer was founded in January 15, 1991 during the Liberian civil war by a group of young Liberians. Not much is known about the owners or the circulation rate, except that it is publicized by World Newspapers.Com as the number 1 major daily newspaper in Liberia.

The New York Times is a daily newspaper known as the “newspaper of record” (Okrent, 2004). The Times circulation rate was 2,149,012 for Monday – Friday and 2,517,307 for Sunday in 2014. The paper is owned by the by The New York Times Company, of which Arthur
Sulzberger Jr. is the chairman. Finally, *The Guardian* is a British national daily newspaper. It was founded in 1821 as a local paper and has grown into a national paper, forming part of a media group with international and online offshoots. It boasts a daily circulation of 189,000 copies but has an online readership of about 42.6 million readers. In 2014, *The Guardian* was named newspaper of the year at the British Press Awards for its reporting on government surveillance. These daily newspapers were selected because of their heterogeneous audiences, wide reach and because they are reputable in the countries they are based.

I generated newspaper articles for this dissertation using the search term “Ebola” on the Lexis Nexis Academic database. An initial search on Lexis Nexis yielded N=880 articles for *This Day Newspapers*, N=581 articles for *Concord Times*, N=851 articles for *The Inquirer*, N=973 articles for *The New York Times* and N=1088 articles for *The Guardian* making it a total of N=4373 articles. Research shows that some newspapers do not upload letters to the editor and wire service stories to electronic databases (Ridout, Fowler, and Searles, 2012). Therefore, researchers using electronic searches inadvertently fall into the practice of underestimating how much coverage about an event is available to readers. A quick search of the Lexis Nexis database showed an absence of wire service stories. However, the characteristics of the newspapers and the nature of the case study eliminates the underestimation problem. Going by Ridout, Fowler and Searles (2012) assertions, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* are large newspapers and they don’t necessarily rely on wire service for international news. On the other hand, *ThisDay, The Inquirer* and *Concord Times* are large enough and have the advantage of proximity to cover Ebola without relying on wire service.
The primary objectives of this dissertation is to use theories of framing and agenda setting to shed light on how systemic structures influence news coverage which in turn shapes public opinion. This dissertation will contribute to an understanding of the role characteristics of media systems play in how news is framed. Furthermore, most comparative research have neglected African media, this study aims to help us understand how media systems in Africa and the west comparatively frame issue of international consequence. By using a qualitative comparative analysis framework, I try to uncover the types of frames used by the two media systems I compared. I establish how different economic, social and political characteristics of media systems come into play in how nations frame events that have global significance. My goal with the quantitative content analysis is to identify attributes of frames commonly used in the coverage and how media system characteristics influence usage.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has its roots in mass communication research (Krippendorff, 2004). It is the “primary message centered methodology” (Neuendorf, 2002) Scholars have come up with different definitions of content analysis. For instance, Krippendorff (1980) an established scholar in content analysis defined it as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (p.21). Also, Berelson (1952), assert that content analysis is the research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (p. 18). Neuendorf (2002) defined it as the “systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (p. 1). Later definitions of content analysis will incorporate other aspects such as qualitative content analysis and inclusion of latent content of communication. Scholars such as Hsieh and Shannon (2005) posit
that “qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (p. 1278).

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that because of the different characteristics of media content, the task of a content analysis is “to impose some sort of order on these phenomena in order to grasp their meaning”(p.31). According to them, “Part of this ordering process consists of singling out the key features that we think are important and to which we want to pay attention. Researchers approach content in different ways, using different conceptual and methodological tools” (p. 31). Content analysis is used to identify international differences in news content, reveal the meanings characteristics of content of individuals or group, in this context, media systems and also to determine effects of content on audiences (Berelson, 1952).

Moreover, content analysis is a flexible research method, and therefore can be used qualitatively or quantitatively (Marsh, 2006). In this dissertation, I use content analysis qualitatively because it allows me to get a sense of the ways media systems make sense of the world around them in times of health emergencies (McKee, 2003). I use a qualitative content analysis, with the recognition that text is polysemic and may mean different things to different people (McNamara, 2005). Therefore, a qualitative content analysis gives the leverage to examine text in relation to the meaning it may hold to the audience, paying attention not only to the text, but the audience, media and other contextual factors (Mcnamara, 2005). Specifically, the qualitative content analysis enables me get an overview of frames used in coverage and also to build a detailed coding instrument for the quantitative study. Quantitative
content analysis provides the framework with which I can condense elements of coverage into numerical descriptions. This numerical version of the text allows me find evidence for posed hypotheses. As stated earlier, this mixed method approach allows me examine the event comprehensively. Furthermore, in a mixed method study, “the strengths of one could shore up the deficiencies of another….so that the two research tradition together can provide a fuller understanding of the communication process” (Bryant & Cummins, 2007, p. 10).

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyze textual data. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), “Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (p. 1278). In qualitative content analysis, data are categorized using categories that are derived from the data. This dissertation used the inductive approach rather than the deductive (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Although the analysis was guided by research questions which is derived from preconceived categories and frames used in the hypotheses, I applied some aspects of grounded theory. First, I generate an initial list of coding categories based on the research question then subsequently allow for new categories to emerge inductively. Furthermore, for research questions 1 and 2, the inductive approach was used because the questions were broad and not targeted at specific concepts or variables.

The objective of conducting a qualitative content analysis is to comparatively determine frames used by the media systems and to build a coding instrument for a quantitative content analysis. Unlike a quantitative analysis that employs statistical means to establish reliability and
validity, the nature of the qualitative process does not allow for statistical inferences. Therefore, a qualitative content analysis does not allow for a statistical test of reliability. However, to maintain integrity, I code the data several times applying a systematic approach to the analysis using the category system (Mayring, 2002). First I do an open coding to look for distinct concepts and categories in the data. Then I follow with an axial coding focusing on the categories and concepts identified to make sure these categories accurately represent a particular frame. This process was be repeated to make sure that categories are related to a core or central theme in the content.

**Sample**

A random sample of articles from the universe was selected for the qualitative textual analysis using a systematic random sampling. The systematic random sampling ensures that the population is evenly sampled. I analyzed N= 4373 with a skip interval of 20. Using a random date generator, I selected every 20th day within the time period. I skimmed through the entire sample to eliminate duplicates and articles that are specifically not Ebola related or articles that use Ebola to explain a larger purpose. After the elimination, the sample size came to n=187 articles for the five newspapers. These newspaper articles were coded using the AtlasTi qualitative analysis software. The software consolidates large volumes of documents and keeps track of all notes, annotations, codes and memos thus aiding in the organization of categories and frames. I conducted an initial line by line coding. Line by line coding ensured that I considered the various levels of meaning inherent in a text. Afterwards, I grouped the emergent codes into themes and code families that correspond with posed research questions. Using the grounded theory approach, I looked for themes that did not align with research questions but
that were visible from the analysis. Using grounded theory enabled me see some themes that were necessary to the better understanding of how attributes of media systems influence coverage.

These research questions, derived from earlier proposed hypotheses, guided this qualitative analysis:

RQ1: What were the differences in how the media in each media system framed the epidemic?
RQ2: What were the similarities in how the media in each media system framed the epidemic?

Quantitative Content Analysis

Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1998), described quantitative content analysis as “the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption” (p.20). My goal with a larger quantitative analysis, was to test all the proposed hypotheses regarding which attributes of coverage is most commonly found across media systems.

Scholars posit that a coding scheme derived from theory and extant research improves validity and inter-coder reliability (see Hayes, 2005; Keyton, 2011). Similarly, pilot studies help to signal problems with coding, particularly for variables that have not been previously studied (Turcotte, 2014). To this end, I developed the coding scheme for the quantitative content analysis from the qualitative data analysis. Using this coding instrument, I coded for attributes of frames found in coverage such as advocacy, suspicion, competing frames, expert opinion and
emotions and others attributes generated. These variables, which I discussed earlier were derived from previous literature that discussed them in relation to media systems. Ultimately, my assumption is that these elements will manifest more in one system than in the other depending on the element

**Sample**

For the quantitative content analyses, a sample of articles from the universe was selected using a systematic random sample. Similar to the qualitative analysis, I analyzed a sample of N= 4373 with a skip interval of 10. Using a random date generator, I select every 10th day within the time period under review and code newspaper articles for the day. Following an initial examination of the articles, I eliminated articles with duplicates, unrelated to Ebola or mentioned Ebola in passing. The resultant sample size was n= 294 for the five newspapers.

**Reliability Test**

Three trained graduate students were employed to help with the coding. These trained coders coded the articles with the researcher. Over the course of three training days, the primary researcher and the coders went through the coding scheme repeatedly to familiarize the coders with the scheme. Furthermore, during the sessions, the coding scheme was revised to ensure that everybody understood the concepts and the variables they explain. Reliability in content analysis ensures the agreement among coders about variables under consideration.

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4 I used the search term Ebola in Lexis Nexis to generate articles. However, some articles were generated that had the term Ebola but had no worthwhile thing about the epidemic. For instance, an article which was about a court case concerning a stolen motor vehicle in Liberia was eliminated because Ebola was mentioned to explain that the crime occurred on a street opposite an Ebola facility. Articles like this one mentioned Ebola in passing and where pulled from the sample. This was a necessary protocol to ensure sampled news articles contained information about Ebola vital to this study. This did not affect sample representation because the elimination occurred across board.
Krippendorff’s alpha (α) is the most frequently used reliability coefficient which was developed to measure agreement among two or more coders. Thus, in this study, I used Krippendorff’s reliability coefficient to determine coder reliability.

Using Krippendorff’s alpha, the agreement for the intercoder reliability ranged from .7 to 1.00. Precisely, the agreement for advocacy was .82, partisan frame .77, anti-west narrative 1, expectation of international help .79, incompetence frame .79, emphasis on international efforts .70, emphasis on local efforts .85, thematic v episodic frame .80, expert sources .86 and elite communication .74. To further reduce bias, all the coders except the primary researcher coded blindly (Neuendorf, 2002). In other words, they had no previous knowledge of extraneous variable except the limited information they acquired from the coding training. Taking such extra care during training invariably improves the validity of any content analysis (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989).

**Operationalization of Variables**

I derived my variables and conceptualization from extant literature to improve its validity and inter-coder reliability numbers. The qualitative content analysis signaled conceptualization problems with the variables which I amended before the quantitative content analysis. See Appendix A for coding examples.

In this study, advocacy is operationalized according to how media systems present the African continent in news coverage. So, if a media system shows support and encouragement and generally presents African nations positively, coders assign 1 for advocacy and 0 if such presentation is absent. The second dependent variable is partisan frame, and this variable is dichotomously measured as 0 and 1. Coders assign 1 if a media system references political
parties and party ideology in coverage and 0 if there is no mention of party affiliation in coverage. Anti-West narrative variable was conceptualized as any coverage that alludes to a suspicion of the west and references western nations as exploiters. So, coders’ code 1 is present in coverage and 0 if absent.

Furthermore, one of the hypothesis predicted that a difference in expectation for international help. Thus, international help is operationalized as coverage that calls for international aid from the international community. Coders coded 1 if an article mentions a call for help and 0 is such coverage is missing. Another dependent variable is the incompetent frame, which is conceptualized as coverage that references nations affected by Ebola as corrupt, lacking in medical expertise, poor with a broken health system. I further hypothesized that emphasis on local and international efforts in the fight against Ebola will vary by media system type. And I conceptualize international efforts as coverage that emphasizes donations from other countries, volunteer health workers from other countries, WHO, U.S, UK, MSF and other nations not native to the African continent. While local efforts is operationalized as coverage that emphasizes help from within the African continent. Thus, coders coded 1 if these attributes were present for the two variables and 0 is the attributes were absent.

Thematic and episodic frames are operationalized according to how media systems contextualize the Ebola outbreak in their coverage. If coverage situates the outbreak in broad historical contexts then the coders’ code 1, if coverage gives no context, they code 0. The last two dependent variables are expert opinion and elite communication. I operationalized expert opinion as coverage that use health workers as news sources such as MSF official, WHO official, CDC officials, scientist, pathologist etc. While elite communication is operationalized as
coverage that attributes a message or a quote to a source who is a serving government official. For expert opinion and elite communication variables, coders coded 1 if the conceptual attributes are present in an article and 0 if absent.

The dependent variables in this study are dichotomous, therefore I estimate a series of cross-tabs with chi-square significance tests. Using cross-tabs and chi-square tests help examine the impact of media systems on the use of advocacy, partisanship, contrast narrative, framing and the use of sources in coverage of the Ebola outbreak. I present the results of the quantitative content analysis in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS FOR QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This chapter is dedicated to the results of the qualitative content analysis. This part of the dissertation employed the inductive coding method (Thomas, 2006). Using the qualitative research software AtlasTi, I conducted an initial line by line coding. Using this line by line approach, I considered the various levels of meaning inherent in a text. Subsequently, I grouped the emergent codes into themes and code families that correspond with posed research questions. Some themes also emerged that do not align with any question but which are very important to our understanding of how social and political characteristics of a media system influence news coverage.

This study is a comparative analysis and as such compares coverage between two systems. Therefore, I present the result by first summarizing the themes in relation to the research questions they answer. The analysis is first organized by research questions, second by dominant frames that emerged from each system. Afterwards, I examine the dominant themes or frames individually and relate them to the media system within which they emanate. These themes answer the questions of framing differences, framing similarities, use of competing frames, use of partisan frames, and advocacy by system type in the coverage of the outbreak. These dominant themes were coded as frames if they followed Entman suggestions of framing. According to Entman (1993), frames "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. With this definition in mind, dominant themes that allude to one or more of the factors in Entman’s definition becomes a frame. Therefore, I use themes and frames
interchangeably in this result section. So, if a cluster of codes suggest that there is a problem or/and alludes to what caused the problem, or/and passes a moral judgment or/ and proffers solution then I refer to it as a frame.

Upon completion of the different levels of coding and categorization, themes emerged that represent differences in how systems framed the outbreak. For the liberal media system, three domains emerged that indicate a metanarrative that contextualized the issue against the framework of existing stereotypes about the African continent (Mahadeo & McKinney, 2007) and shed lights on the long standing relationship between African nations and the Western media. The categories that emerged from the liberal media system include: The war torn and diseased Africa; Africa the charity case; and the western savior complex. On the other hand, coverage of the outbreak by the polarized pluralist media system was primarily concerned with the broader implications of the outbreak on affected nations. Frames that emerged from the polarized system include: A rallying world and Grass root mobilization; Life after the outbreak; and the implications of the outbreak on the affected countries.

Furthermore, the second research question ventures into the similarities arena. This dissertation compared two media systems: the polarized pluralist media system and the liberal media system, the second research question investigates the uniformities that are found in the coverage of the outbreak. Two themes emerged from the qualitative coding and categorization that provide answers to this research question. These domains are: incompetence frame and the self and societal efficacy frame.

Surprisingly and contrary to expectations, the theme for advocacy did not emerge from the polarized pluralist system but from the liberal model. However, the UK emphasized
advocacy more that the US while partisan themes were present in the U.S and less so in the UK.

These discrepancies in the liberal system can be attributed to slight differences in the media autonomy in the two countries which will be discussed in detail later. The next section discusses the first research question.

Research Question 1: What were the differences in how the media in each system framed the outbreak?

**Poor, War-torn and Diseased Africa Frame.**

Even before Ebola came, West Africa was a place where infections were the leading cause of mortality. Global health groups often refer to the “big three” diseases that constitute the major causes of suffering: HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. But that is only the beginning in West Africa. There is yellow fever, pneumococcal disease, meningitis, rickettsia infection, streptococcus and a host of other maladies that can shorten lives and bring general misery to a place.

Of the articles analyzed, one of the common themes that emerged from my analysis that was a major difference in how the two media systems covered the outbreak is the reference to West Africa as poor, war-torn and disease infested. This was a pervasive theme from the liberal media system which was not visible in the polarized pluralist media system.

Several codes emerged from the analysis that suggests that the western part of Africa is famous for being host to different diseases, in perpetual war fare within and with neighbors, and suffering from political instability. Interestingly, the liberal system lumped Africa states together as though they were a monolithic entity suffering from all these maladies, rather than a diverse group made up of fifty-two independent countries.

There is a general consensus in journalism that context is important for stories to sell. According to Halberstam (1996), contextualizing a story sells it, highlights the importance of a piece of information and makes the story salient in peoples mind. Therefore, “the context of
the stories is often more important than the event itself.” As important as it is to provide context for ideas, journalists also need context to sell. Thus, the diseased African society theme provided the liberal media system the background for the Ebola story. Further analysis of the liberal system coverage shows that any information about any country in Africa was garnished with a descriptive that emphasized this existing war torn and poor narrative. For instance, in a New York Times article of October 26, 2014, Mali a country in West Africa was described thus: “Mali, one of Africa’s poorest nations, had appeared to be highly vulnerable to the spillover of the Ebola virus from neighboring countries still struggling to contain the epidemic, which began nine months ago. It has limited infrastructure and a fragile central government weakened by internal conflict.”

In a similar fashion, New York Times of November 11, 2014 wrote “using old fashioned detective work, public health workers in Mali, one of the world’s poorest nations, working with Centre for disease control and prevention and the World Health Organization, tracked and quarantined 108 people in two cities and a few roadside towns who may have had contact with a 2 year old girl from Guinea who died of Ebola on Oct 24.” This description of Mali embodies how the media in the liberal system framed West Africa while covering the Ebola outbreak. Interestingly, it does not really matter what the subject matter of the story is, reporters in the liberal system always found ways to rope in these potentially damaging additions, which for a very long time has been used to describe the continent. To buttress this point, a story in the Guardian on August 20, 2014 which discussed slow international response to the crisis included this quote “fear, rumors and conspiracy theories have conspired with poverty and high illiteracy to flourish in two countries whose infrastructure is already weak.”
Furthermore, there was an ever present reminder of past wars in the affected areas and its association to the outbreak. Codes emerging from the analysis of coverage in the liberal system suggested that past wars have had a great impact on the health infrastructure of African nation. It has also further affected political authority thus providing a rich context to discuss the need for expatriate health workers. Quotes such as this one in a *Guardian* article of October 31, 2014, support this point, “there is little respect for government authority in a region still emerging from war.” A Similar article in the *New York Times* of August 21, 2014 suggested that violence as an aftermath of the civil wars has made is difficult to work in affected regions. A paragraph in the news article reads:

So far, the outbreak has mostly been concentrated in rural areas, but the disease has also spread to major cities like the Guinean capital of Conakry, and especially her in Monrovia, the Liberian capital. Fighting Ebola in an urban area particularly in a neighborhood like this one, known as West Point, an extremely poor and often violent place that still bears deep scars from Liberia’s 14 years of civil war, presents challenges that government and international aid organizations have only started grappling with.

The diseased Africa narrative also emerged as a part of the overall framing of Africa as synonymous with everything foul. To support this finding, a *New York Times* article of October 17, 2014 purported: “Africa has plenty of diseases and plenty of diseases spread by mosquitos but Ebola is not one of them.” A similar article in the *New York Times* of October 17, 2014 reads thus:

In particular, many infectious disease doctors are driven toward international health, and in particular settings where resources are most limited. Even before Ebola came, West Africa was a place where infections were the leading cause of mortality. Global health groups often refer to the “big three” diseases that constitute the major causes of suffering: HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. But that
is only the beginning in West Africa. There is yellow fever, pneumococcal disease, meningitis, rickettsia infection, streptococcus and a host of other maladies that can shorten lives and bring general misery to a place.

Such media representations of Africa as poor, diseased and conflict ridden has been a thorny issue in international news flow discussions since the 70s. In fact, it was one of the issues raised in the UNESCO forum that addressed global communication imbalances that led to the establishment of the McBride commission in 1977. One of the many arguments made in series of UNESCO meetings was that Western news coverage of developing worlds reflects the priorities of news agencies. Rather than report fundamental realities in the developing nations, they concentrate on reporting natural disasters and military coups. Actually, following the Ethiopian famine of 1980, stories about Africa has mostly been riddled with themes that suggests the continent and its inhabitants are starving.

Studies have found that this narrative of evil has grown over the years rather than decline. Ross (2004) found that between 1998 and 2002, the number of stories about Africa tripled. However, most of the stories were along the lines of poor, starving, diseased and war-torn continent. Similarly, Nittle (2012) quoting Zukerman co-founder of Global Voices said “I think there’s a longstanding theme about ongoing famine and starvation, of chronic misgovernance, of Africa as a continent that needs to be saved….I’m not saying that every portrayal plays with those particular themes, but those are fairly common. Those clichés aren’t just sloppy writing. They’re sloppy thinking. They reflect Africa as helpless, Africa as a place where nothing good happens.” Rothmyer (2011) argued that despite the overall decline of the poverty rate in the African continent, Western media especially the US continues to portray the continent as the stuff horror stories are made off. According to the Rothmyer,
“Time magazine published graphic pictures of a naked woman from Sierra Leone dying in childbirth. Not long after, CNN did a story about two young Kenyan boys whose family is so poor they are forced to work delivering goats to a slaughterhouse for less than a penny per goat. Reinforcing the sense of economic misery, between May and September 2010 the ten most-read US newspapers and magazines carried 245 articles mentioning poverty in Africa, but only five mentioning gross domestic product growth.”

The pornification of poverty and conflict in Africa has been perpetuated in Western media over the years and the findings from this dissertation confirms that this kind of coverage is still ongoing. Such representation of an entire continent as a homogenous suffering and diseased group only serves to spread erroneous information that leads to further prejudice against persons of African descent. However, the nature of the event might also have contributed to the style of coverage by the Western media system. On one hand, talking about something this dangerous happening in Africa has the potential to unconsciously evoke similar stereotypes about the continent to make a story believable, entertaining and worthwhile. On the other hand, it could also signify a crop of ill-informed journalists that defer to stereotypes as heuristic shortcuts to provide context, rather than do due diligence. Although establishing the reason for this type of coverage is beyond the scope of this dissertation, this finding is in line with existing arguments about Western media othering and ignorance about the African continent (Dionne and Seay, 2015).

Furthermore, this finding might also be an indication of the relationship between diseases and conflict. Two of the three countries worst hit by this outbreak have been ravaged by civil wars in the past 30 years mostly as a result of the end of the cold war and IMF imposed
structural adjustment policy (Sherrill and Somerville, 2015). Iqbal and Zorn (2010) found that periods of violent conflicts and associated internal problems are conducive for diseases to take root and spread. So, this established relationship between conflicts and diseases might explain the reason Ebola was framed within the context of wars and poverty by the press system in the global north.

Africa the Charity Case and the White Savior Complex

A second theme that emerged from the analysis of coverage by the liberal media is the portrayal of Africa as a needy continent and in dire need of international charity and the presence of the white savior complex. The liberal media system framed Africa as a group of infantile nations incapable of handling such grave situation without external help. Such coverage tended to place importance on foreign expertise while pointedly negating local and grass root efforts. Little attention was paid to local health workers and abundance of health sources used in the articles were foreign experts volunteering on the continent. Coverage was perpetuated with an almost condescending contextualization of not just West Africa, but the entire continent suggesting a Western superiority.

Roger Ross, a professor of global development commenting on the white savior complex said “One of the most intrinsic characteristics of the white savior complex is its ability to ingrain and spread the notion that Westerners are the solution to African problems. This requires portraying the latter as helpless and endlessly recirculating images only of abandonment and violence, or innocence and primitivism.” An example of this kind of coverage appeared in the Guardian of August 21, 2014 which discussed UK’s £6.5m emergency Ebola research program.
This paragraph and others stood out in the very Western centric coverage found in the liberal system:

Among the projects they may look at, are case detection systems in places such as Sierra Leone and Liberia where there is illiteracy and weak health infrastructure and where accurate data on the spread of the disease is difficult to come by. This week the World Food Program announced it was stepping up emergency food deliveries after reports of shortages in quarantined areas.

News coverage of foreign doctors flown abroad for better health care seem to buttress the helpless Africa theme. This theme was illustrated in the Guardian of December 8, 2014 with headline that screams “Ebola survivor Ian Crozier speaks for the first time about illness; if I had stayed in Kenema, I would have been dead in a week.” This headline demonstrates that the situation in Africa is a hopeless one and urgent help is needed. President Obama quoted in the New York Times pledged to lead a global effort to confront Ebola in West Africa while arguing that his counterparts from other Western nations had been slow to respond to the outbreak.

Liberal media system coverage of the outbreak paid greater emphasis on what Western nations were doing to curb the outbreak and very little attention to what governments in the affected countries are doing. Statements such as “Finally the west acts on Ebola”; “UK launches 6.5m emergency Ebola research program”; “We cannot just fight this epidemic, we have to extinguish it”; “Three thousand America soldiers built three Ebola treatment centers in Liberia”; “Britain coordinating relief efforts” etc. were abundant in the liberal system reportage pointing to a Western centric approach to how the outbreak is being handled. This sort of journalism undermines local efforts and grass root community approach in tackling the epidemic. The liberal system narrative of the outbreak persistently framed coverage against the backdrop of white savior stories emphasizing health expert volunteers from Europe, UK and US, funding
from donor agencies, US military involvement and funds that has been set aside by western nations. The liberal media system coverage differed in this regard from coverage by the polarized pluralist system, which had a balanced emphasis on international help and local efforts.

This measured western centric framing of the Ebola outbreak by the liberal media system appears to belittle the efforts of those actually experiencing the problem and extols foreign expertise in handling epidemic of such magnitude while negating domestic capabilities. While such narratives are great examples of how national interests trump objectivity, they somehow conceal important aspects of global collaboration in the fight against infectious diseases such as Ebola. For example, I found that Nigeria, a country in West Africa was able to successfully bring an outbreak under control using a very limited but functional health infrastructure without foreign intervention. This laudable achievement was given very little attention by the press in the global north, thus ignoring the international significance of such accomplishment. Applauding efforts made by the global south in fighting the outbreak might ensure that when a disease of epidemic proportion emerges, the WHO could mobilize the capacity of the local health system first before rallying the international community for help.

**Are We Helping Africa Or Are We Helping Ourselves?**

My analysis revealed that the liberal media system used contradicting frames in their coverage of the outbreak. On one hand, journalists emphasized how the international community such as WHO, MSF, CDC and how Western governments have allocated funds to fight the virus, which is suggestive of a world that is fighting to ensure that Africa is saved from
the ravaging virus. This headline from *The New York Times* of October 17, 2014 supports this finding “White House Takes Drop-everything Approach to respond to Public Health Crisis.” A sentence from this same article reads thus “The president pledged to lead a global effort to confront the spread of Ebola in West Africa.” A similar paragraph reads, “Dr. Liu acknowledged an outpouring of financial and construction help from abroad in the past few months. The United States has led the outpouring, and President Obama exhorted Congress on Tuesday to approve a $6.18 billion funding request.” This theme was also prevalent in *The Guardian* articles. For instance, the article in *The Guardian* of September 19, 2014 reports thus “The UN remarks that we could stop the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in six to nine months, but only if a massive global response is implemented.” These assertions would suggest that the world rallying to stop Ebola in Africa shows a humanitarian gesture towards the continent.

However, further analysis of the articles from the liberal media system suggests that while the manifest reason for these gestures seemed altruistic, the latent motivation suggests a high self-preservation. Politicians and health workers alike emphasized the need to help Africa through funds and healthy manpower to safeguard them from the virus. An article written to discuss a CDC statement suggests that health experts should be encouraged to help in Africa as this would help stop the disease from spreading to the USA. The CDC statement reads thus, “The epidemic won’t end without them, and without their work, the US will be at increased risk,’ the C.D.C said. ‘We must protect their health, safety and well-being and treat them with respect when they return home while continuing to take action to protect Americans so Ebola does not spread here.” The returning health workers were referenced as “soldiers who go to battle to protect us.” Although it is universally acknowledged that there is no cure for the Ebola
virus, analysis revealed that available experimental drugs were reserved for American and
European health workers. Furthermore, Western media and indeed Western governments
refused to get involved in the struggle until it started affecting their citizens. This analysis
suggests that the “help” may not be entirely for Africa, but a self-preservation mechanism.

This contradiction suggests a “them vs us” narrative. Although the Western coverage
posed an “us” that promotes human liberty, rights and dignity by providing funds and
manpower to countries ravaged by diseases, they also inadvertently created a narrative that
implies that the West is doing everything to prevent everything “bad” in the African continent
from spreading to them. This finding has implications for global aids in general. It poses
questions of the real reason why Western nations give so much money as aid to Africa.

Impact of the Outbreak on Affected Nations

While the liberal system covered Ebola in the context of conflict, poverty and disease,
the polarized system emphasized the devastating impact of the outbreak on the continents
economy and general wellbeing and structural recovery plans in the aftermath of the
outbreak. Most of the articles in the polarized pluralist system highlighted the importance of
eradicating Ebola to ensure economic growth and national development. Take this paragraph
for example “This virus is also a threat to national development; therefore, it behooves all
citizens to abide by all anti-Ebola measures so that eventually this country can be declared
Ebola–free to accelerate development initiatives.” Coverage of Ebola by the media system in
the global south demonstrates the juxtaposition of the outbreak and national interest.
Eventually, the expatriate volunteers helping with the outbreak will leave the affected nations
alone to handle the devastating aftermath of the outbreak. Therefore, coverage in the
polarized system emphasized this and situated coverage within the confines of impact and post recovery plans.

Further analysis revealed that the Ebola outbreak had thrown a crushing socio-economic blow to the affected countries and even at the international level. There were reports on children orphaned by the outbreak evidenced by this quote from the *Concord Times* of December 8, 2014:

They say you don't have to be infected to be affected. This is true for 19 year-old Ramatulai Kargbo and his two brothers and sister who survived 42 days of quarantine after losing both their parents to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Ramatulai is scared she'll apparently now assume the strange role of breadwinner of her family, being the eldest. ‘I’m worried how we are going to survive and stay together as a family,’ she says between sobs, adding that her parents’ relatives are nowhere to be seen during this difficult period in their lives.

Reports that emphasized the economic consequences of travel restrictions that were initiated by some countries also abound such as this quote in *Thisday* of August 15, 2014:

This will further shrink their economy. There will be negative impact on the country's economy. This will include everything; not only the airlines, commerce and other things, but even the aviation support industry will be affected. You are talking about the airport, the catering, handling companies, the airlines, oil marketers that are supplying Jet A1 to them. It will affect the entire economy of that sub sector. We will see a reduction in the countries that are affected...I believe that in the next few weeks, there will be negative economic impact to the countries affected. I cannot put figures to it but we are losing a lot of revenue. We are losing revenue because of daily flights. We have about four flights to Liberia and about three flights to Freetown and we were connecting Ghana with Freetown. We were also connecting Ghana with Monrovia and Banjul, so there are a lot of economic activities that are going on within the West Africa countries, which now is not being done. Of course there is economic loss there. Movement will be affected ad restricted.

There were also evidence of a general fear and anxiety about what the future holds. The crippling effect of the outbreak was evident in news articles regardless of what the overall
report was about. According to the World Bank, the Ebola outbreak will cause Guinea’s GDP to reduce by 2.1%, Liberia by 3.4% and Sierra Leone by 3.3%. The fiscal impact of these percentages are great especially for nations that are still recovering from catastrophic civil conflicts. The outbreak might also cause a reverse in the GDP growth of the affected nations and the stifle the recent flow of foreign direct investment the countries have been able to attract post-civil war. An article in The Inquirer of December 3, 2014 states, “The socio-economic impact of the Ebola medical emergency will be felt long after the crisis has ended. It is already affecting the means of making a living of millions of the poorest and most vulnerable people in these countries, as well as the ability of governments to provide basic services to their populations.”

Furthermore, the outbreak and its appurtenances, caused a hike in food prices triggering citizens to horde food. The continuous rise of food prices prompted a dissatisfied population to violently break curfew and quarantine in search of food. As a consequence of the uncertain economic fate of the affected countries, the polarized pluralist media coverage placed emphasis on ways to curb economic hardship despite the outbreak. For instance, this paragraph in the Inquirer of August 15, 2014 contextualized the outbreak against the backdrop of its economic impact. The paragraphs states:

President stressed that the hiking of prices for goods and services in the country is unacceptable. Minister Brown said be it goods, services rendered or transportation fare, nobody is too hike prices as the current situation in the country already has an economic implication. However, as the situation is today, the prices of goods and services are skyrocketing, some being increased at the rate of hundred percent while at times transportation fares are increased by over hundred and fifty percent at the detriment of the ordinary citizens who have been asked to stay home during the Ebola epidemic which has claimed over a thousand lives in Liberia, sierra Leone and Guinea.
At the national level the outbreak also affected commerce. The temporary closure of some borders and internal business establishments and the imposition of curfew to curb movement and the spread of the virus, have inadvertently affected cross-border trading and small scale commerce as well as had a huge impact on exportation earnings. Certain industries which dominate the affected countries economy have been hard hit and have suspended operations albeit temporarily. Analysis of the news stories revealed that in Guinea for instance, agriculture has been halted and production of staples such as rice, coffee and cocoa has been greatly affected. Similarly, in Liberia rubber exportation also reduced dramatically. This paragraph in *Concord Times* of October 19 captures this economic effect, “The impact of Ebola and of the crisis in the mining sector will continue to dampen economic activity in 2015 and possibly into 2016, the report indicates. It is projected that the economy will contract by 2.5% in 2015 but will pick up gradually in 2016. Due to the effects of Ebola, inflationary pressures have been higher in 2014 than anticipated and only a gradual easing is projected.” This article on *Thisday* of August 15, 2014 suggests similar sentiments:

Ebola outbreak in West Africa threatens to exact a severe economic toll, analysts said yesterday, as stricken countries remained in lockdown and rushed to bolster emergency responses. The shutting down of schools, borders and government services in the worst-affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone could have a significant impact on already impoverished nations. The outbreak risks having a direct financial effect on government budgets via increased health expenditures that could be significant.

Aside the overall impact on the foreign direct investment and GDP of affected nations, monies that could have been budgeted for infrastructural development will have to go towards fighting the outbreak, further stifling domestic growth. Furthermore, coverage suggests that the impact
of the outbreak will persist even after the crisis is brought under control, consequently emphasizing the importance of effective post outbreak reconstruction plan.

**Global Collaboration with Local Efforts**

In contrast to the very western-centric approach to coverage used by the liberal system, the polarized pluralist system framed the Ebola coverage as a global collaboration between the global north and the global south. Coverage emphasized local efforts as well as international efforts in the fight to end the outbreak. It highlights West Africa's efforts to tackle the Ebola crisis which was largely overlooked by the press in the liberal system, even though Africans and African nations have taken the lead in providing frontline staff and shown themselves capable of fighting the outbreak with little help from outsiders. An interesting aspect of the kind of coverage in the polarized pluralist system highlights the importance of local and international collaboration as a crucial step for the successful implementation of health plans.

Furthermore, it is almost impossible to lead a sustainable intervention program without local help. In the past, there have been instances where foreign workers have taken advantage of locals and administered deadly medications or used them as guinea pigs for trials. These negative Western antecedents makes it highly unlikely that natives would be willing to trust foreigners in situations like this. This sense of distrust was prevalent and threatened efforts to fight the outbreak. A collaboration with locals ensures that respect for customs and traditions are upheld which further engenders trust in western health workers. It is easier for locals to understand why they need to change certain practices such as sacred burial practices which are
considered unsafe if the idea comes from a fellow local than when it comes from a foreigner who in their opinion does not know much about the importance of culture.

Such contextualization of the outbreak within the confines of global collaboration were captured in several articles in the polarized pluralist system. There was always a mention of local organizations working in conjunction with some foreign organization to implement a campaign program. This article in the Concord Times of December 8, 2014 which discusses the importance of controlling Malaria which has similar symptoms with Ebola exemplifies the sentiments expressed in prior paragraphs:

Reducing the number of people exhibiting high fever will result in less patients requiring screening and isolation care to eliminate Ebola as the cause of illness. UNICEF, in partnership with The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Médecins Sans Frontières, WHO and Roll Back Malaria is supporting the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the National Ebola Response Center to roll out the first round of the campaign in the Northern Province and Western Area of Sierra Leone, from 5th to 8th December. A second round of the anti-malaria drug distribution will take place in January 2015, noted a release issued by UNICEF last Friday. With funding from the German government, over 9,300 community health workers were trained and will go door to door and help administer the drug regimen, consisting of the proven anti-malarial Artesunate and Amodiaquine (AS + AQ) tablets, to all ages 6 months and above.

This paragraph points out the collaboration among different international organizations and donor countries with local health workers in the campaign to slow down the spread of malaria through the administration of prophylaxis. This paragraph from Concord Times of April 7, 2015 suggests similar collaborative sentiment “Sierra Leone Police's Complaint Discipline and Internal Investigations Department (CDIID) is transforming itself with help from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)”. This type of collaborative theme was evidently lacking in the liberal media system coverage of the outbreak.
Apart from global collaborations, the press in the polarized pluralist system also highlighted local efforts in the fight against the outbreak. Further analysis revealed that the press in the polarized system also stressed the volunteers from other African countries like Nigeria which the press in the liberal system had failed to mention in their coverage of the outbreak. This except from the *The Inquirer* of Dec 3, 2014 supports this finding:

The Bassa Youth Caucus, the parent body of all youth organizations in Grand Bassa County embarked on a door-to-door, house-to-house; community-to-community Ebola sensitization campaign sponsored and supported by Arcelor Mittal Liberia during the senatorial election campaign in Bassa and the theme of the campaign was (MAKE BASSA EBOLA-FREE). Over 75 persons were trained to go out in the various communities with flyers and other preventive items telling the people to be very careful how they go about the campaign, because Ebola is still in Liberia and it’s real, so everyone must work together to kick Ebola out of the country.

A similar except from *The Inquirer* of Dec 3, 2014 also highlights the role of other African nations in the fight to eradicate the epidemic in the affected countries. See below:

A group of 150 Nigerian Volunteer health-care professionals that will include Medical Epidemiologists, Field Epidemiologists, Physicians, Nurses, Laboratory Technologists, Laboratory Scientists, Data Managers, Psycho-social Professionals, etc., will be arriving tomorrow in Liberia. The group, which will be coming under the aegis of the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA), will be led by Dr. Joshua Obasanya of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (CDC). Dr. Obasanya is the Deputy Head of Mission for ASEOWA under Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Julius Oketta. He will be in charge of the ASEOWA team in Liberia. Dr. Obasanya was part of the group of experts that effectively eradicated the Ebola disease in Nigeria.

The differences in coverages especially the emphasis on efforts by the two media systems shows how the politics and environment of a system affects framing and tone of coverage. It is not surprising that the press in the liberal media system focused on the efforts of the international community and governments in the fight against Ebola while completely
overlooking the efforts of the people and governments in the affected region. In fact, analysis showed that rather than discuss local efforts (albeit with limitations), the liberal system took on a righteously indignant position, calling out the international community for not responding promptly to the public health crisis. However, before WHO, the U.S, U.K and other Western states eventually intervened, local health workers had been battling the outbreak without it becoming a global calamity. This dedication to duty despite the accompanying hazards should have been used by the liberal system to give the outbreak some objective perspective.

On the other hand, the press in the polarized pluralist media system may have highlighted local and international efforts because of characteristics of the system that encourages such coverage. For instance, countries in the polarized system have perpetually been dependent on foreign aid and this has become part of the system, making it impossible to frame events without some foreign intervention context. Furthermore, some of these countries have a long relationship with foreign countries via colonialism and that deferential relationship still persists till date and have infected the press system. Additionally, because this outbreak happened in their backyards, it is impossible to talk about eradication without mentioning local efforts in the process.

Unfortunately, because the press in the polarized pluralist system do not have the international clout that the press in the liberal system has, efforts by local people are sometimes overlooked or not commended. Although analysis in the polarized system shows that the international community provided much needed funds and infrastructure, the affected countries and volunteers from other African nations provided the manpower and reacted effectively to the crisis. In fact, the Africa Union (AU) deployed more than 835 African health
workers to the affected regions. Unfortunately, with so many actors working to fight this epidemic, it seemed that the loudest voices were given credit for the Ebola efforts.

This finding supports the idea that news organizations pander to the idea of proximity and localization of international incidents. To make events like the Ebola outbreak interesting and newsworthy, crises that seem to develop from abroad are framed by injecting localized content so that they become relevant to local target audience. Most times, this kind of coverage become opportunities for local politicians to score points especially during an election cycle. However, such coverage also detracts from the voices that really matter in such situations. Figure 2 below shows a summary of the differences in coverage found between the liberal system and the polarized pluralist system.

**Differences in the Use of Political Advocacy and Civic Advocacy**

I also uncovered the use of advocacy by the liberal media system which was contrary to what I expected to find. What was interesting in this finding was that while the polarized pluralist media system used little advocacy in how they framed the Ebola outbreak, there were also discrepancies in how media organizations within the liberal media system employed advocacy in the coverage of the crisis. The media in the UK represented in this dissertation by *the Guardian* used more civic advocacy while the media in the USA used more partisan type coverage. The UK media were more supportive of African nations affected with Ebola. They called out foreign media organizations and even acknowledged the unfair type of coverage western media organizations have given Africa since the advent of the outbreak.
Figure 2: Framing differences between the liberal system and the polarized pluralist system.

For instance, this article in *The Guardian* of April 7, 2015 headlined “Ebola; Media overlooked Africa’s role in combating crisis” emphasizes this point. A paragraph in this article citing the African Union reads thus “Africa’s effort to tackle Ebola crisis have been largely overlooked even though Africans have taken the lead in providing frontline staff and shown themselves ‘better placed to fight infectious diseases in their continent than outsiders.’

Although my findings shows that *The Guardian* was also guilty of emphasizing international coverage, it was also more inclined to acknowledge that African countries could
have been given more favorable type of coverage especially during situations like the outbreak.

To support the civic advocacy kind of coverage finding in the UK, see the article in The Guardian of November 11, 2014. The story in the article called out Sir Bob Geldorf for reviving Band Aid to raise money for countries afflicted with Ebola. Thirty years ago, Band Aid had released “Do They Know It’s Christmas” to raise money for victims of the 1984 Ethiopia Famine.

However, this article argues that staging a charity concert every time a disaster strikes Africa was not useful. The article stressed the effects of global economic policies on the plight of Africa and also called out the popular narrative which always “places the west in the position of benevolent elders, helping out poor Africans, mouths always needy and yawning, on their constantly blighted continent, and leaves out harder to pin down villains: local corruption, yes but also global economic policies that do little to pull some countries out of the depths of entrenched poverty.” Another article that suggests a civic advocacy theme in the Guardian argued that while Ebola broke out in countries that are war-torn and riddled with corruption, there was a much deeper problem, which lies at the “pathology of our society and the global political and economic architecture.” This article rather than go the usual poor African route, chose instead to illuminate the economic growth that the countries in Africa has experienced and how global free-market dogma had ensured that foreign countries siphon the wealth generated in West Africa. The type of advocacy journalism used by the Guardian positions the Ebola outbreak as a wakeup call for world leaders to proffer solutions that challenge the core of the economic exploitation going on in the African continent rather than one that encourages occasional financial aid.
The media in the United States on the other hand used more partisan advocacy in coverage, emphasizing political parties, party ideology, and effects of Ebola on Immigration policy. In fact, findings demonstrate that the approach to Ebola in the USA became a political debate that boils down to party affiliations. Analysis of coverage indicates that guidelines on the best way to handle the outbreak may have broken down along party lines, with Republicans demanding restrictions and most Democrats claiming restrictions would be counterproductive.

This article in the New York Times of October 31, 2014 with the headline “From Governors, a mix of Hardline Acts and Conciliation over Ebola,” illustrates how coverage of the outbreak has become a politically polarizing hot topic. The article articulates how Governors with different party affiliations feel about the outbreak. The article suggests that Republican Governors have approached the outbreak with harsher monitoring, quarantine and restriction guidelines for returning health workers. This paragraph captures this sentiment succinctly: “In Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, a Republican, issued a stern warning on Thursday to medical experts coming to an international conference on tropical diseases that they should stay away if they had been in Ebola-affected countries the past 21 days, and they who defied would be confined to their hotel rooms.” Another paragraph from the same piece attributed to the Governor of Maine also captures the Republican stance on Ebola “And here in Maine, Gov. Raul R Lepage, a Republican, said he was simply trying to enforce federal guidelines when he called for quarantining a nurse who recently returned from Sierra Leone.” Another article in the New York Times of October 17, 2014 further cements this finding. The article reads thus:

......... during an exchange about a ban on travel from affected countries, which republican lawmakers continued to press for, Fred Upton, a Republican from Michigan, said he wanted to know why federal authorities could not simply look at incoming people’s travel histories ‘and say, no, you’re not coming here.’ Dr.
Frieden countered that people would continue to travel to the United States, but it would be harder to track them. He also pointed out that American citizens made up a significant share of those arriving from the affected countries. But lawmakers did not give up. ‘There’s no restrictions for travel on humans, but what about dogs?’ said Morgan Griffith, Republican of Virginia. ‘Don’t you think we should at least restrict the travel of Dogs?’

The Democratic side was framed to have taken a more placatory or uncertain stance of how best to handle the situation. Analysis of news stories revealed that Democrats have been flip flopping with respect to how best to approach the situation. This paragraph from *The New York Times* of October 31, 2014, demonstrates this, “But in New York, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, a Democrat, who last week called for mandatory quarantine for health care workers returning from West Africa, sounded a more conciliatory note, joining Mayor Bill de Blasio to announce financial incentives to encourage health professionals to go to West Africa to treat Ebola patients. Similarly another article suggested that because of the tough re-election race, politicians are taking a different direction on previous stance on the issue. Consider this paragraph “After facing withering criticism from her Republican rival, Ms Hagan (a Democrat) changed her mind on Friday and called for immediate action. I am calling on the administration to temporarily ban the travel of non-US. Citizens from the affected countries in West Africa, Ms. Hagan said in a statement.”

Although this finding goes contrary to extant literature which contends that the polarized media system should be prone to advocacy because of the high level of press instrumentalization (see Waisbord, 2009), the inconsistencies within the liberal media system are not surprising. This finding is consistent with literature that maintains that the idea of objectivity on the side of the media in the United Kingdom is a mere assumption. Journalists in
the UK have always embraced the idea of pursuing accuracy and using findings to campaign for causes (Esser and Umbricht, 2014). The British kind of journalism does not fully embrace objectivity like their American counterpart, but injects civic advocacy as a journalistic norm. This finding is in line with what Schudson (2001) asserted, “The British case may be a kind of half-way house between American professionalism and continental traditions of party-governed journalism with high literary aspirations” (p. 167). Hallin and Mancini (2004) grouped the USA and the UK under the same media system because of the media and political similarities which they share. However, there are still some differences in journalistic professionalism that play a part in shaping news coverage as this finding demonstrates. Figure 3 below summarizes how the USA and the UK used advocacy in the coverage of the outbreak in West Africa.

**Research Question 2: What were the similarities in how the media in each system framed the outbreak?**

The analysis showed that despite the many differences in coverage, certain themes appeared consistently across media systems. These similarities in coverage demonstrate the mediating effects of globalization on transatlantic news coverage. Moreover, the nature of the outbreak which demanded international response thus leading to a prioritization of humanitarian values over national interests may have precipitated the emergence of similar frames in the analysis. The next set of themes discussed directly addresses the second research question and shows the uniformity in coverage between the liberal system and the polarized system.
The incompetent Frame

The incompetence of affected African countries emerges from my analysis of framing similarities across media systems. It was clear that reporters in the two systems agreed that West African countries were ill-equipped to handle the outbreak. To arrive at this conclusion, in the liberal system, I merged codes that negatively referenced the West African health system, corruption, lack of expertise and poverty. For the polarized pluralist system, I merged codes that referenced the crumbling health system, unavailability of infrastructure, a complacent government, financial issues and crises among health workers together to create the incompetent theme.

Both systems arrived at this themes via different ways but the consensus seemed to point to the ineptitude that is prevalent in Africa and a fear that it might lead to a further
spread of the virus without international help. The analysis showed that there were constant references to the loopholes in affected states and other West African nations that makes it impossible for them to handle an epidemic of such proportion. Both press systems mentioned a paucity of medical personnel and the lack of expertise of local health workers, hence the need for foreign health worker volunteers. As this article in the New York Times of September 9, 2014 says:

Transmission of the Ebola virus in Liberia is already intense and the number of new cases is increasing exponentially, the organization said in a statement on its website. "The number of new cases is moving far faster than the capacity to manage them in Ebola-specific treatment centers. Of the 152 health care workers in Liberia who have been infected, the statement said, 79 have died. The paucity of medical personnel in Liberia, with a population of 4.4 million, was a severe problem even before the Ebola outbreak escalated into a crisis. The World Health Organization's statement said that when the outbreak began, Liberia had only one doctor per 100,000 people. Every infection or death of a doctor or nurse depletes response capacity significantly, said the statement, titled "Situation in Liberia: Nonconventional Interventions Needed."

Similarly, this New York Times article of December 3, 2014 which reads, “But Dr. Liu said most of the work of tracking, isolating and treating patients, burying the dead and raising awareness to minimize contagion had fallen to the three poor countries at the heart of the outbreak: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Local doctors, nurses and charity workers, some lacking expertise, are still carrying an inordinate burden” highlights the lack of expertise and incompetence of the local health care system to handle the outbreak. In fact, my analysis reveal that referring to Africa as incompetent by both sides is a strategy devised to hasten international intervention. An article which discusses MSF cry for international help says, “the slow response, risks creating "a double failure" because ill-equipped locals in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea have been left to run hospitals and treatment centers.”
Furthermore, news stories suggested that foreign health workers who fell ill fighting the disease, would have the best treatment abroad rather than in the local hospitals ill-equipped to effectively treat Ebola. An example of this kind of coverage found in the liberal system is this sentence in the Guardian of January 5, 2015, “At the Royal Free and similar hi-tech hospitals, an Ebola patient who suffers organ failure from the viral attack can be supported in intensive care, which is not possible in West Africa. Cafferkey is in the best possible place to fight off the virus, she is relatively young at 39, and the infection was diagnosed at an early stage.”

Interestingly, the analysis carried out seemed to suggest that the health system of the affected countries is in shambles because of the poverty levels in these countries, which had made it impossible for governments to have a sustainable and workable health system. According to an article in the Guardian August 21, 2014 “In the US, Donald Trump tweeted that American Ebola victims should not be brought home. Yet international health experts agree that the failure to contain the outbreak is due to the broken health systems in the affected countries, which are among the poorest in the world, two of which are still rebuilding following a decade of war. Simply put, this would not happen in Britain or the US.” This generates the idea that the damaged health system in the affected countries, which is different from the health systems in the U.S and UK has created a situation that enables the spread of Ebola rather than one that contains it.

The incompetent frame also manifested in the analysis of the polarized pluralist system. Although this frame showed up via a different route from the liberal system, themes that emerged from the codes point to a coverage that accentuated the inability of the affected nations to stop the outbreak. A code emerged that suggested a paucity of daily necessities
required in the isolation centers. Materials like food and toiletries were not readily available
and this affected the isolation and quarantine moves by the local ministry of health. Locals
were eventually moved by hunger to break quarantine so they could look for food and this
created a hostile environment that necessitated the use of force by the local law enforcement
to maintain order. This suggests that affected countries were ill prepared with funds, secured
facilities, relief material etc. to safely manage the outbreak. This paragraph from the *Inquirer* of
August 15, 2014 captures this:

Amidst positive news of the survival of persons affected by the Ebola virus, latest
report says victims at the ELWA Ebola Isolation Center are leaving the camp due
to lack of food. Disclosing this at the National Ebola Task Force Meeting held at
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia yesterday, Health Minister, Walter
Gwenigale, said he had received several calls from the center that the people are
hungry and need food. According to Dr. Gwenigale, based on this latest report,
most of the victims are now leaving the center which is a major threat to several
communities in which those leaving are going. "I'm getting calls every day of the
lack of food; the people say they are hungry and I understand that there is food
there but I'm getting these calls every minute," Liberia's Health Minister
Gwenigale said.

From my study of the newspapers, I gathered that one way to contain the spread of the
virus is to isolate suspected cases. However, my analysis showed that even with the foreign
help imported into the affected countries, the isolation centers were spread thin and proper
medical transportations were lacking. Similar to the liberal system, coverage by the polarized
system mentioned the lack of proper facilities necessary to fight the outbreak. These
paragraphs from *The Inquirer* of December 3, 2014 and the *Concord Times* of October 2, 2015
captures this finding succinctly:

Across the region, there are still not adequate facilities for isolating and diagnosing
patients where they are needed. In rural areas of Liberia where there are active
chains of transmission, for example, there are no transport facilities for laboratory
samples. In Sierra Leone, scores of people calling in to the national Ebola hotline to report a suspected case are told to isolate the person at home. Meanwhile, other elements that are essential to an Ebola response - such as awareness-raising and community acceptance, safe burials, contact tracing, alert and surveillance - are still lacking in parts of West Africa. In Guinea, for example, where the epidemic continues to spread, awareness-raising and sensitization remains very weak – especially for an intervention that began eight months ago.

It's over eighteen (18) months now since the dreaded Ebola virus disease hit the sub-region, starting off in the neighboring sister Republic of Guinea, thence through Liberia and unto Sierra Leone. To say that its wake caught our healthcare delivery infrastructure pants down would be a serious understatement, because beyond the buildings and the uniformed personnel manning them, we had absolutely nothing .... And as we later proved, beyond the politically influenced high sounding "official" directorate titles they carried, those on whom responsibility for our medical care devolved almost wished they were in more mundane professions, like Cobblers (Shoemakers) instead, when the disease struck.

Although both systems framed Africa as incompetent, they arrived at this through different means. The liberal system was more interested in the broken health system of the affected countries and the lack of trained health workers. The polarized pluralist system, on the other hand concentrated more on the poor availability of food, everyday necessities, and a complacent government. Figure 4 below is a word cloud that shows the differences in the words used by the liberal and the polarized media system to capture the incompetence frame.

**Self and Societal Efficacy Communication**

Another major theme that appeared across media systems is efficacy framing and correction of misconceptions. My analysis revealed that the outbreak elicited a host of fake information about the disease and efficacy measures which went viral via social media. In fact, drinking salt water solution was rumored to prevent catching the virus.
Figure 4. Word Clouds representing Incompetence Frame by System Type.
An article in *Thisday* newspaper of August 20, 2014 addressed this rumor thus “A general feeling of helplessness has defined the national mood. Some callous mischief-makers spread the spurious story of salt as the cure. As a result, more people might have died of panicky brine bath than Ebola.” These kinds of rumors only lead to more non-Ebola related deaths. The five traditional media which I analyzed used their platform to address these misinformation and to give accurate and evidence-based best practices on how to handle the outbreak. To address the misinformation flying around concerning how Ebola is transmitted, several articles framed coverage in such a way that addresses the several misconceptions flying around about the outbreak. One of such article appeared in *The Guardian* and reads thus:

...reporting of the Ebola outbreak has been consistently overblown. Early reports claimed the virus was passed on to humans through the consumption of fruit bats, an apparent delicacy .....In a scientific paper, I found a more convincing explanation: the bats hang in rafters of buildings, dropping their contaminated feces and urine below. ... In West Africa, those at risk are the very poor, their carers (sic) and health workers, true, the disease has no cure, but reported death rates of 90% are wrong. The actual figure is 50% to 55%. Agencies struggling to contain the outbreak took the international media to task for an inflated figure, causing locals to view Ebola centers as no more than a place to die and therefore refuse to report symptoms.

Furthermore, *The Inquirer* of August 15, 2014 contends that, “The media will continue the education and sensitization of the Ebola awareness to assist in the eradication of the deadly Ebola virus in the country.” This paragraphs suggests that the media has taken on the role of educators in this instance in the collective fight to obliterate the virus. To reinforce this position, several also took on the efficacy communication frame. This article in *The Guardian* of October 31, 2014 explains how the disease is not spread contrary to widespread belief and how it is spread according to research based findings. See the paragraph:
Ebola is not an air-born disease and can only spread from human to human through close contact with the bodily fluids of someone who has the disease—blood, vomit, semen, urine, tears or saliva. The incubation period—the gap between an individual being infected and showing symptoms—is up to 21 days, meaning it is possible for an infected person to travel widely before they know they have the disease. Humans are not infectious until they develop symptoms, which at first are fever, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. These are followed by vomiting, diarrhea, and rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function and in some cases internal and external bleeding.

The above paragraph suggests that one of the ways the media framed the outbreak was through the provision of efficacy communication. A media report that emphasizes actions that the public can take to reduce risk such as description of symptoms and information about personal protection, is communicating self-efficacy, while that which emphasizes how political actors are handling the situation is communicating societal efficacy (Evensen & Clarke, 2012).

Information on self-efficacy addresses symptoms and personal protection (Roche and Muskavitch 2003). Self-efficacy was a theme that I found appeared consistently across systems. Findings from the analyses revealed that reporting information on self-efficacy was the main objective of most of the articles. There were article that were written with the sole purpose of explaining symptoms and protective measures and geared towards educating people on how the disease is transmitted and how best to avoid contracting it. An article in The Guardian of January 5, 2015 used an infected health worker to stress the symptoms and pathology of the disease. The part of the article that buttresses this point reads thus:

When the virus enters the body, it starts to replicate, at first without being detected. Cafferkey was not infectious when she arrived at Heathrow because she did not yet have a temperature indicating a fever—the first sign that viral levels have risen high enough to cause symptoms. It is what follows—the vomiting,
diarrhea and bleeding—that will infect other people if they are unprotected. When Cafferkey first arrived at the Royal Free, she was sitting up in bed, reading and talking and apparently well. But within few days, the virus in her body had replicated to sufficiently high levels to threaten her survival.

Further analysis revealed that the media in both systems also took it upon themselves to address certain cultural practices that are deemed unsafe and fertile breeding ground for the virus to spread. One of such is the traditional burial practices in West Africa. Culturally, burial of loved one included body touching that might involve fluid. This is considered unsafe because the levels of virus in the infected are at their highest in dead bodies. By addressing these unsafe cultural practices, the media take on the role of educators. *The Guardian* of October 31, 2014 captures this sentiments accurately:

> Levels of virus in infected people are the highest in the late stage of the disease and in dead bodies. The disease often spread during traditional funeral practices that involve close contact with the corpse. Burial teams in protective clothing are being dispatched to homes to collect and safely dispose of the bodies. Another route of transmission has been traditional healing practices, which involve touching. Families are at high risk when they nurse their sick at home, as is the traditional norm.

Furthermore, *The Inquirer* of December 3, 2014 “stressed the issue of safe burial, isolation of sick people, contact tracing, the availability of medical and bio-medical infrastructure....because dead bodies being removed from their homes are still tested positive of having the Ebola virus.”

These articles are example of coverage that emphasized self-efficacy.

One of the biggest and most dominant themes that appeared across systems in the form of societal efficacy. News stories abound that focused on what actors were doing, have done or intend to do to curb the epidemic. This theme appeared in clusters of actions by the government of different countries, actions of health workers and actions of WHO and other international organizations. Across board, reports highlighting actions of the various
governments popped up constantly. For example, in The Guardian of August 21, there was a report about UK launching a £6.5 million emergency Ebola research program, another report claimed that WHO had set aside a $100 million fund as back up for emergency plan by the three affected countries. An article in the Concord Times of December, 2014 mentioned funding from the German government which will be used to train 9,300 community health workers.

Similarly, The New York Times of August 20, 2014, report that WHO was collaborating with the United Nations World Food Program to feed about one million people also indicates that influential actors were increasing efforts to stop the epidemic and alleviate the suffering of the affected. A paragraph in an article read, “International health officials have concentrated intensively on the hospital in the last several days, training healthcare workers, preparing a more secure isolation ward, establishing rigorous separation zones—low risk, high risk—.” Another story detailed WHO’s declaration of an international public health emergency and Doctors without Borders calling for a ‘massive deployment’ of medical workers to affected areas. Stories detailing the efforts of doctors from Medicine San Frontier also appeared constantly, generally showing that the group was providing the much needed help. Affected governments on the other hand, were reported to have declared a state of emergency in their countries and are putting policies in place to ensure the disease is controlled.

The findings demonstrate an abundance of self-efficacy and societal efficacy kind of communication across media system. Both type of efficacy were dominant in my analysis. While the societal efficacy theme finding is consistent with most findings of analysis of disease coverage in the media, information on self-efficacy in the media is generally low notwithstanding the area of focus (see DeSilva et al. 2004; Moriarty and Stryker, 2008). This
discrepancies may have something to do with the nature of the outbreak and the pathology of the disease itself, which has been shown to have no cure and instantly fatal. This also happened in an era of social media and information going viral. Thus, there was a need for traditional media to step in and provide the much needed sanity and accuracy to prevent further problems. Figure 5 below illustrates the similarities found across media systems and some of the codes that explains the themes.

**Summary of Qualitative Result**

The qualitative section of this dissertation tried to find answers to the two research questions posed in chapter 4. The qualitative results revealed differences as well as similarities in coverage. Analysis shows that the liberal media system framing of the Ebola outbreak fell into three major categories that differed from the polarized pluralist framing. Journalists in the liberal media system emphasized the limitations of the African continent in the coverage of Ebola.

Frames that emerged from the liberal media system include, the war-torn and diseased Africa, Africa the charity case and the western savior complex, and the are we helping Africa or are we helping ourselves frame. On the other hand, the polarized pluralist media system framing of the outbreak differed from the liberal media system framing because they emphasized the broader implications of the outbreak. Frames that emerged include the rallying world and life after the outbreak and impact of the outbreak.
RQ2: Similar Frames Across Media Systems

- Africa as Incompetent Frame
  - Reference to a broken health system
  - Reference to corruption
  - Reference to a lack of expertise
  - Reference to Poverty

- Polarized Pluralist System
  - Reference to poor infrastructure
  - Reference to a complacent public and government
  - Reference to financial issues
  - Reference to better treatment facilities abroad
  - Reference to training health workers
  - Reference to mode of transmission
  - Reference to actions of international donor agencies
  - Reference to foreign government aid
  - Reference to the rumours
  - Reference to local and foreign government actions
  - Reference to deial and unsafe cultural practices

- Liberal System
  - Reference to training health workers
  - Reference to mode of transmission
  - Reference to actions of international donor agencies
  - Reference to foreign government aid

- Self And Societal Efficacy Communication

Figure 5: Similarities in frames across media system types.
Furthermore, there were evidence of framing similarities across systems. Both media systems framed the outbreak along the lines of portraying Africa as incompetent to handle an epidemic of such proportion. The two systems referenced paucity of infrastructure, complacent local government and a broken health system among other things. Additionally, both media systems took on the role of educators, and tried to communicate self- and societal efficacy through the news.
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS FOR THE QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

To test the hypotheses presented in chapter 3 of this dissertation, I estimate a series of cross-tabs with chi-square significance tests. In this chapter, I first present the composition of the data and then I discuss the results of the quantitative content analysis.

Composition of the Data

The data used for this analysis were composed of news stories from the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist media system. Two hundred and eighty nine stories were sourced from LexisNexis data base. Out of the 289 news stories that I analyzed, 45.6% were from The New York Times and The Guardian which represents the liberal media systems while 54.4% of the stories analyzed were from Thisday, Concord Times and The Inquirer which represent the polarized pluralist media system. Furthermore, of the sample from the liberal system, 26.1% of the articles were from The New York Times, which represents the news media in the USA and 19.5% were from The Guardian, representing the news media from the UK. On the other hand, of the sample from the polarized pluralist system, 20.6% were from Thisday newspaper representing the news media from Nigeria (20.6%), while 19.9% were from the Concord Times newspaper representing the news media from Sierra Leone and 13.9% were from The Inquirer, representing the news media from Liberia. Additionally, the news stories from both media systems had local bylines suggesting that they were home grown rather than wire service sourced. Table 2 and Figure 6 and summarizes the composition of the data and the percentages of the data from each medium and each media system.
Table 2. Data description by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Systems</th>
<th>Polarized Pluralist</th>
<th>Liberal System</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thisday</td>
<td>Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59(20.6%)</td>
<td>57(19.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>156 (54.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Data composition by medium and media system type

Results for Advocacy and Partisan Frame

Recall that hypothesis 1a suggested that coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of advocacy journalism by media system type, while hypothesis 1b suggested that coverage of the
outbreak will vary in the use of partisan frames by media system type. In chapter 3, I explained how evolutions regarding press-state relations in media systems has led to the development of advocacy journalism in the polarized pluralist media system. Because advocacy is argued to be anti-objectivity, which is the ideal most journalists aspire towards, most media organizations in the past have decried advocacy as a journalistic norm. However, recent changes in the media/political landscape have changed this rhetoric and journalists are taking more active and assertive roles in their reporting (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Journalism culture that is interventionist in nature usually acts as the mouth piece of the socially disadvantaged or a political party and the purpose is mostly to intervene and promote change. According to Hanitsch (2007), this kind of culture is prevalent in media systems in the global south in which developmental journalism is popular. Moreover, characteristics of the polarized pluralist system such as late democratization encourage advocacy journalism. On the other hand, Waisbord (2009), asserts that because of the values inherent in journalistic objectivity and political detachment, the US media which is part of the liberal media system rejects advocacy as a norm. Notwithstanding this deliberate stance, partisanship has managed to sneak into mainstream media, leading to the development of partisan news organizations like Fox news and MSNBC.

Therefore, H1a predicted a difference in use of advocacy by media-system type. This hypothesis was supported in the analysis. However, the direction is contrary to expectations. The cross tab results showed that the liberal media system used more advocacy journalism in their coverage of the Ebola outbreak than the polarized pluralist media system. As Figure 7 illustrates, the cross tab results showed that 10.7% of the articles from the liberal media system
used advocacy as a frame while 2.6% of the articles from the polarized pluralist system used advocacy as a frame in the coverage of the Ebola outbreak. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2 = 6.670$, df=1, $p = .01$). This contradicts extant literature on advocacy which suggests that conditions in the polarized pluralist media system favors the use of advocacy journalism more than the liberal media system.

The second hypothesis 1b predicted a difference in the use of Partisan frame by media-system type. This hypothesis was also supported. Coverage of the Ebola outbreak varied in use of partisan frame by media-system type. Figure 8 graphically illustrates the cross-tab results which shows that 19.1% of the articles from the liberal media system used partisan frame in the coverage of the Ebola outbreak while 5.1% of the article from the polarized pluralist system used partisan frame in the coverage of the outbreak. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2 = 12.291$, df=1, $p = .000$). Table 3 summarizes the results of the hypotheses presented in this section.

Table 3: Differences in advocacy and partisan frame by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Type</th>
<th>Percentages of sources within media systems</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal System</td>
<td>Polarized Pluralist System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisan</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = .000  ** p < .01  *** p < .05  
**Note:** Frame type percentages do not add up to 100% because some stories emphasized neither type of frame and were coded 0 for each.
These results show that advocacy and partisan frames were statistically significant such that both types of frames were more visible in the liberal system coverage than the polarized pluralist system coverage.
Results for Anti-West Narrative, Expectation of Help and Incompetence

In chapter 3, I proposed three hypotheses for this section. H2a suggested that media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media system will be characterized by an anti-west narrative. While H2b predicted that media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media will be characterized by expectations that the international community will help. Finally, H2c proposed that media coverage of the outbreak will vary in the characterization of Africa as incompetent to handle the crisis.

The first two hypotheses suggested that coverage by the polarized system will be more anti-west narrative and have more elements of expectations of help from the international community. Hypothesis 2c on the other hand refers to how coverage will differ in characterizing Africa as incompetent to handle the outbreak without international help. I arrived at these hypotheses by examining the history of foreign aid in the African continent and the reception of aid in the health sector by nations in this region of the world. Evidence shows that historically, African nations have come to depend on foreign aid when there is a health crisis of pandemic proportion. For instance, the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the continent led to aid from some developed nations and wealthy private donors. These organizations have exposed the inadequacies in the African health system, thus bringing it to the attention of other donor organizations and agencies (Oji et al., 2013). The public health system in Sub-Saharan Africa has been a significant focus of global health intervention, especially in tackling HIV/ AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Although the continent boasts of 24% of the world’s diseases, it has about 3% of the world’s health workers. Also, all the countries that make up the continent are
classified as developing nations and are therefore poor. This means they cannot afford or be able to maintain a vibrant and state of the art health system.

Despite the influx of foreign aid into the continent, there are also brimming anti-west sentiments especially as it concerns health issues. For instance, in 1999, Pfizer conducted a trial in Northern Nigeria for a meningitis drug that went bad. This trial killed 11 children and left many others with permanent injuries. Unfortunate incidents like this have created a distrust of the west and the help they give during outbreaks like Ebola. Hypothesis 2a predicted that the polarized pluralist system will be characterized by anti-west sentiments. I estimate cross-tabs with chi square and the data do not support this hypothesis. The results suggest that there were no differences in how both media systems covered the outbreak in terms of anti-west sentiments. As Figure 9 explains, 3.8% of the stories in the liberal media system used anti-west narrative, while 1.3% of the stories in the polarized pluralist media system used this narrative in their coverage of the Ebola outbreak. Although there were slight variations in the crosstab percentages in the opposite direction, the chi-square test was not significant ($x^2=1.005$, df=1, p=.316).

Hypothesis 2b predicted that coverage by the polarized pluralist media system will comparatively have more elements of expectations that the international community will help the affected nations during the outbreak. This hypothesis was also not supported. There was no significant difference in how the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist system covered the Ebola outbreak regarding this variable. Figure 10 illustrates the cross-tab results, which shows a slight variations in coverage in the opposite direction. Out of the news articles from the liberal media system, 25.2 % used this frame while 18.6% of the stories in the
polarized pluralist media system used this frame in the coverage of the Ebola crisis. This chi square results shows that this difference test was not significant ($x^2=1.463$, df=1, $p<.05$).

Hypothesis 2c predicted differences in the use of incompetence frame by media system type. This hypothesis was supported. There was a significant difference in how both media systems used incompetence as a frame in the coverage of the outbreak. As Figure 11 indicates, the crosstab result showed some clear differences in how the liberal and the polarized system used incompetency of affected nations as a frame. The results showed that 26.2% of the articles from the liberal media system used this frame while 14.1% of the articles in the polarized pluralist system used the frame in the coverage of the outbreak. This difference was statistically significant ($x^2= 5.636$, df=1, $p<.05$). Table 4 summarizes the results for the hypotheses presented in this section.

Figure 9: Differences in the use of anti-west narrative by media system type.
Figure 10: Differences in the use of international help expectations by media system type.

Figure 11: Differences in the use of incompetence frame by media system type.
Table 4: Differences in anti-west, help expectations and incompetence frame by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Type</th>
<th>Percentage of stories within media systems</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal System</td>
<td>Polarized Pluralist System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-west narrative</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter help expectations</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompetence</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.000 **p < .01 *** p<.05

**Note:** Frame type percentages do not add up to 100% because some stories emphasized neither type of frame and were coded 0 for each.

These results show that there were no significant difference in how each media system used anti-west narrative and expectations of international help. However, analysis showed a significant difference in the use of incompetence frame such that journalists in the liberal media system were more likely to frame Africa as incompetent in the coverage of the Ebola outbreak.

**Results for Contrast Narrative**

Hypotheses 3a and 3b investigates the overall emphasis of the coverage of the outbreak between the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist media system. Recall that I proposed in hypothesis 3a that compared to the polarized pluralist media system, the liberal media system will place more emphasis on international efforts. While hypothesis 3b predicts that compared to the liberal media system, coverage by the polarized pluralist media system will emphasize local efforts.
As I discussed earlier, media coverage of events of internationally significance might be influenced by the journalists’ ethnocentric bias and national interests of the country they belong to. Scholars who have analyzed media coverage of events usually find this contrast in narrative. For instance, when Hallin and Gitlin (1993) analyzed US network coverage of the Gulf War, they found that coverage focused on American prowess, the potency of American technology and the bravery of American soldiers (p. 414). According to this analysis, coverage was mostly biased in favor of America, while there was a dearth of stories that dealt with protest and civilian casualties. Similar to the US media, Shaw and Carr-Hill (1992) found that British media emphasized their smart weapons and effective military strategies while ignoring the devastations the war had inflicted on Iraqi infrastructure.

Similarly, Yang (2003) found that U.S and Chinese newspapers had differed in their coverage of the 1990 NATO airstrikes in Kosovo. The U.S press legitimized the attack by presenting a humanitarian frame that suggested the strike was to save Albanians from Serbia. On the other hand, the Chinese press challenged the legality of the airstrikes by framing the event as an attack on Yugoslavia’s sovereignty. To further show the media bias for national interest when covering international events, Entman (1991), found that two similar events that should have gotten the same kind of coverage where framed differently by the media in the United States. The downing of an Iranian plane which was a misapplication of military force by the US military was reported as a technical issue while the Soviet downing of a Korean jet was depicted in the US media as a military attack. This contrast in narrative emphasized Soviet guilt and America’s innocence. Taken together this evidence suggests that journalists in every
system will frame an international event in a way that shines positive light on the milieu within which they operate.

Hypothesis 3a predicted that compared to the polarized pluralist media system, the liberal media system will place more emphasis on international efforts in the coverage of Ebola. I estimate cross-tabs with chi square and the data supports this hypothesis. The results showed that there was a significant difference in how both systems emphasized effort type. As Figure 12 demonstrates, the cross-tab results shows that 52.7% of the news stories in the liberal model emphasized international effort while 22.4% of the news stories from the polarized pluralist model emphasized international efforts. The chi-square result shows that this difference was statistically significant ($x^2=26.88$, df=1, p=.000).

Additionally, hypothesis 3b predicts that compared to the liberal media system, the polarized pluralist model will place more emphasis on local efforts in the coverage of Ebola. Analysis in this study shows that this hypothesis was also supported. From the cross-tab results, it is evident that 70.5% of the news stories in the polarized pluralist media system emphasized local efforts while only 35.1% of the news stories from the liberal model emphasized local efforts. Figure 13 clearly illustrates this. The chi-square results shows that this difference was statistically significant ($x^2=35.55$, df=1, p=.000). Table 5 summarizes in the results of the cross-tab and chi-square explained in this section of the dissertation.
Figure 12: Differences in use of international effort frame by media system type.

Figure 13: Differences in use of local effort frame by media system type.
Table 5: Differences in emphasis on effort frame by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort Type</th>
<th>Percentage of stories within media systems</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal System</td>
<td>Polarized Pluralist System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International effort</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local effort</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.000 **p <. 01*** p<.05

Note: Effort type percentages do not add up to 100% because some stories emphasized neither type of effort and were coded 0 for each.

These results support hypotheses 3a and 3b. As expected, the chi-square shows a significant differences in how the media in the two media systems framed coverage based on effort type. While the liberal media system were more likely to emphasize international efforts, the polarized pluralist media system on the other hand, were more likely to emphasize local efforts in coverage.

Results for Thematic vs. Episodic Frame

Hypothesis 4 predicted that coverage of the outbreak will differ in use of thematic and episodic framing by media system type. Like I discussed in chapter 3, Iyengar (1991) distinguished between these two frames. How an event is framed is fundamental to how people attribute responsibility for outcomes. Thematic frames address broader issues and social conditions that exacerbate a problem, thus leading audiences to attribute responsibility to complex political realities that abound in society. In contrast, episodic news coverage
simplify issues and offer little or no insight into broader social conditions enhance problems. The result is a very stunted audience understanding of the broader issues prevalent in public affairs. The implication is that audiences attribute responsibility for outcomes to the people portrayed in the story rather than on complex social and political realities (Bennet, 1988, p. 42).

When discussing how the media chose to frame issues, certain systemic constraints come into play. For instance, Iyengar found that 74% of news stories in the of U.S network coverage of terrorism were episodic while 26% were thematic. He suggests that networks prefer episodic coverage because of the time and financial demand of thematic coverage. Similarly, Picard (2004), argues that because of the commercial nature of newspapers, coverage has become more focused on entertainment to draw in a larger audience while stories that are expensive to cover are often ignored. One attribute of the liberal media system is that it does not survive on subsidies from the government but rather is market controlled thus making it more adjusted to episodic coverage. It is clear that time and financial constraints explain why coverage is mostly episodic.

Using Iyengar’s framing typology (1991), this dissertation sets out to explore the degree to which newspapers in two media systems differed in the use of episodic vs. thematic framing in their coverage of an international event. This hypothesis was not supported. There was no significant difference in how both systems used thematic and episodic frames. Table 6 and Figure 14 shows that there were slight percentage difference in the use of thematic and episodic frames between the two media systems. According to the crosstab result, 71.8% of the liberal media system used episodic framing while 28.2% of coverage used thematic framing. Similarly, the crosstab analysis of the polarized pluralists system showed that 78.2% of coverage
was episodic in nature while 21.8% of coverage was thematic. The chi-square for these differences were not significant ($x^2 = 1.263$, df =1, p>.05). Both systems used more of episodic frames in coverage than thematic frames leading to a similarity in coverage type. This suggests that irrespective of media system type, time and financial constraints abound that create a demand for more episodic type coverage as observed in this case.

Table 6: Differences in frame treatment by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Percentage of stories within media systems</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal System</td>
<td>Polarized Pluralist System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 100 100

*p>.05

Figure 14: Comparison of Thematic vs Episodic Frame by Media System type.
The results for hypothesis 4 shows there were no significant difference in how both systems used thematic and episodic frames. The cross-tab result showed that both systems were more likely to use episodic frames in coverage than thematic frames as shown in Table 6.

**Results for Source Attribution**

Hypotheses 5a and 5b predicts a differences in source attribution by media system type. Hypothesis 5a suggests that coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of elite-sources by media system type. While hypothesis 5b suggests that coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of health expert sources by media system type. These hypotheses draws from my discussion in chapter 3 on the role of sources in news coverage of international events. A fundamental principle of journalism is the attribution of information to source to provide evidence and lend credibility to a news story. Studies suggest that whatever source is used in a news story affects how the story is framed, making a news source important in what is presented as news to the public (Entman and Paletz, 1981). Studies show that the media is more inclined to use official or authoritative sources in news coverage. For example, Bennett (1990), found that in news coverage, the media would index the range of voices found in elite conversation. This suggests that the media uses elite communication to lend credibility to coverage more than they use non-elite communication. News sources determine who shapes representation of realities and what the authoritative version of reality is making them critical in how audiences across media systems perceive unpredictable events such as the Ebola outbreak.
Examining the differences in source attribution, hypothesis 5a predicted differences in the use of elite sources by media system type. This hypothesis was not supported. Figure 15 and Table 7 shows the cross-tab and chi-square results. The cross-tab results showed differences in how the liberal media system and the polarized media system used elite sources. According to the cross-tab results, 36.6% of the news stories in the liberal media system used elite sources while 47.4% of the news stories in from the polarized pluralist system used elite communication in coverage. Although there were percentage differences, the chi-square result showed that this difference was not significant ($x^2=2.968, df=1, p=>.05$).

Furthermore, hypothesis 5b predicted a difference in the use of health sources by media system type. This hypothesis was supported. The cross-tab result shows the differences in how the two media systems used health sources. According to the cross-tab results presented in Figure 16, 51.1% of the news stories in the liberal media system used health expert sources while 26.3% of the news stories in the polarized pluralist media system used health expert source attribution. The differences were significant ($x^2=17.710, df=1, p=.000$).

These results also shows that compared to the polarized media system, the liberal media system used more health expert sources in coverage with a statistically significant effect while the polarized pluralist system used more elite sources (47.9%) although this was not statistically significant. Table 4 below shows the differences in source attribution by media system type.
Figure 15: Differences in use of elite sources by media system type.

Figure 16: Differences in the use of health expert sources by media system type.
Table 7: Differences in source attribution by media system type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Percentages of sources within media systems</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal System</td>
<td>Polarized Pluralist System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite Political Sources</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Expert Sources</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N                                     87.7  76.4

*p< .05

Note: Source attribution percentages do not add up to 100% because some stories used neither elite sources nor health expert sources and were coded 0 for each.

The results for hypothesis 5a and 5b show that use of elite political sources was not statistically significant. However, there was a significant difference in how both media systems used health expert sources such that journalists in the liberal media system were more likely to use health expert sources in coverage than their counterparts in the polarized pluralist media system.

Summary of quantitative results

The results from this quantitative content analysis revealed the differences in how media systems frame an international health crisis. The objective of this dissertation was to show how systemic characteristics come into play to affect how media systems frame news of international significance. How does coverage of one incident differ across media systems? The cross-tabs and chi-square results show that in terms of how media systems used frames such as anti-west narrative, expectation of help from the international community, thematic v. episodic frames and elite sources, the differences were not significant. Contrary to expectations and
evidence from literature, coverage by both the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist media system did not differ in how they used these frame types. In fact, coverage by both systems were more episodic than thematic suggesting that despite existing differences in media system attributes such as government subsidies, there were also attributes common between systems. Financial and market factors in both media systems, may have contributed to the widespread use of episodic coverage in this case.

Furthermore, the data also suggested that the use of advocacy journalism differed by media system type. We expected journalism in the polarized pluralist media system to be more interventionist in nature because of the nature of government in the states that make up the system. Additionally, countries that make up the liberal media system are democratically stable and have rejected the notion of advocacy while embracing objectivity. However, contrary to expectations, the results of the analysis showed that the liberal media system used more advocacy journalism in coverage more than the polarized pluralist media system. This reversed difference may be attributed in part to the role of the USA and the UK in world politics and also to the use of thematic coverage by journalists. The data showed that although coverage by both systems were largely episodic, the liberal system used more thematic coverage than the polarized pluralist media system. Advocacy journalism entails giving some historical context to the event and this requires a more thematic approach to coverage which the liberal system seemed to have used more than their counterpart. Also, the UK may not have rejected advocacy as previously thought. In my discussion section, I outlined evidence that suggests that journalists in the Britain have not routinely embraced objectivity as a journalistic norm but have continued to use facts to push causes.
Additionally, just as hypothesized, partisan frame, emphasis on local and international efforts, incompetence frame, and use of health expert sources all differed across media systems. The differences suggested that because of social, political and economic attributes of media systems, coverage of any international event differed across media systems. When an event occurs, such as a disease outbreak, national interest will trump any journalistic professionalism and the need to find a local angle that resonates with target audiences will contribute to how journalists shape coverage. This was evident in the differences found in the coverage across media systems. Table 8 below gives a summary of all the quantitative results of the proposed hypotheses presented in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in use of advocacy journalism by media system type.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in use of partisan frames by media system type</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a: Media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media system will be characterized by an anti-west narrative.</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b: Media coverage of the outbreak in the polarized pluralist media will be characterized by expectations that the international community will help.</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. continued

H2c: Media coverage of the outbreak will vary in the characterization of Africa as Incompetent to handle the crisis. **supported**

H3a: Compared to the polarized system, coverage by the liberal system will place more emphasize on international efforts. **supported**

H3b: Compared to the liberal system, coverage by the polarized system will emphasis local efforts. **supported**

H4: Coverage of the outbreak will differ in the use of thematic v. episodic frames by media system type. **not supported**

H5a: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of elite-sources by media system type. **not supported**

H5b: Coverage of the outbreak will vary in the use of health expert sources by media system type. **supported**
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the role of systemic influences on news coverage of events of international significance. Leveraging the unique case of the Ebola outbreak, I examined how characteristics of coverage differed across media systems. The primary objective of this dissertation was to uncover how social and political attributes of a media system contribute to our understanding of how news stories are framed and the implications thereof. I approached this dissertation using an in-depth qualitative content analysis and a quantitative content analysis. My goal with the qualitative content analysis was to independently draw connections between media systems and their unique type of coverage and also to help build a coding instrument for the quantitative content analysis. Through the qualitative content analysis, I discovered thematic differences in coverage across media systems as well as thematic similarities in coverage. Using the quantitative content analysis, I employed numbers to show significant differences in coverage between the liberal media system and the polarized pluralist media systems. In this chapter, I discuss the key findings, implications and limitations of this dissertation and also make suggestions for future research.

Key Findings, Contributions and Implications

The results from the qualitative content analysis indicate that there were differences as well as similarities in how the liberal system and the polarized pluralist system covered the Ebola outbreak. These findings provide evidence that variations found in the milieu of media systems contribute towards how journalists cover events and the frames they use. Through the use of qualitative and quantitative content analysis, I uncovered some thematic similarities in how the liberal system and the polarized pluralist media system framed the Ebola outbreak.
The similarities found in this dissertation shows that irrespective of the differences in media systems, elite newspapers in both systems share some common traits. During the months following the outbreak, the media in both systems focused on the efforts both local and foreign bodies were putting towards curbing the outbreak. Furthermore, the two media systems analyzed framed the outbreak through a cultural practice lens where both systems agreed that existing cultural practices in the affected nations hinder the efforts put in place by government and non-governmental agencies. This findings suggests that during times of uncertainties, survival of the human species become a common denominator in how systems frame news. Furthermore, both media systems embraced the journalistic tendency of treating events episodically. Audience’ attribute responsibility based on how the news media frame an event. Thus by using episodic frames, both systems simplified such a complex issue and encouraged person-specific blame rather than placing the blame on societal failure. This finding highlights the importance of market structure in news coverage. This is suggestive that systems are increasingly becoming dependent on content and rating for survival rather than subsidy from government. Therefore, the structure of media market is indicative of how systems frame news.

Similar to the findings from the qualitative analysis, the quantitative analysis found that systemic influences affect news coverage of international incidents. I found a significant effect for advocacy use by the liberal media system. This finding is contrary to literature which posits that attributes of the polarized pluralist media system such as late democratization have led journalists in this system to embrace advocacy. One reason for this discrepancy may be the nature of the case study, which may have necessitated the use of advocacy by the liberal media
system more than the polarized pluralist media system. Moreover, through the qualitative analysis, I uncovered a difference in how the *New York Times* and *The Guardian* used advocacy in coverage. My analysis revealed that the media in the United Kingdom were more inclined to use advocacy than the media in the United States. This may be in part due to the ongoing disagreement on how much advocacy is accepted in journalism. While American journalists tend to embrace the objectivity notion, British journalists find opinion-less objectivity less appealing (Hampton, 2008). This suggests that despite the touted Anglo-American ideal of objective journalism, the British press did not fully embrace it. They however subscribe to pursuing accurate facts and using these facts to campaign for causes (Esser and Umbricht, 2014).

In addition to that, I find systemic differences in the use of partisan frames. As hypothesized, the crosstab and chi-square results suggests that the media liberal system was more likely to use partisan frames in the coverage of the outbreak and equally more likely to use advocacy in coverage more that the media in the polarized pluralist system. Overall the partisan finding supports evidence of the rise of a partisan media culture in the United States. The United States had a strong partisan media culture in the nineteenth century which died in the twentieth century due to reactions against political parties in that era. However, a growth in media competition informed a product differentiation strategy that led to the reemergence of partisanship in the liberal media system. In the Hallin and Mancini model, the degree of political partisanship was also used to group systems. The findings in this study sheds light on how political parallelism affects coverage. The degree of press involvement in politics shapes and polarizes news coverage.
Another finding of this dissertation indicated that the liberal media system reported that the affected countries are not structurally and financially capable of handling the outbreak and would require help from foreign bodies to fight the outbreak. This finding is consistent with prior research that suggests a historical dependence of African nations on foreign aid during health emergencies. The special focus on Africa by international donor agencies in African aimed at eradicating diseases predominant in Africa has graced the media landscape for so long, it has become almost impossible to cover Africa as anything but incompetent to handle serious health situations. The qualitative analysis also found that the liberal media system used the poor, war-torn and diseased African frame to contextualize coverage. This type of coverage reflects an age long tradition of western media treatment of Africa as monolithic entity with one narrative. This narrative has been fostered for generations and may have become institutionalized. The implication of this kind of coverage is a problematic single story narrative that borders on incomplete analysis and stereotyping. My findings in this dissertation provide additional evidence that suggests that despite the advent of technologies that should necessitate information sharing, the western based journalists continue to rely of heuristic shortcuts when reporting on Africa.

This dissertation also found a significant difference in the emphasis placed on effort type by the two media systems. While the liberal media system emphasized international efforts, the polarized pluralist media system emphasized local effort in coverage. This findings provide support for the proposition that coverage is sometimes influenced by the ethnocentric bias of journalists. Consistent with extant studies (see Entman, 1991; Hallin and Gitlin, 1993; Shaw and Carr-Hill. 1992; and Yang, 1993), this findings lends credence to the idea that
depending on the situation, journalists will cover an event in a way that portrays the system they represent in a positive light. By emphasizing international efforts in coverage, the liberal media system indirectly presents the west as saviors and solutions to African problems. To be able to do this would require a deliberate narrative of Africa as helpless and primitive. This kind of coverage is evident in both the qualitative and the quantitative analysis. The implication of this for global equality is a constant undermining of the African progress and how much African countries contribute towards their own growth and development. The polarized pluralist system on the other hand, emphasized local coverage more than it emphasized international coverage. This also provides evidence of ethnocentric bias in coverage. However, the qualitative analysis showed an emphasis on both local and international efforts by the polarized pluralist media system. This finding suggests that journalists will be more likely to pay attention to attributes of an event that positively sells the system they represent to the world.

The expectation of differences in the use of sources were partially supported. The results showed support for differences in the use of health sources. The liberal system used more health sources in coverage than the polarized pluralist media system and they also used more health sources than they used elite sources (based on the percentages). This shows that the liberal media system depended more on health experts in framing the outbreak. While the polarized pluralist media system used more of elite sources (based on the percentages), thus showing a dependence on political sources in how the outbreak was framed.

One of the objectives of this dissertation is to extend the Hallin and Mancini model to include countries in the South of the Saharan Africa. To my knowledge, this dissertation would
be the second study to do this.\textsuperscript{5} Extending the Hallin and Mancini model to sub Saharan Africa is important because it highlights the limitations of the model as well as proves its generalizability. The results from this dissertation broadly provides evidence for the legitimacy of the Hallin and Mancini thesis, however, there are slight problems with lumping countries together under one system as this creates variations in how events are covered. This comparative study also tests how theories and concepts that are products of the west can be applied to other contexts. Although the findings do not support all of the proposed hypotheses, the result indicate a strong evidence of ethnocentric bias in coverage, a continuation of the old stereotypes that abound in covering Africa by western media and a similarity in the use of episodic framing across media system. The findings in this dissertation are important because they shed light on the extent to which systemic attributes shapes coverage.

This study also contributes to literature on framing and attribute agenda setting. It sheds light on the power the media has to present facts in a way that gives the audience a point of view. Through the analysis conducted in this study, we are able to see the frame of reference the media provided in covering the Ebola outbreak. By emphasizing certain attributes of coverage, the media in both systems avail audiences a frame through which they interpret and make decisions concerning the outbreak. These decisions have policy, social and economic implications for national and global response to international emergencies. By using agenda setting and framing theories in this dissertation, we explain how differences in media systems

\textsuperscript{5} The first study that extended the Hallin and Mancini model to include African countries is D'Angelo, P., Pollock, J. C., Kiernicki, K., & Shaw, D. (2013). Framing of AIDS in Africa: Press-state relations, HIV/AIDS news, and journalistic advocacy in four sub-Saharan Anglophone newspapers.
affect media coverage of an important international incident and how such coverage will in turn affect people’s opinion and attitudes towards such event.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

For decades, scholars have posited that the news takes on the form and coloration of the social and political milieu within which they operate (Siebert et al, 1956). Hallin and Mancini (2004) used factors such as the structure of the media market; political parallelism; professionalism of journalists; role of the state; and political distinctions to outline three different media systems. This suggests that factors inherent in media systems determine how events are framed by the news media and how news is framed define public opinion.

The sample size for this dissertation covered only the liberal and the polarized pluralist media systems, two out of the three media systems delineated by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Incorporating data from the north/central Europe or democratic corporatist model which is the third media system according to the Hallin and Mancini model would have added more robustness to my findings. Future studies should look at framing differences across the three media systems so as to capture a more holistic view of how context shapes coverage.

Additionally, my study was a qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Future studies could include in-depth interviews of journalists as part of the qualitative framework to determine their reasoning for framing coverage a certain way. This additional information would help shed light on factors personal to journalists that affect coverage and how these personal factors are shaped by systemic elements. Furthermore, adding more independent variables such as media ownership, editorial policies, journalistic training, type of government, etc may help explain how media structures combine with systemic structures to affect
coverage. According to Hallin and Mancini, the relationship between media systems and political systems is reciprocal such that the media systems reflect social structures out of which they emerge and they also have an impact of their own on these social structures. Future studies should incorporate these extra variables to bring clarity to how characteristics of media systems juxtapose with social structures to influence coverage.

An area that I find important to explore is the difference in coverage between mediums. Are the differences found here really systemic? I found in the qualitative analysis that advocacy was found in the liberal system, however, it was commonly found more in The Guardian UK than The New York Times. Hallin and Mancini agree that substantial differences exist between the United States which is a purer liberal system and Britain, where statist conservatism, liberal corporatism and social democracy are stronger than in the United States. It is worth investigating the extent to which state variations justify their inclusion in one media system.

One of the proposed objectives of this dissertation is to determine effects of coverage on audiences. How the media emphasizes and describe certain attributes of an event affects how the issue is defined by the public. However, this dissertation does not explore the area of media effects. Therefore, future research should examine how coverage affects public opinion formation and political behavior. For instance, how does the use of emotions in coverage affect people? Considering the unique nature of this case study, will the use of negative emotions in coverage prime individuals to evaluate everybody remotely connected to Ebola with negative associations? How will priming fear or disgust etc., in coverage affect attitudes toward quarantine or immigration policies? Will individuals be prone to xenophobia if they are exposed to treatment that prime negative emotions?
Furthermore, how will the use of sources affect attitudes? In my analysis, I found significant differences in how media systems used sources in coverage. Do individuals trust the opinion of health experts more than they trust the opinion of political elites during a health crises? Are they likely to support policies if framed as health expert opinion as opposed to when it is framed as political elite communication? I also found partisan frame to be more likely found in the liberal media system than the polarized media system. To what effect? Studies have pointed out the polarizing effects of exposure to partisan news (Stroud 2010; Sustein, 2009). When coverage of a health situation is shrouded in partisan frames, how does it affect people? Does it make people more likely to support a particular policy irrespective of the camp it originates from or does it make people even more polarized? This investigation is especially important in a highly salient health crisis with erratic outcomes. These are questions that are still open to further examination.

This dissertation explored differences in media coverage of Ebola across media systems. Findings reveal that characteristics of media systems inform how news about an event is framed by reporters. By investigating news influences, this dissertation broadly clarifies the latent influences of politics and culture on what audiences receive as news. Although the agenda-setting effects of the media has been established, this dissertation raises the question of what influences news agenda. It highlights how societal forces combine to shape news which in turn creates the agenda-setting effects.
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This part of the study examines the characteristics of the Ebola outbreak coverage commonly found in two media systems.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the whole news article except in the case of elite vs evidence-based communication then unit of analysis becomes the sources attributed in the article.

Variables for Coding

V1: Media System
   1. North Atlantic or Liberal Model: code 1 if the newspaper originates from the UK or the US
   2. Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist: Code 2 if it originates from Nigeria, Liberia or Sierra Leone

V2: Medium
   1. The New York Times
   2. The Guardian
   3. ThisDay
   4. Concord
   5. The Inquirer

V3: Advocacy
   1. Yes: Code 1 if the article makes reference to poor international response because the outbreak is in Africa, refusal of big pharma to develop Ebola vaccine because Ebola is an African disease, mention of Africa as fun and beautiful as opposed to poor and diseased, reference to western exploitation of Africa etc.
   2. No: Code 0 if none of the above is present

V4: Partisan Frame
   1. Yes: Code 1 if the article mentions political parties, party officials, references an elected official and party affiliation, mentions an opposition to a policy with reference to party ideology, references presidential hopefuls, mentions the president in relation to his party and party policies etc.
   2. No: Code 0 if none of the above is present
V5: Anti-West Narrative

1. Yes: Code 1 if the article mentions a suspicion of the west, suspicion of western help, mention of not trusting western medicine and doctors, mention of the west as exploiters etc.

2. No: Code 0 if none of the above is present

V6: Expectation of International help

1. Yes: Code 1 if the article references a call for international help, mentions international help in a positive light, uses phrases like government is working with international partners, international community is helping etc.

2. No: Code 0 if none of the above is present

V7: Africa as Incompetent

1. Yes: Code 1 if the article mentions a corrupt African government, a complacent African government, a broken health system in Africa, health workers lacking expertise, reference to poverty, reference to a lack of infrastructure etc.

2. No: Code 0 if there is no reference to the above

V8: Emphasis on International effort

1. Yes: Code 1 if the article mentions international help, country donation, WHO, US sending troops, foreign health workers volunteer, foreign volunteers on standby, MSF, mention of etc.

2. No: Code 0 if not present in the article

V9: Emphasis on Local effort

1. Yes: Code 1 if article mentions efforts by local governments, efforts by local groups and organizations, effort by African countries, volunteers from other African nations etc.

2. No: Code 0 if not present in the article

V10: Thematic Framing

1. Yes: Code 1 if article situates the issue in broad historical background, references specific historical events that has shaped the issue, presents collective evidence, run interpretive commentary on the issue

2. No: Code 0 if the article concentrates on the specific event and gives no context.
V11: Expert Opinion

1. Yes: Code 1 if article, quotes from or attribute a message to a health source such as doctors, nurses, WHO officials, MSF officials, scientists, pathologists or any health related personnel

0. No: Code 0 if not present in the article

V12: Elite Communication

1. Yes: code 1 if the article, quotes or attributes a message to a source such as a serving government official, presidents, secretary of state, ministers, parliament members/senators/congressmen/governors. When a country or official institutions, such as administration, ministries, offices, the White House, etc. or their spokesmen is used

0. No: Code 0 if not present
### APPENDIX B: CATEGORIES FOR THE DIFFERENCES ACROSS MEDIA SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Name</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Codes Included</th>
<th>Media System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor, war-torn and diseased Africa</td>
<td>“Global health groups often refer to the “big three” diseases that constitute the major causes of suffering: HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. But that is only the beginning in West Africa. There is yellow fever, pneumococcal disease, meningitis, rickettsia infection, streptococcus and a host of other maladies that can shorten lives and bring general misery to a place”</td>
<td>Poverty and illiteracy Africa has plenty of diseases World’s poorest nations Extremely poor and violent Conflict and civil war Region emerging from war</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa the charity case and the white savior complex</td>
<td>“Finally, the West acts on Ebola” “U.K launches 6.5m emergency funds” We cannot just fight this epidemic, we have to extinguish it” “Britain coordinating relief efforts” “Three thousand American soldiers built three treatment centers in Liberia”</td>
<td>Portrayal of Africa as hopeless and helpless Portrayal of Africa as inadequate Call for international help Mention of foreign government leading global effort Mention of foreign volunteer efforts Mention of African nations as dependent on foreign aid.</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we helping Africa or are we helping ourselves?</td>
<td>“The epidemic wont’ end without them, and without their work, the U.S will be at increased risk,’ the C.D.C said. ‘We must protect their health, safety and well-being and treat them with respect when they return home while continuing to take action to protect Americans so Ebola does not spread here.”</td>
<td>Encourage volunteers to go to Africa so the diseased does not spread to the West Reserving experimental drugs for Western volunteers Slow international involvement that increased when foreign volunteers caught the virus</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of the outbreak on affected nations</td>
<td>“Ebola outbreak in West Africa threatens to exact a severe economic toll, analysts said yesterday, as stricken</td>
<td>Effect on Commerce Effect on Children and families</td>
<td>Polarized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
countries remained in lockdown and rushed to bolster emergency responses. The shutting down of schools, borders and government services in the worst-affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone could have a significant impact on already impoverished nations. The outbreak risks having a direct financial effect on government budgets via increased health expenditures that could be significant.”

| Effect on economic growth |
| Effect on general well-being |
| Effect on affected nations GDP |
| Increase in health expenditure |
| Post Ebola recovery plans |

| Global collaboration with local efforts |
| Reducing the number of people exhibiting high fever will result in less patients requiring screening and isolation care to eliminate Ebola as the cause of illness. UNICEF, in partnership with The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Médecins Sans Frontières, WHO and Roll Back Malaria is supporting the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the National Ebola Response Center to roll out the first round of the campaign in the Northern Province and Western Area of Sierra Leone, from 5th to 8th December. A second round of the anti-malaria drug distribution will take place in January 2015, noted a release issued by UNICEF last Friday. With funding from the German government, over 9,300 community health workers were trained and will go door to door and help administer the drug regimen, consisting of the proven anti-malarial Artesunate and Amodiaquine (AS + AQ) tablets, to all ages 6 months and above. |

| Mention of local and international collaboration |
| Mention of efforts by local groups |
| Mention of efforts by unaffected African countries |
| Mention of efforts by local governments |
| Mention of volunteers from other African countries |

| Polarized |
## APPENDIX C: CATEGORIES FOR THE SIMILARITIES ACROSS MEDIA SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Name</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Codes included in Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Incompetent Frame | “Transmission of the Ebola virus in Liberia is already intense and the number of new cases is increasing exponentially, the organization said in a statement on its website. "The number of new cases is moving far faster than the capacity to manage them in Ebola-specific treatment centers. Of the 152 health care workers in Liberia who have been infected, the statement said, 79 have died. The paucity of medical personnel in Liberia, with a population of 4.4 million, was a severe problem even before the Ebola outbreak escalated into a crisis. The World Health Organization’s statement said that when the outbreak began, Liberia had only one doctor per 100,000 people. Every infection or death of a doctor or nurse depletes response capacity significantly, said the statement, titled "Situation in Liberia: Nonconventional Interventions Needed.”” | Reference to a broken health system  
Reference to corruption  
Reference to a lack of health expertise  
Reference to Poverty  
Reference to poor infrastructure  
Reference to a complacent public and government  
Reference to financial issues  
Reference to better treatment facilities abroad |
| Efficacy Communication | “Ebola is not an air-born disease and can only spread from human to human through close contact with the bodily fluids of someone who has the disease—blood, vomit, semen, urine, tears or saliva. The incubation period—the gap between an individual being infected and showing symptoms—is up to 21 days, meaning it is possible for an infected person to travel widely before they know they have the disease. Humans are not infectious until they develop symptoms, which at first are fever, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. These are followed by vomiting, diarrhea, and rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function and in some cases internal and external bleeding.” | Reference to training health workers  
Reference to mode of transmission  
Reference to actions of international donor agencies  
Reference to foreign government aid  
Reference to training health workers  
Reference to mode of transmission  
Reference to actions of international donor agencies  
Reference to foreign government aid |
## Three Models of Media Systems
*(Hallin and Mancini, 2000)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mediterranean (Southern Europe)</th>
<th>Democratic Corporatist (Northern Europe)</th>
<th>Liberal (North America)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Low circulation; elite-oriented</td>
<td>High circulation</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parallelism</td>
<td>High parallelism; external pluralism; politics/broadcast</td>
<td>External pluralism; party press; PSB autonomy</td>
<td>Neutral commercial press; internal pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>Weak; journalism political activism not differentiated</td>
<td>Strong professionalization; institutionalised self-regulation</td>
<td>Strong professionalization; non-institutionalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the State</td>
<td>Strong state intervention</td>
<td>Strong state intervention; strong PSB</td>
<td>Market dominated; weak PSB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E: COUNTRIES DELINEATED IN THE HALLIN AND MANCINI MODEL

Source: Global Mediastudies Blogspot
APPENDIX F: MEDIA SYSTEMS OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

North-Central European/ Democratic Corporatist Model
[Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland]

Mediterranean/ Polarized Pluralist Model
[France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain]

North Atlantic/ Liberal Model
[UK, US, Canada, Ireland]

Contained Democratic
[Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda]
- Mixture of state/private ownership of broadcasting
- Newspapers usually privately owned; few overt state regulations on press
- Moderately high press autonomy and professionalism
- Low external pluralism; newspapers less identified with political parties

Instrumentalized Democratic
[Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia]
- Mixture of state/private ownership of broadcasting
- Low to moderate press autonomy and professional codes
- Weak parties; newspapers tend to reflect ideological differences

Repressive Autocratic
[Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe]
- State owns and runs broadcasting
- Newspapers can be privately owned but remain heavily state supervised and regulated
- Low press autonomy
- High political parallelism; press has strong ideological tendencies

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