

**Resist much, obey little: A look into the media coverage of the 2019 Indian CAA/ NRC and the
2023 French Pension Reform protests**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis was to discover how mainstream media covered the major 2019 Indian CAA/NRC and the 2023 French Pension reform protests and its leaders. Witnessing the rise of the universal form of dissent known as the act of protesting over the last decade combined with the decrease in media freedom motivated this study. The Black Lives Matter movement for instance was a major global mass movement, heavily covered in the media and bringing up questions of racial injustice and police brutality. The recent farmers protests across Europe showcased that farmers were a force to be reckoned with. Protests are heavily goal-oriented and demand respect more than anything. A major way in which the protests gain the attention and can work towards their goal is through media attention. However, this attention comes at a cost depending on how protests are portrayed and perceived in the media. In light of this, this study involves the examining of protests and protest leaders, especially those that are anti-government, and how they are covered by the media. In an attempt to do this, the two case studies from India and France were chosen and taken a close look at. Qualitative Research analysis was taken up as the general research approach along with qualitative content analysis employed for the analysis of data. As mentioned before, the two case studies were taken from France and India. In terms of the data collection and sampling; 30 newspaper articles from the French news media outlets Le Monde and France 24 and 30 newspaper articles from the Indian news media outlets Times of India and NDTV were utilised. Within Qualitative Content Analysis, data was analysed through Frame Analysis. A Hybrid approach involving both Deductive and

Inductive Approach was undertaken. Through this approach, two frames based on literature namely “Spectacle” and “Debate” were coded for the emergence of sub-themes with these two as a base. Alongside this approach, the data was also inductively coded for the emergence of two new frames names “Resolute” and “Conspirators” along with their sub-themes. Evidence pointed towards media coverage deeply rooted in the portrayal of the most dramatic elements of a protest along with also evolving to include public grievances and the significance of leaders. This study helped reinforce not just the importance of resisting to unjust governmental practices in a democracy but the role media plays in this too.

KEYWORDS: Anti- government protests, media coverage, Indian and French case studies, protest leaders

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“सभी का खून है शामिल यहाँ की मिट्टी में किसी के बाप का हिंदुस्तान थोड़ी है” (Hindustan Times, 2020)

(Trans: Everyone’s blood runs through the soil of this land, it’s not like someone’s father owns all of India)

“Macron prends ta retraite, pas la nôtre” (Steinkopf-Frank, 2023)

(Trans: Macron take your retirement, not ours)

Held up in high defiance against the government, the above slogans were among a multitude of others used to express discontentment and outrage in the 2019 Anti- CAA/NRC movements and the 2023 Pension reform protests in India and France respectively. These two cases erupted recently and came to strongly determine the implications of large-scale citizen unrest and the making of laws in the future of their respective countries. Finding strength in numbers, spreading across many different areas within each of the countries and being highly publicized in the media, the 2019 Indian Anti- CAA/NRC protest and the 2023 French Pension reform protest are features of what one would call a modern-day social movement.

Across geographical borders, races, sexes, economic backgrounds, forms of government, and a history of conflicts, the act of protesting has been a powerful outlet for citizens to signal their grievances and raise their voices against establishments. The pages of history are made up of ordinary people raising their collective voices against unjust establishments, whether that was the French Revolution, the Suffrage movement, anti- Apartheid marches or the student uprisings of South Korea and China. Protest activity is defined as a mode of political action oriented towards objection to policies or conditions, characterized by showmanship to obtain rewards from a political or economic system (Lipsky, 1968). Most protests and movements are defined by a common set of essential elements which are a protest issue or message, a protest actor and a protest action form (Lipsky, 1968), so ideally a goal to achieve, a group of people gathering together and various kinds of demonstrations to get their point across. They can be thought of as a joint action in which large groups of people cooperate and by attending, they

share the potential costs and risks of doing so (Larson, 2021). In many cases, unfortunate to say, most acts of dissent are met with a strong response from the authorities including brutal crackdowns and violence. But a protest is nonetheless a goal-oriented movement calling for the participation of many. Beyond these, a factor that a protest has relatively lesser control over but is highly essential for its working is the media.

The media is an extremely powerful and indispensable resource for any protest or demonstration. The best way for a protest to gain traction was and continues to be media and its different forms. Protests hence strongly rely on two things- Diffusion and Amplification; the protest's ability to gain access to mass media and expand their cause (Wouters, 2013). It is through mass media channels that protest actors spread their message to the world for authorities to listen. Those protests that gain enough momentum have the power to sharply affect societies, systems and even overthrow governments. While there are others that reach negotiations and compromise and some others that eventually die down. A major determinant in these outcomes is the media.

In the discussion of public discourse, Gamson (2004) considers mass media to be a site for contests. Players in a contest such as a demonstration or protest look to mass media to assess their effectiveness which means measuring success based on whether something they said or did make it to leading newspapers. Media attention thus helps in raising public saliency, can activate silent bystanders and put pressure on political elites (Gamson, 2004; Wouters, 2013). News media in particular is what holds the most significance in determining public reactions and views towards a gathering as extensive as a protest. News media always has been what to leave out instead of including all facts. Journalists decide which collective actors will be the highlight and therefore come to shape and frame discussions as per their interpretation (Lester, 1980; Gamson, 2004; Wouters, 2013). It is however not necessary that a journalist acts on their own conviction. There are various factors, primarily governmental influence that can shape coverage. It is here where our study begins. The two cases from India and France highlighted here were both cases of anti-establishment movements where citizens attempted to prevent a law from being passed that was highly detrimental to a major population of the

country. Similar examples of protests and their coverage have been broadcasted and studied for a long time.

1.1. Societal Relevance

Protests have come to evolve over time and societal circumstances. Over the last few years, certain movements such as the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement, the 2021 Farmers Protests in India and the 2022 Women, Life, Freedom movement have captured global media coverage and attention. These particular movements brought to light deeply ingrained issues against institutionalized forms of injustice against a certain group of people. Beyond that it was the sheer virality that these movements made their way around mainstream news media forms to all social media platforms and that ignited global participation, debates and policies forming around them.

Mainstream news media involving newspapers, television broadcast, radio and more have a very crucial role to play when it comes to covering events such as major protests. As is the characteristic of news media, it is the most essential outlet for public audiences to become aware of the events around them. It can very well make or break the perceptions that audiences hold and define opinions around a specific occurrence based on their portrayal. Political communication and journalism scholarships thus have a duty to uphold the relationship between the media and protesters (Gamson, 2004; Wouters, 2013; Brown & Harlow, 2023).

News media portrayal exists in variations around the world. There exists a number of factors that come to affect media coverage including journalist ethics, societal context, state involvement, ownership and citizen rights. News media depends highly on selection made by media professionals. Moreover, there is a tendency to focus on a story that would be newsworthy. Protests while being a universal form of dissent are represented quite differently not just in the home country but all around the world. The same news story can get picked up by several outlets and interpreted in different ways. The 2020 Black Lives Matter movement triggered “one of the largest racial justice protests in the US since the Civil Rights Movement” (CBS News, 2021, para 1). News channels across the world carried stories from the US and

reported on the large groups of people gathered in the fight against racial injustice and police brutality.

With certain news groups highlighting what the movement entailed with reports indicating that “93% of Black Lives Matter Protests have been peaceful” (Time, 2020, para.1), there were others with a prime focus on gatherings that escalated due to clashes with the police or opposing groups. Some mainstream media covered the widespread gatherings as disruptive and inciting violence, such as “peaceful protests exploded into unrest and outrage in Washington on Sunday night with some demonstrators setting and feeding fires” (The Washington Post, 2020, para.2).

The start of 2024 already saw widespread demonstrations including mass gatherings in Germany against the far-right party AFD (The Guardian, 2024) and farmers across Europe, majorly in Belgium and Germany protesting the rise in costs of fertilizers, falling sales, climate change and unjust regulations. Some media have been covering the demonstrations as highly disruptive by broadcasting “farmers clogging the streets with their tractors, blocking ports and pelting the European Parliament with eggs” (CNN, 2024, para.1). Others have been representing the view of the farmers’ covering their frustration with headlines like “Europe’s restless farmers are forcing policy makers to act” (Reuters, 2024, para 1.). These events are key examples of how protests are still a means of resistance employed by people to express their discontentment in the recent decade. They also highlight how the news media continue to frame and cover protests, particularly anti-establishment ones with a sense of precarity. Hence societal relevance is still very strong and calls for attention.

1.2. Academic Relevance

A substantial amount of scholarship has been concerned with how protests get portrayed and perceived in the media. Research and political scholarship indicate that media coverage often fails to paint an accurate picture of protests, especially those that are anti-establishment or challenge the political and social status quo (Mcleod, 2007; Brown & Harlow, 2019). While mainstream media remains at the core of making a movement more widespread and is a main factor towards gaining traction, this reliance remains challenging, primarily due to

protestors being portrayed as deviants and violent (Chan & Lee, 1984; Brown & Harlow, 2019). Mcleod (2007) argues that protest groups engaging in newsworthy circumstances leaves them in a double bind, for it gains both traction and criticism. There exists scholarship on the connection between race and depiction of protests. Broadcasts of non-White protesters are more likely to use language associated with fear and anger which leads to public distrust and lack of support (Gause et al., 2023). Scholarship revolves around large scale environmental protests as well as community-based protests such as student led movements in the UK against BREXIT or in Thailand against the monarchy. These have a focus on solidarity and large-scale gatherings (Ockey, 2021).

More needs to be uncovered in the ways mainstream media frames anti-establishment protests in different parts of the world. While different kinds of protests carrying varied motives and goals exist around the world, anti-establishment protests are among the ones that are more often in a precarious situation, going up against the ruling authority. Coverage and frames are more likely to be placing them in a detrimental position depending on how restrictive the established authority is. Hence this variedness calls for attention. Additionally, while there is a decent amount of discussions taking place on the factors that impact media coverage of protests, most of these are collective based. There is not enough attention given to individual activists or protest leaders who are often at the center and become the targets of opposing authorities. What their depiction means to the movement overall as well as individually needs to be explored. With this gap kept in mind, the following research question that this thesis will answer is

“How did mainstream media outlets cover the anti-establishment 2019 Indian Anti CAA/NRC and 2023 French pension reform protests and their leaders?”

The rationale behind settling on these protests is in abundance. While these cases come from two completely different countries, cultures, timelines and people, what unites them is the fact that it involved ordinary citizens coming together to raise their voice against established governmental authorities. They both involved citizens exercising their civil rights of public demonstrations, taking to the streets and calling to action against discriminatory policies.

Both protests involved country-wide gatherings in large numbers and the prevalence of violence along with a crackdown from the authorities. Moreover, the outcome of both the movements still remains in a questionable stance for negotiations were not fully reached.

In the case of India, the coronavirus broke out in 2020 and in the case of France, the continued strikes were met with eventual low turnouts that led to the subsiding of the movements. Throughout the course of the movement, the events were highly televised and covered across major news media. The question arises on how these two countries chose to cover anti-establishment protests for several systems in India and France are known to have underpinnings of governmental influence especially with the authoritarian leaders they have in place today.

Relevant to this study and what was explored further were the certain differences when it came to news media channels in both the countries. There are differences in terms of ownership as well as frequency of coverage, topics covered and language used. A headline for the French protests was for instance “Bitter pension battle turns to democratic crisis as Macron bypasses parliament”(France 24, 2023, para.1). The Indian case saw headlines more in the nature of “Delhi riots accused committed crimes against humanity: Police ” (NDTV,2020, para.1). A news coverage of a protest typically involves common characteristics of frames of deviancy and unrest but its evolution in this modern, extremely connected digital era should be navigated. The aim of this thesis hence explores the ways in which mainstream news media represents all the occurrences of a movement along with their leaders when it comes to nations though democratic in nature but questionable in media freedom and views. The research question encompasses every field within which the two protests were frames and the consequences they led to.

1.3. Thesis Structure

Post chapter one which involved the introduction, background and aim of the study, the structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter two consists of the theoretical framework involving previously done research and key concepts that assisted in the study. Special attention is paid to framing practices and how they have been channelised over the years. Followed by this is

the methodology in which a qualitative content analysis of a set of news articles from Indian and French channels was conducted. Details and justifications are given on the choice of taking up qualitative content analysis followed by a frame analysis and coding based method.

The methodology and data analysis give way to the results which are reported with the aforementioned concepts and new elements that revealed themselves in the process. The thesis ends with a conclusion that provides main findings and an answer to the research question and a final discussion to summarize everything to be taken away from this study, its implications, areas of further research and the current state of society.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this thesis lies in how the mainstream media covers anti-government protests and protest leaders. Concerning this issue, there exists a significant amount of scholarship that can be utilized for support. There are 3 key concepts that lie in relevance to what dictates mainstream media coverage which will hence be discussed. The concepts have been deliberated on through years of research and will help provide key insights and perspectives towards what this thesis aspires to highlight.

2.1: Protest Paradigm

Protesting is a goal-oriented act, symbolic of a modern democracy. It is a universal means by which the public can express their discontentment mostly against the government or similar figures of authority. The media plays a significant role in the working of a protest. Not only does media coverage help a protest gain momentum but it also influences how a protest is received by other citizens. Political leverage can be brought about not by the act itself but the reaction of others towards it (Lipsky, 1968; Gamson, 2004). If a protest manages to grab attention of not just citizens but also the authority in question, they would be close to their goal. But how they will be received depends on how they are portrayed. Previous research (Chan & Lee, 1984; Mcleod & Hertog, 1999; Brown & Harlow, 2019) indicates that mainstream news media do not always accurately and fairly portray protests that challenge the political and societal status quo. There is a long history of traditional journalism marginalizing and delegitimizing social movements, however protests must rely on mainstream media and journalism to spread their cause; a pattern manifests itself as Protest Paradigm (Chan & Lee, 1984; Mcleod & Hertog, 1999; Brown & Harlow, 2019).

The Protest Paradigm causes a symbiotic but imbalanced and impactful relationship between protestors and journalists. Brown and Harlow (2019) describe how this relationship develops in three ways. Journalists do not prefer to cover anything that seems unnewsworthy, resulting in several movements falling short of gaining the traction it desired. This results in movements looking to adapt and possibly staging events that the media is more likely to cover. Once they do, journalists cover the movement with insufficient information and there is a

tendency for protestors to be portrayed as menaces to society. This marginalizes their voices and inadequately reports their cause. More often than not, it is protests that go against the established authority, the state or societal norm for instance that find themselves in this paradoxical paradigm. Agendas that radically contest the societal and political status quo are more likely to conform to the protest paradigm, while protests that support the status quo are less likely to receive such coverage (Brown & Harlow, 2019; Schmidt, 2020; Masullo et al., 2023).

Similar to this theory is the pattern that differences in protest topics and identities of protestors receive differential treatment from the media. There is a “hierarchy of social struggle” (Brown & Harlow, 2019, p. 523) present in journalism wherein certain topics are given preference over others. This hierarchy reinforces power structures that dictate news agencies and reinforces stereotypes for anyone not within the status quo. Schmidt (2020) also discusses this concept and the trend of journalistic objectivity, particularly in US-based media that has to do with a journalist’s professionalism and occupational identity. However, in the attempt to be fair and objective, there is the fulfilling of audience expectations as well legitimizing rationales of the state and media owners. Such journalistic objectivity was criticized in the issue of race in the United States for the concept was seen to be marginalizing Black or communities of color and concealing power structures that justify the status quo (Schmidt, 2020). For instance, while mainstream news media made the effort of covering stories of Black communities, the stories majorly revolved around either crime or sports, thereby reinforcing existing class and racial hierarchies. Scholarship such as Schmidt (2020) and Masullo et al. (2023) therefore indicate that journalistic bias comes to determine what is newsworthy which communicates to the public what is important and what can be subsumed under the stereotypical ways of thinking. Hence, if a protest challenges the social hierarchy or status quo, media coverage is reported under a frame that marginalizes the protestors and their goals.

The Protest Paradigm is a challenging concept to overcome. Protest groups find themselves in a double bind; to either be ignored by the media or attract coverage through acts that would be received negatively. The attention thus gained comes at a cost (McLeod, 2007; Brown & Harlow, 2019). In researching the origins of the protest paradigm, McLeod and Hertog (1999) identified certain characteristics that enable the concept. These include 5 characteristics

namely - news frames, reliance on official sources, public opinion, delegitimization, and demonization. News framing involves the categorizing of media coverage into certain overarching themes or frames. Radical social protests are mostly placed within negative frames. Official sources are what makes coverage reliable- they are either derived from on ground sources or from the perspectives of the authorities.

Considering public opinion in a news coverage of a protest tends to isolate the protestors from citizens, however they can also lead to public support. The delegitimization comes from the media's tendency to focus on the behavior of the protestors rather than their grievances. This behavior is then demonized and portrayed to be negatively affecting the public (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). These 5 characteristics are often what have been shaping the protest paradigm over the years. In this context Leopold and Bell (2017) discuss how it can be found that news coverage of protests displays varying levels of these characteristics with some showing up in news media more than others. Traditional news formats dictate a one-dimensional coverage of events mainly focused on what is newsworthy and have a tendency to convey a negative message in the case of protests. Moreover, the cause and motivations behind the protest get lost as well (Leopold & Bell, 2017) Hence delegitimization and demonizing are common characteristics. Adherence to just one or two characteristics is therefore detrimental for it results in only negative coverage (Leopold & Bell, 2017). The media needs to step outside normal news routines especially in covering protests more radical than others.

In this context, Beyeler and Kriesi (2005) discuss the concept of newsworthiness in the Protest Paradigm depending on proximity. This principle suggests that the closer an event is to the public, the more media coverage it gets. The events of a protest can further cross transnational boundaries. However contextual factors affect the coverage to a large extent. Political regimes contribute to the media's construction of protests. The support for a protest for certain parts of the globe depends on whether it resonates with the political culture of not just the news media but also the state (Beyeler & Kriesi, 2005). Kim and Shahin (2020) further discuss this in the way protests are covered across the globe is largely determined by the dominant ideology prevalent in a particular country. In a comparative study of protest in China,

India and Brazil, it was noted that conservative or liberal media was largely sympathetic towards any kind of movement that supported conservative or liberal causes respectively (Kim & Shahin, 2020). The highly mediatized world we live in, transnational coverage, particularly that of the US comes to affect how protests are perceived and portrayed in other countries as well. Postcolonial effects of the Global North can adversely affect perspectives surrounding the media and support for protests in the Global South (Kim & Shahin, 2020). The reactions induced thus can oscillate between sympathy and hostility depending on what colonial history has left as the constituents of inferiority.

Another key aspect of the Protest Paradigm worthy of discussion is how it comes to affect the common public and their reactions. Vlazakis and Baka (2023) discuss the concept of “accessibility bias”, a cognitive process that induces reduced information processing among audiences, first introduced by Iyengar (1990), that is largely reinforced through the Protest Paradigm. It leads to the public often only processing the most accessible images available i.e. protests being violent and protestors being deviants. There is a form of selective visibility present in Protest Paradigm that can affect not just the audience's political perceptions but also engagement and mobilization in protests (Iyengar, 1990; Vlazakis & Baka, 2023). Accessibility bias however should be discussed through the lens of emotional reactions of the audience as well (Stamps & Mastro, 2020). Beyond views on social issues, it has been studied that utilizing the characteristic of delegitimizing in Protest Paradigm reduces audience engagement and increases the potential of group antipathy (Stamps & Mastro, 2020). The decreased emotional reactions of the audience inculcate less mobilization and enthusiasm towards a social movement. Another hindrance towards participation in protests is the theory of system justification motivation according to which the public finds ways to justify and defend existing social norms and arrangements (Vlazakis & Baka, 2023). It is mainly an issue of a loss of control that one might feel with the bringing about of change in social order, hence they continue to rationalize the current system. This system justification brought about often by Protest Paradigm has been studied to be affecting both, involvement in protests and support for political systems.

Further literature on this topic indicates that the vitality and legitimacy of a democracy can be tested by the quality of coverage that protests receive (Boyle et al., 2012). Evidentially, since radical social protests find themselves covered with a more negative lens as compared to other movements, the question arises as to what causes the differential treatment of protest groups. When identifying these factors, Boyle and Armstrong (2009) and Boyle et al. (2012) take into account the goals and tactics of protest groups which they see as affecting media coverage. Goals can range from moderate reform to radical change whereas tactics involve the actions taken to achieve these goals. A protest groups' goals and tactics are generally marked through the "level of deviance" (Boyle & Armstrong, 2009; Boyle et al., 2012). A group with more radical goals is considered more deviant and is portrayed as such. Similarly, more bold tactics such as hostility or large gatherings draw significant albeit negative coverage as compared to vigils or sit-ins. Examples of such are protests around war or against political parties which trigger the Protest Paradigm more than protests surrounding climate change or gender issues such as abortion. This level of deviance is not the most accurate or ideal scale to interpret goals and tactics of protest groups. If goals and tactics are viewed through bias and presented as such by a news source, the groups' actual aspirations get distorted. They are also sometimes marked through whether they are Normative or Non-Normative (Shuman et al., 2023). When a protest adheres to socially accepted norms, they are termed as Normative and non-violent. The ones that violate the social norm, cause disruptions but remain non-violent are non-normative. Non-normative violent protests are ones that escalate into riots, clashes or property destruction (Shuman et al., 2023). The effectiveness of each of these types can be marked by their variable in focus, with the key ones being radical policy change and high mobilization. Violent protests are more likely to drive policy change whereas non-violent protests have a better outcome in terms of mobilizing and drawing support (Shuman et al., 2023). Thus, goals and tactics of a protest need to be looked at in the discussion of their media coverage.

The recurring pattern of the Protest Paradigm has been researched quite thoroughly over the years. The concept is representative of what Literat et al. (2023) describes as the gatekeeping qualities of news agencies set in opposition to the dependency of social movements on news media for visibility and exposure. However new research has pointed out

the growing influence of today's digital media environment on the production and consumption of news media (Literat et al.,2023). Social media is a major means to mobilize support and gain visibility. With the prevalence of digital and social media in recent years, more and more protests have been able to attract global attention and get people involved in discussions and nuances around their cause. Often social media has also been the trigger or instigator of a movement. The 2011 Egyptian Revolution was known to have been activated through visual content of police brutality being spread across social media channels. While it was not the primary contributor, emotionally triggering images and the efficacy with which they were spread especially when news media did not cover them, instigated fuel for the revolution (Kharroub & Bas, 2016). Similar patterns were seen in recent examples of the Black Lives Matter and the Women, Life, Freedom movements. These patterns have proved to be challenging mainstream media and offering itself as an alternative source of information. Certain journalists, bloggers and experts take to social media to present their perspective on issues, often taking protests and protestors more seriously than mainstream news media (Literat et al., 2023). However, in terms of news production and consumption on social media, Cotter & Thorson (2022) bring about that misinformation and the pandemonium of different and opposing voices can be tedious.

The Protest Paradigm is placed at a unique position in this context. There are different kinds of social media users- certain groups that share news items or speak against protestors and there are others who are critical and suspicious towards mainstream news media. For instance, at the time of the Black Lives Matter movements, there were conservative Americans supporting mainstream news media and viewing the protestors as a nuisance. Opposed to this, there were some Americans pointing out the flaws in news media, particularly their lack of comprehensiveness and the tendency to engage in harmful stereotypes that already affected the African- American community (Cotter & Thorson, 2022; Literat et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there is a growing trend of protestors and their supporters critiquing their news media representation on digital platforms and challenging the effects of the Protest Paradigm. While mainstream news media still find a greater level of prominence and legitimacy, social media in most cases proves to be a conducive platform for protest groups to challenge the Protest

Paradigm, especially those that lack in resources. It is a space where news can be shared, commentary can spread and traditional, undue representation can be confronted.

Taking the present literature into account, it can be inferred that the Protest Paradigm consists of several different features and the extent to which the paradigm is employed depends on certain determining factors. Adherence to the Protest Paradigm exists in varying degrees around the world and can significantly affect public perceptions towards collective action and the democratic process as a whole.

2.2: Framing and Sourcing

The media is the main source of knowledge about political or justice systems, for the majority of the public that is not directly involved in any of these structures. It therefore plays a fundamental role in shaping public opinion and perspective. This comes across significantly in how the public views protests as well depending heavily on the media's portrayal of them. A major element within the Protest Paradigm hence is the way in which protest stories are framed (McLeod & Hertog, 1999; Boyle, McLeod & Armstrong, 2012; Brown & Harlow, 2023).

Framing as a research tool has often been contested. Its ambiguity is mostly due to its varying definitions and use. Entman (1993) offers a relatively accepted definition of the concept by arguing that

To frame is to select some aspect 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 (p. 52).

In describing the concept, Entman sheds light on the idea that framing involves culling out certain aspects of a given piece of information as per one's own interpretation. Frames generally operate within two types- Equivalence Framing and Emphasis Framing, as highlighted by Cacciatore et al. (2016). The former involves manipulating the presentation of information whereas the latter involves manipulating the content of communication. Emphasis framing occurred post equivalent framing as it moved beyond the logical presenting of all facts and

figures to a selection of one fact or argument over the other. This is how framing in journalism can be understood today.

Framing is employed in the media to relay messages often with the intention of shaping public opinion. Framing design and decisions give structure and meaning to news stories and major events. With frames, it becomes important to consider what gets included within the frame and what is left out. Prior research has indicated that framing is an essential element in journalist routines (Nisbet, 2010; Ophir et al.,2023). Since it involves selective information that has the potential to shape behaviors and attitudes, Nisbet (2010) describes it as “an unavoidable reality in the public communication process” (p.44). A journalists’ actions are guided by ideology and how to frame a message effectively. The filtering out of meanings is determined by what dictates society at the time of writing (Nisbet, 2010; Ophir et al.,2023). Previous discussions such as that of Gamson (2004) have pointed out that journalists are therefore not isolated from their material and play the dual role of deciding which collective actors will find prominence within the coverage. Hence, they are not merely gatekeepers but players themselves. Talking of journalist roles and frames, Nisbet (2010) highlights that frames help simplify complex issues by giving weight to certain arguments over others. After exposure to the framed message, it is highly likely that the audience feels that their preconceived notion about a certain issue can now be said with significance. While most arguments around framing question journalistic objectivity and fairness, an earlier discussion led by Walgreen and Mannsens (2005) indicates a counterpoint that framing contributes towards mobilization of protests. If the framing is resonant enough, it could change the way people perceive a problem and seek opportunities to display their discontent. A compelling media frame can help people comprehend not just the cause but also take action (Walgreen & Mannsens, 2005). However, recent years have seen more negative coverage than positive.

In terms of media coverage of protests, frames are employed to categorize protestors and their actions within certain terms. More often than not, these frames are predictable narratives but they can be influenced by political leanings and societal norms. The influence that these broadcasts have on individual attitudes about protests depends majorly on the frames employed by mass media. Mcleod and Hertog (1999) identified four frames with

mutually exclusive consequences, prevalent in the coverage of protests. These include Riot, Confrontation, Spectacle and Debate. These four frames often emerge in connection to one another. Any aggressive act taking place in a protest including violence, looting or destruction of property is included within the Riot frame. This often escalates into the Confrontation frame which involves clashes with the police or other authorities and highlights subsequent circumstances such as arrests and detainment. From here emerges the Spectacle frame, emphasizing on the sensational and dramatic folding of the events. These three frames are often what causes the delegitimization of protest groups. The fourth frame regarding Debate takes place to a lesser extent. Nevertheless, it involves a focus on the protestors and offers up a platform to voice their grievances and main cause.

In discussing the frames of Mcleod and Hertog (1999), Brown and Harlow (2023) highlight that they come with their own set of flaws. In terms of the Riot and Confrontation frames, there is a strong emphasis on threats and violence, however there is no distinction made between violence by protestors and violence inflicted on protestors (Brown & Harlow, 2023). There is often a clear bias towards the figures of authority and viewing the protestors as not to be protected by the law. The second frame that finds dominance in coverage is often the Spectacle frame. Instead of the cause of grievance of the protestors, this frame shifts its focus on elements such as dramatically high numbers of people gathering, emotions of protestors, involvement of notable figures and out of the ordinary unfolding of events (Brown & Harlow, 2023). While this may not necessarily be negative coverage, this contributes towards the delegitimizing of protests for it trivializes them. Usually, it is mostly the Debate frame that proves favorable to a protest. Through an in depth portrayal of protestors' grievances and arguments can help shift a narrative, although not necessarily assuring absolute legitimization. However, the Debate frame does not always achieve its desired goal (Brown & Harlow, 2023). It does not manifest in the way that protests would like, for it depends on defining factors such as the relationship between the mainstream media and the protest groups or the more fundamental factor that is the interest of the political elites. Alongside these frames also exists a concept known as Labelling in journalism that further places certain individuals and actions within and outside the norm. Greer (2014) discuss the use of labels in criminology where

certain actions are more deviant than others and require correction- a theory that can be utilised in the discussion of protests as well for several activists find themselves incarcerated for their actions. Labelling like framing is highly selective and results in consequences of the hardening of social definitions and rules behind established labels of right and wrong (Greer, 2014). Journalists and media play a very important role in the social construction and imposition of labels through their choice-based coverage.

In terms of protests, Ophir et al. (2023) describe how studies revolving around their media framing have a lean towards both issue-specific and general approaches. The general approaches are identified by a broad coverage and organized area of comparing topics whereas issue-specific focus on a specific context in this case a single protest or movement. In this sense media framing of protests can at times also be revolving around a particular individual. Boykoff and Carrington (2019), in their study of activism in the NFL, brought to light the case of the American football player Colin Kaepernick and his act of public dissent. By kneeling during the national anthem, Kaepernick chose to protest against racial discrimination and police brutality against African-Americans. Media frames were created in the coverage of this event with certain dominant ideas appearing more often than others which is how Boykoff and Carrington (2019) describe the concept. There is a process of selection and salience that takes place in the creation of media frames which then consequently influence discourse. Frames can often exist alongside or reinforce each other but they can also clash in what is known as frame contests (Boykoff & Carrington, 2019). Frame contests relate to which interpretation or meaning of a certain news story will find the most prominence amongst the public. In the case of Colin Kaepernick, frames about race, professionalism, his skills and grievances found dominance in media coverage.

Research indicates that it would be remiss to talk about framing without highlighting the role of sources (Amine & Kozman, 2023; Brown & Harlow, 2023, Hau et al.,2023). Sources withhold a significant amount of influence not just when it comes to framing news content but also in the production phase. More often than not, these sources are influenced by those in power. Journalists and sources often work together when it comes to the representation of the political elite (Amine & Kozman, 2023). The tendency to use certain sources more than others is

a result of this connection. Hence it is often official sources that journalists use but what influences their officiality is up for debate. Amine and Kozman (2023) indicate that authoritative figures are seen as the credible basis for news stories whereas unofficial sources are generally employed to get a closer look into an event for instance, witnesses or topic experts. This is typically how the most prevalent societal agenda often finds a significant standing in the news, especially at a time of social turmoil and consequently finds space in people's viewpoints. In this context Hau et al. (2023) also brings out the perspective of the relationship between journalists and these official sources. By relying on institutional and official sources, there is an authoritative narrative that is created. The ideology of officials, journalists and social actors come to shape media coverage across topics. This is often the result of a power bias and hierarchy present in every news media system including audiovisual, online and print news media (Hau et al., 2023). There is also a negotiation that takes place in this relationship with both parties hoping to impact a story. The level of mutual dependency depends more often on the journalist's individual principles and ideals. The study by Hau et al. (2023) shines a light on journalists being secondary definers of social reality. In this discussion, journalists do not simply relay the source i.e. mostly the political elite but present their viewpoints indirectly through a dynamic process of legitimizing and delegitimizing every actor involved in the event. There is a competition when it comes to which source will find more prominence and framing over the other, and once that happens, a news story is published. The authority of social and political elite upon journalists gets represented not as much in the content but more in how a news story gets presented and structured (Hau et al., 2023).

Beyond the influence of the political elite, sourcing studies also focus on aspects such as voice and representation. Sources reinforce power structures and there is tendency of journalists to overuse sources as part of their routine (Thomson et al., 2023). When considering voice, the male and majoritarian are always louder. Or in terms of organizations or occupations, the police or court sources are considered to be more credible than others.

In the case of protests and their coverage, the Protest Paradigm is often reinforced through this connection and the tendency to use more official authoritative sources. The commonly occurring themes used by journalists to label protests are often what cues an

audience towards how they should understand a particular protest activity. The factors that shape news production make it difficult for protests to control the messages that get framed. Brown and Harlow (2023) indicate that a framing approach cannot fully account for every factor that influences a journalistic production of a protest news story but they often hold major influence in comparison to the others.

2.3: How media uses language

The use of language in the media has been quite topical. Most of the discussion is usually based around style both in written and verbal, expression of bias and the social and cultural effects of how language is used. It has always grabbed the attention of not just linguists but significant research for decades. It is extremely crucial in shaping public opinion and perception (Kress, 1986; Mcloed & Hertog, 1992; Gause et al.,2023). The media and its various forms are significant as a political and ideological institution in both the public and private domain. It mediates events between these two domains, in the sense that it classifies certain events as public and others as private.

In this context, Kress (1986) discusses that not only does the media participate in this social classification but also instructs the public about their positions and thus reinforces ideological viewpoints. This is where the use of language becomes important. The public is essentially the domain of social, political and economic forces whereas the private is beyond these forces. Through media, an individual takes in a public event and internalizes it in their private domain (Kress, 1986). Language is key in all media forms, particularly news media. In news media itself, the placement of language becomes crucial as well. For instance, in a newspaper it is most often the headline that has eye-catching language and the front page which determines the most newsworthy event of the time (Kress, 1986). Emphasis on certain words and description styles vary across the media form and several factors come to determine them. In talking of language and writing styles in the media, Bell (1995) interprets that journalists write stories instead of articles and a good story requires a balance of structure and knowledge about the media. Bell (1995) considers media to be a crucial symbol of culture, politics and society. Hence its discourse is important in both revealing the facets of society as well as contributing to its nature. Ideology and power remain at the core of language in news

media. As discussed in the 2.1 and 2.2, journalists are the key players in the presentation of events in terms of what they leave out or include and the language they use creates ripples.

News media are essentially informative texts aimed towards the function of impact and reaction from the audience. In the analysis of mass media, it becomes important to take into account how events are shown and what lexical means are used to reflect them. They are often created in accordance with an ideological system, the keywords of which are presented in subtle and non-subtle ways in texts. This is what Ponomarenko (2013) assigns as linguistic impact. Within journalistic discourse, linguistic impact plays a significant role in public consciousness. It can be shown both in the open and hidden form, however recently the hidden form is usually of greater value and significance. A popular method of the hidden form being linguistic manipulation. Scholarship such as that of Kuzio (2014) and Mialkovska et al. (2023) also discuss linguistic manipulation as manipulative influence, carried out by the use of language resources with the aim of influencing the behavioral activity of the addressee. It is through the intentional and subtle use of language the masses are influenced towards a desired paradigm. In the course of communication and interaction, the actors of manipulation are the ones with access to public discourse such as politicians, journalists or media creators. The influence is usually aimed with a group in mind in accordance to which manipulative strategies are employed (Mialkovska et al., 2023).

Ponomarenko (2013) also researched that the intentions behind linguistic manipulation are more likely towards the imposition of propaganda and the creation of political polarization. More often than not, there is the use of neutral words with hidden connotations implying the ideological system in place. In a conflict there are terms used such as peacemakers or aggressors, which can be associated as per the goal. In other instances, it is less subtle and can be utilized to shape public policy. There is also the use of subtle denunciation and incorporating fear through language and euphemisms. Denunciation involving conviction and the exposing of questionable activity is brought about to lower the credibility of any opposing force and negative consequences are highlighted to inculcate fear amongst the public (Ponomarenko, 2013). For instance, during the presidency of Bill Clinton, words like rogue states were used to describe any nation considered to be a threat or hostile towards the United States in the 1990s.

These were also significantly adopted by the mass media at the time. Despite the insinuating approach being criticized later on, the stereotype and association was stuck in people's minds and became political clichés.

Language is also utilized to create emotionally coloured and overwhelming events to affect the cognitive visions of the masses. Comparisons with similar events in the past are highlighted and their consequences are given a second look. Negative connotations are attributed to any event opposing the societal quo which attracts attention. Authoritative figures thus employ linguistic manipulation in the media to reinforce their power and societal control (Ponomarenko, 2013; Mialkovska et al., 2023). Besides these, journalists continue to look for new linguistic means that would shape opinion, attract attention and allow the public to form a relation with the information they present. In this context, language is also studied as a tool for propaganda. Forni (2023) also indicates the use of constructing speeches and narratives to push a hidden message to reinforce political power. The characteristic of this use of language is the targeted claims of fake news and the articulated distortion of reality. News is presented in such a way that does not openly declare their standing but still favors the powerful who sent forth the communication (Forni, 2023) which then influences public opinion. A degree of concealment and manipulation is present here as well.

Another major aspect of news media that needs to be considered in the analysis of language used are Headlines. The function of the headline is to attract the reader at first glance and compel them to read further, which is why news producers employ strategies to create headlines that would evoke the most curiosity. Atashfaraz and Ralston (2022) and Mehmood (2024) discuss how a headline is essentially the preamble of a news story in the sense that it summarizes and sets the tone for the content to follow. However, though journalists are meant to be objective and factual, there is hence a tendency to lean away from the truth and use provocative language that would make the headline grab attention (Atashfaraz & Ralston, 2022; Mehmood, 2024). Like the overall news piece, the headline too becomes a tool of discourse and shapes public opinion. It is hence written with the intention to sway the thinking of the public. Often if not eye-catching, it becomes the only element of the news piece that an individual reads but can be enough to set a particular ideology in motion (Mehmood, 2024). Hence the

language it comprises carries heavy impact. Following the headline is naturally the news story (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Atashfaraz & Ralston, 2022) where news value is significant. It is the criteria that determines the newsworthiness of a particular event. In relation to news values and their significance towards media language, Bednarek and Caple (2014) highlight certain commonly occurring values that shape newsworthiness. These include Proximity, Negativity, Eliteness and Superlativeness. In this context, there is a certain relationship that comes about namely language highlighting news values or news values being embedded in language. Hence, news values are construed in and through discourse (Bednarek & Caple, 2014). Newsworthiness or news values are created very significantly through language. In relation to all aspects discussed above, many researchers and linguists point to the insinuating and ideological nature of news values. They are often not neutral and indicate what the society holds most important. They are even seen to be reinforcing other ideologies besides a base one. News values can often either be foregrounded or backgrounded in a story, hence it becomes important to identify their exact construction and how they come to impact an event or issue.

With regards to protests and social movements, Gause et al. (2023) discusses how there is a tendency for the media to exaggerate facts and manipulate the public towards a certain ideology. When it comes to protests, specifically anti-government, these tendencies are applied along with the systematic use of language that would invoke emotions like fear, anxiety or anger (Gause et al., 2023). Each of these emotions have direct and distinct consequences on an audience. For instance, anger and fear from an external threat often causes further prejudice and distrust of the masses either with certain people or social groups, resulting in them not engaging in political activity. Nevertheless, it is often the case that the media covers a movement using certain words and describing events in a manner that would evoke fear, anger or anxiety (Gause et al., 2023). Ozymenko (2021) also highlights how emotions play a decisive role in how opinions are formed and often within the media discourse, it is emotions of threat and fear that find significance. Also noted by Klemm et al. (2019), the emotional tone of coverage increases fear and risk even with the lack of direct evidence. Fear has become politicized and has become an effective tool of influencing others. The construction of fear in the media is employed through language through the method of capturing audience reactions

by appealing to what they fear or are unsure of (Klemm et al., 2019; Ozymenko, 2021). This tendency has grown more over the late twentieth century.

In general news pieces, fear-mongering language is often seen around stories of criminal activity or for instance the spread of an epidemic (Klemm et al., 2019) or pandemic. In the context of protests, the use of such language is highly influenced by whether the cause defies authority and often even identity of the protestors that comes out significantly in racial or class based issues. In the same discussion, Baranaukas (2022) draws attention to how there are times when a protest is covered within the same frames that cover an act of crime. Crime and crime policy find significance in Media coverage, consumption and public opinion. Though it can even render support for certain policies, the framing of protestors as violent or confrontational delegitimizes the protests overall. A demonstration in the US by Black Americans is more likely to be called riots and portrayed using fear laden words whereas one hosted by White Americans are more likely to be praised (Gause et al., 2023). Media outlets may employ some levels of objectivity but they tend to take into consideration the political leanings of the majority in society, the choice of words then impacts public opinion swaying them either towards support or opposition. On the opposite side of the spectrum, it can be seen that this does not necessarily mean the same as media coverage using frames to portray protests negatively. Rather anger can be employed as a means of sympathy towards the protestors at times too. This can be particularly showcased by their treatment from the police (Gause et al., 2023).

Coverage and media language tends to display extreme appearances and behaviors. This focus on protestors being described as more deviant than they really are is detrimental towards the issue that they try to raise. The ones involved in the protest hence feel more isolated than before. To sum up, language is an integral tool in media coverage. Though ideally, it should be utilized to accurately present facts and opinions, it ends up in a complex process of manipulation and profit.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1: General Research Approach

To begin with, this study used the Qualitative Research Approach. This methodology is a widely accepted and significant research approach and has increased greatly in importance over the years. There is no one single definition that constitutes Qualitative Research, however researchers have come to similar conclusions of its principles. It is essentially a process of describing and classifying certain social phenomena in great detail (Flick, 2014; Graue, 2015). It is conducted with the intention of understanding and explaining the subjective meaning behind social production and phenomena such as people, events, issues or processes (Flick, 2014; Graue, 2015). This is done through systematic data collection followed by interpretation and meaning making processes. Information can be analyzed across many different areas in qualitative research. It can include (i) the researching of experiences and communication amongst individuals through personal accounts (ii) an analysis of text, images or documented data to explain a phenomenon, (iii) a comparative study of cases or events and the subsequent building of a conclusion or theory along with much more (Flick, 2018).

Since, the focus of this study is to analyze mainstream media coverage with regards to social movements, there is a need for a significant amount of text and viewpoints to be interpreted. As will be discussed further, this thesis looked upon case studies as a research objective and investigated the complexities of how each case was represented in the media. Since Qualitative Research is predominant in expounding material such as this, it works best for this study. Moreover, this method comes with a myriad of advantages. Qualitative research is highly flexible in structure. During the analysis, if a method or technique for instance, type of data collection does not fit an issue or field, a new approach can be developed till the point an ideal method is found. The design can be constructed and reconstructed to cover every dynamic (Tetnowski & Damico, 2001). This method is also highly embedded in the human experience and interpretation of meanings. It captures everything from facts to concepts to changing attitudes, which is crucial for this study. The media coverage of protests involves a

trajectory of events, experiences and subsequent reactions which need to be magnified and can be understood best through Qualitative Research. A study can also be more concentrated and subjective through this research method. Sampling and target groups can be narrowed down and only relevant, meaning data can be gathered (Rahman, 2016).

Finally, within Qualitative Research, researchers themselves are an important part of the process. This can be in terms of presence or experience and the reflexivity they bring during the study (Tetnowski & Damico, 2001). It is important for the researcher to not isolate themselves from the study and gain new understandings of the social phenomena they are researching, which in this case is of great importance as well. Hence, Qualitative Data Analysis will be employed to achieve these goals.

3.2: Data Collection

In terms of data collection, conducting Qualitative Content Analysis was considered to be the most ideal. Known to be a method of systematically elaborating on qualitative and textual data, Qualitative Content Analysis selects certain key aspects of written material and assigns them to a code or overarching theme (Forman & Damschroder, 2008; Schreier, 2013). It essentially involves the breaking down of content material and allowing categories to emerge. In this manner, it becomes easy to recognize the significance and context of the data.

In line with the research question and objective, the data collected in this study was textual in nature and derived from several news media sources. To analyze these texts, adopting the Qualitative Content Analysis was extremely useful owing to its versatile and detailed nature. Since the method involves the close reading and categorisation of information, employing it was ideal to comprehend the various aspects of the movements as well as the responses of the public. Qualitative Content Analysis differs from other methods primarily due to its focus on informational content that helps bring out theoretical perspectives (Schreier, 2013). This helps to fully comprehend a phenomena rather than making generalizations about the same (Forman & Damschroder, 2008). This method hence assigned more meaning to the theoretical framework upon which this study was built.

The three key features and advantages of Qualitative Content Analysis are that it reduces data, it is systematic and it is flexible. Most of the open-ended data gets reduced to relevant aspects through inductive and/or deductive codes and are reorganized as per what the study seeks to find (Schreier, 2013; Kyngäs, 2020). It is systematic hence for the material to be looked upon with just the research question in mind. Moreover, it is known to be unobtrusive and useful to comprehend large volumes of data or unstructured information. Explicit coding also makes the study more transparent (Schreier, 2013). These features significantly explain the wide use of this method. In this manner, the news coverage collected was divided and coded into relevant themes. The themes cover key aspects that this research wishes to explore including types of coverage, representation and depiction, identities of both protestors and opposers, critical views and varying public opinion when it comes to protests. Qualitative Content Analysis assigns prominence to meaning and interpretation. It gives a lot of attention to detail which this research also hopes to include and through strategic coding, this method will help the drawing and verification of conclusions. Hence, it was a useful and practical method of collecting data.

3.3: Case Study and Sampling

As part of the research, this thesis evolved around Case Studies, two in particular. A Case Study is a qualitative research methodology that involves a detailed look into a case through in depth data and through several variables. It is an empirical inquiry and intensive study into a real life phenomena which can range from an event, an activity, a process or a closer look into a group, organization or individual (Yin, 2009; Heale & Twycross, 2018).

Case Studies involve the examining of social complex phenomena in their natural setting which increases their understanding of them (Yin, 2009). A phenomena can be looked upon through multiple angles to reveal new facets. The aforementioned data collection method of Qualitative Content Analysis will be narrowed down with the sole focus on two particular social movements and their media coverage. The events can be understood in greater detail through the case study format. Case studies are particularly useful when it comes to gaining insights on various aspects of human behavior and circumstances. In its exploration of a trajectory of events and causal mechanisms, a Case Study can help retain the event's holistic and meaningful

characteristics as well that of its participants (Yin, 2009). Its unique strength lies in its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence such as observations, documents, artifacts, interviews which allows for a more comprehensive look at research questions and theory development (Heale & Twycross, 2018). Hence, owing to these principles and motivated by the desire to enrich this study with relevant examples to better understand the complexities of protest coverage, the research methodology of Case Study was put to use.

CASE 1: The first case comes from India. On 11th December 2019, the Indian Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that involved the granting of Indian citizenship to the people of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, but only those that were non-Muslims. The Central Government also issued the task to prepare a new National Register of Citizens (NRC) that would displace many migrants in the North Eastern parts of India. The Act ushered widespread protests and demonstrations across the country. National universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University were the centers of major protests with their students rioting and being subjected to violence and arrest (Livemint, 2019). While the state and the police issued a major crackdown of the movement, much news coverage of the time portrayed the protestors as the instigators of violence and disruption.

CASE 2: The second case is based in France. In January 2023, there were immense public objections to the Pension Reform Bill proposed by the Borne government to increase the retirement age from 62 to 64. Increasing the retirement age was seen as unfair by many for as per the French system, age and contribution regulate one's access to unreduced pension benefits, risking them to old age poverty (Bouhol & Queisser, 2023). President Macron chose to supersede the National Assembly and pass the bill without a vote (Chrisafis, 2023). The protests began on 19th January 2023 and went on till June 2023. It saw the gathering of over one million people and the suspension of public facilities like transport and maintenance. There were also lootings and clashes with security forces in Marseilles.

What makes these cases relevant is that though they differ in cause, geographical space and culture, both involve widespread public demonstrations against the government and a brutal crackdown by security forces. The media focused largely on violence and the suspension

of civil activities instead of the grievances of the protestors or their peaceful gatherings. Certain individuals were at the forefront during the movements. In the case of India, many student representatives and protest leaders organized gatherings but were also detained and subjected to violence. In France, strike leaders such as Laurent Berger, Phillipe Martinez and politicians such as Jean-Luc Mélenchon played a titular role in the demonstrations (Jacobin, 2023). The portrayal of these individual activists and leaders and what their representation meant for the movement as a whole is helpful and can be looked at through this study.

In terms of sampling, the focus is on news media. The sampling units were major news media outlets- two based in India and two from France. From India, the units were the rightwing outlet: *NDTV* and the center right outlet: *The Times of India*. Similarly in the French case, the media outlets in focus were the center- leaning outlet *Le Monde* and the center-right leaning *France 24*. A subscription to *Le Monde* was bought as not every article was available for free. Another challenge remained that certain articles had to be translated from French to English. These outlets were chosen on account of their country wide circulation and their tendency to be pro-government in their political outlooks.

The selection of units of analysis were based on purposive sampling. They include online news articles as well as features, op-eds and blogs, for this best represent how the media frames such movements and its leaders. The criteria upon which these were selected was based on whether the news stories are revolving around the events of the protests and some leaders at the forefront namely Laurent Berger, Phillippe Martinez, Simon Duteil, Jean Luc Melenchon, Benoît Teste and Catherine Perret in France and Sharjeel Imam, Umar Khalid, Kanhaiya Kumar, Aishe Ghosh and the 'Grandmothers of Shaheen Bagh' in India. The time frame will be from when the protests first gained momentum right up till its eventual subsiding in the same year, hence; 15th December 2019 till 21st March 2020 and 19th January 2023 till 19th April 2023 in India and France respectively. As per the official requirements, the units of analysis analyzed were 15 from each of the 4 media outlets, with the total hence becoming 60. Since there exists a large amount of news coverage of this time, to maintain transparency and adhere to the guidelines, the units of analysis were brought to the official required amount

through the use of a manual AI known as Randomizer.org. This helped create 4 sets of 15 news articles with each news outlet having an equal distribution.

3.4: Data Analysis

As per what was extensively discussed in the theoretical discussion, the concept of Framing finds a lot of prominence in media coverage. Framing decisions give meaning to news stories and events and is a highly contested yet essential aspect of journalism. These decisions are thus extremely important to examine as they often shape public opinion around issues. To better analyze portrayal and framing narratives in news media when it comes to protest coverage, the most appropriate data analysis method for this thesis was considered to be Frame Analysis. Frame Analysis is a research tool that closely looks at the very frames used in the depiction or relaying of a story and through this provides evidence towards how people perceive a particular occurrence. It has often been employed in the exploration of messages, images, portrayals and categorisations within events and experiences (Goffman, 1974).

The theory behind Frame Analysis argues that people classify their experiences according to guiding frames of reference. Social situations are given meaning through these frames. So beyond direct involvement in the form of describing the events, frames are significant in meaning making (Goffman, 1974). Hence the sources from which these frames emerge are to be considered. Frame Analysis therefore serves many purposes, particular to this study as well. The method is known to help define issues within frames, make value judgements and offer remedies (Linström & Marais, 2012). It is also ideal in exposing hidden implications behind certain spoken or written material. Common keywords or implications were culled out through this method out of the source material. It was therefore helpful to shine a light on how grievances are interpreted and the ideological strategies behind the depiction of protest and protest leaders. This method of analysis was thus considered best due to its nature of being a critical and methodological tool of exploring processes of meaning-making employed by the politically and socially elite. It served as a guiding tool of analysis and since it involves a look into news coverage along with ideology and culture, it applies well to the study.

This project took a Hybrid approach involving both, a top-down largely theoretical Deductive approach and a bottom-up data driven Inductive approach in. A deductive approach essentially involves engagement with literature and applying an existing theoretical framework to a study. This approach is helpful in explaining causal relationships through available information to reach a valid conclusion. An Inductive approach primarily uses detailed readings of raw data to derive findings and dominant themes, guided by specific evaluation objectives (Thomas, 2006). New theories can be devised pertaining to the specific case studies and contexts through an inductive approach. Essentially, researchers using a deductive approach regard data as pre-existing forms of evidence ready to be collected whereas the inductive approach emphasizes on the emergent properties of the researcher and how to develop new concepts (Swain, 2018). The hybrid approach involves both. The strength of this approach comes from it allowing a researcher to explore complex themes of a specific phenomenon that would necessitate theme generation while also benefiting from a rigorous pre-existing theoretical framework as a base. The hybrid approach is known to be carrying significant merit and is useful because it deploys the advantages of both approaches (Proudfoot, 2022). Through the hybrid approach hence, the frames for this study were created. While literature provides pre-existing frames surrounding media coverage of movements, their scope came across as somewhat limited, particularly in the coverage of protest leaders. This concept of how protest leaders get covered in the media is a key exploration in this study and since it is a relatively less explored phenomena, pre-existing frames in literature do not cover them within separate frames and they end up being generalized. Hence, doing an inductive approach alongside the deductive allowed for new concepts surrounding leaders to emerge from the ground up and with that came about new frames that encapsulated them. Meanwhile, in the coverage of protests as a whole, the pre-existing literature was considered ideal as it pertained to the cases and their long complicated political histories. The pre-existing frames have been utilised across research for years and found significance here as well. Hence adopting the hybrid approach assisted in having certain frames as a guide and looking at new ones at the same time.

This study required the breakdown of the sample through coding. Coding entails close reading of texts, going through data line by line and assigning codes to paragraphs, relevant to

the research questions (Thomas, 2006). This is done to identify the multiple meanings inherent in the text. This study will therefore deductively utilize the sampling units to identify dominant themes within pre-existing frames as well use the same to create new frames as part of the inductive approach. The process of coding will be conducted through the use of ATLAS.ti, a prominent qualitative data analysis software.

In the process of exploring the literature around this topic, two frames within the media representation of protests and the protest paradigm stood out to be the most relevant and noteworthy. They were “Spectacle”, and “Debate” (Mcleod & Hertog, 1999; Brown & Harlow, 2023). The focus of the “Spectacle” frame lies primarily on the newsworthy, sensational and dramatic aspects of a social movement. It is a frame used as a delegitimizing tool where the coverage tends to favor officials more than the participants and are typically used to inculcate fear or disapproval. The “Debate” frame, though appearing relatively less often, is extremely important for it highlights the opinions that arise out of media coverage and gives a voice to the protestors (Mcleod & Hertog, 1999; Brown & Harlow, 2023). A blend of dominant themes arising out of these distinctive frames and how commonly they occur in the two cases will be a key aspect of this study.

The software Atlas ti. was utilized in two stages of coding. Firstly, in following the deductive approach, the units of analysis were coded with the above two frames as the pre-existing overarching themes. The analysis helped in delivering sub themes within the “Spectacle” and “Debate” frames as well as provided evidence of how commonly these frames are used in news coverage. Secondly, as part of the inductive approach, the sample had to be coded to cull out new frames relevant to the study of the representation of protest leaders. The first step of Initial Coding involved the line by line reading and analysis of the 60 news articles out of which emerged a large set of 302 distinct codes. The second step of Axial Coding identified those codes which were repeating and had similar features which were then grouped together. The aim of the axial coding was to synthesize the initial codes into groups, ultimately leading to 44 smaller codes. The final step of Selective Coding involved determining the dominant themes that were unfolding from the dataset and transforming them into categories. Two results came about with these as a basis - the subthemes were created for the “Spectacle”

and “Debate” frames and the other dominant themes helped create two new frames pertaining to the research question which were “Resolute “and “Conspirator”. The “Resolute” frame was identified as a commonly occurring category in the media coverage of protest leaders showcasing their relentless and determined nature to bring momentum to the movement and also organize the events of the movement strategically. The “Conspirator” frame occurred more frequently in the Indian context but involves the commonly occurring negative portrayal of protest leaders and the consequences they face for their actions against the government. Out of these frames, codes out of each frame were derived, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Coding Scheme

Spectacle	Debate	Resolute	Conspirators
Focus on the Dramatic	Public Expression of views	Determination and Assertiveness	Negative view of Leaders
Negative Inclination towards protestors	Presence of differing opinions	Motivating words and statements	Challenges faced by leaders
Eye-catching language	Criticism of country’s leaders	Strategic Ideation	
Positive coverage			

3.5: Reflexivity

Bias in qualitative research is an inevitable circumstance that researchers always have to pay close attention to. To avoid biases occurring in a study, the process of reflexivity becomes very important. It is essential that a researcher identifies themselves and shares all pertinent details to avoid bias (Bergen & Labonte, 2019). The purpose behind this study is to examine a means of public expression, often representative of a modern democracy and differing opinions towards them. The impact that this study hopes in providing is offering a

clear picture of anti-establishment movements through two case studies and verifying what positions the movement's significant organizers find themselves in. It is aimed towards being more individual and personalized rather than a collective narrative and understanding.

Considering positionality, there was a strong attempt to avoid bias and not impose personal opinion. Being a young Indian female who witnessed a lot of the events unfolding in the CAA/ NRC protests in 2019, it was a conscious choice to include this case in the study. As a fellow university student from a minority background, it was difficult to see peers of similar ages, backgrounds and localities in clashes with the authorities along with being one of the citizens of a country where the government favors the majority and can impose discriminatory laws. Moreover, what added to this was the fact that my father himself is a part of the authorities, more specifically the Delhi Police. Hence, this case came from a very personal source. Similarly, in the second case, there was also a tendency to have a bias towards the more liberal view and in support of the fellow citizens and protestors rising up.

However, overcoming this personal attachment was made a priority. As a researcher, conscious attempts were made to separate personal views and maintain objectivity so the research and its results are not affected. This can be seen in how each of the research methods chosen do not involve any possibility of forming a bias, rather they are all in depth explorations into the phenomena. Moreover, the frames in the data analysis were conceived with media coverage in mind as per the research question and objective. There was also a strive to focus on both cases equally and not having a leaning towards one over the other. Bias was predominantly overcome by viewing myself first and foremost as a researcher rather than a student or daughter of someone in the state authorities.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter entails the display of results and discussing the dominant codes under each frame as initially put forward in Table 1. It was found that the media coverage surrounding protest leaders in the two cases were most commonly defined and represented by these 4 frames and their codes.

4.1: Spectacle

Creating a spectacle frame proved to be a common journalistic practice in the two cases of this study. Across the media coverage of the events that unfolded in both India and France, the themes of “Focus on the dramatic”, “Negative Inclination towards protestors”, “Eye-catching language” and “Positive coverage” within the Spectacle frame revealed to be the most prominent. All four themes had a strong presence throughout with ‘Focus on the Dramatic’ being the most dominant angle. This particular theme was found in 28 French newspaper articles out of 30 and in 29 Indian newspapers out of 30 as well. Majority of the news coverage, in its relaying of protest events, focused on the most dramatic occurrences and activities. They revolved around what the protestors were engaging in as part of their resistance to grab attention such as gathering of large numbers, long term strikes and clashes with police. News articles were overrun with the violent and disruptive elements of the protests, with an example being “the protests against the pension reforms took the shape of hundreds of furious fires across the land” (Bacqué, 2023, para. 1). Arson was a commonly occurring activity in both countries.

Figure 1.

Violent Protests against CAA/NRC in Lucknow, India (Deka,2019)



Figure 2.

Demonstrations against Pension reform in Nantes, France (Bacqué, 2023)



Dramatic details were also brought about in the numbers that gathered in strikes or marches across the two countries. “Over a million march in protest across France” (Le Monde, 2023 ,para . 1) and “Thousands of people protest at Mumbai’s iconic Azad Maidan against Citizenship CAA, NRC and NPR” (NDTV, 2020, para.1).

The Indian government often resorts to harsh subduing of protestors which journalists use in their stories quite a lot. “Authorities resorted to barricading and clampdown on mobile services... while protestors faced tear gas shelling and police batons giving the protests a violent color” (Times of India, 2023, para.2) is one of the key coverage pieces in this context. An unplanned surge of resistance was always met with a brutal crackdown by the law enforcers. French President Macron passing the reform through the parliament without a vote triggered a lot of anger and resentment towards the government which became the main subject of further dramatic activities and coverages. A common coverage being, “The past seven nights have seen spontaneous demonstrations in Paris and other cities with rubbish bins set ablaze and scuffles with the police” (France 24, 2023, para. 6).

In relation to this is the second theme upon which the Spectacle frame which is a “Negative Inclination towards protestors”. Though the use of dramatic elements make up the events of the movement, it is accompanied with an underlying negative outlook towards the protest and its participants in general. This theme was found in 18 French newspaper articles out of 30 and in 14 Indian newspapers out of 30 as well. Instances of disruptions caused that

painted a rather negative picture of the demonstrators to not be the ones fighting against a discriminatory authority but the ones causing inconvenience to the city. A French example being “Several spontaneous demonstrations followed, damaging buildings and igniting several fires, notably burning the garbage cans that have littered Parisian streets since sanitation workers went on strikes” (Schittly, 2023, para 7) and an Indian one being “Minister Yogi Adityanath said that those who damaged public property will have to pay for it and that the culprits have been identified through video and CCTV footage” (Times of India, 2019, para. 4).

Our next theme within the Spectacle Frame is the use of ‘Eye-catching language’. Most news outlets can be seen employing this practice as a means of representing the events while also securing readership. Evidentially, this theme was found in 22 out of 30 French newspapers and 15 out of 30 Indian newspapers. The headlines “The pension reform looks like a boxing match: Macron, the president, versus Berger, the union leader (Fenoglio & Fresso, 2023) and “NRC, CAA Onslaught on Constitution says Kamal Nath, leads Peace March” (NDTV, 2020) are some examples of instigating, eye-catching headlines that news outlets used to represent movements. Within the news pieces, the use of heavy, provocative language is present through the use of phrases like “black day”, “bringing to a standstill”, “set to paralyze” or “grand rally”. A journalistic practice for the same is using their platform to tell a story with tense scenes and the frustration of the demonstrators expressed.

Figure 3.

Example of eye-catching headlines in Le Monde (Fenoglio & Fresso, 2023)

OPINION • FRENCH PENSION REFORM

'The pension reform looks like a boxing match: Macron, the president, versus Berger, the union leader'

COLUMN



Françoise Fresso
'Le Monde' columnist

Figure 4.

Example of eye-catching headlines in NDTV (Dwary,2019)

"NRC, CAA Onslaught On Constitution", Says Kamal Nath, Leads Peace March

Opposition leaders have been critical about the Citizenship Act; Trinamool's Derek O'Brien called it a ploy from the "Nazi copybook" and Congress's Anand Sharma said it "hurts the soul of the Constitution"

Table 2.

Frequency of "Spectacle" Frame

	French Newspapers	Indian Newspapers	Total
Focus on the Dramatic	28/30	29/30	57/60
Negative Inclination towards Protestors	18/30	14/30	32/60
Eye-catching language	22/30	15/30	37/60

4.2: Debate

The Debate Frame is a relatively lesser explored frame in most research, however, it stood out significantly in this study capturing public response in the media coverage of the two cases. The dominant angles through which this frame was defined were "Views of the Public" and "Presence of differing opinions" and "Criticism for country's leaders"

Out of these three, the 'Views of the Public' theme was found to be in was found to be in 24 articles out of 30 in French newspapers and 23 articles out of 30 in Indian newspapers. Across the news outlets, there exists significant examples and mentions of protestors and the

public expressing their discontentment and disillusionment with the reform and the law. Some examples include the public stating "I don't want to work longer. My job is hard and even at 62 I will be exhausted (France 24, 2023, para.11) and "Government cannot force us to show our documents. We will not show them nor will we allow them to divide people on the basis of religion "(NDTV, 2020, para. 3). The public response to each of the laws majorly was that of apprehension and criticism which French and Indian newspaper managed to cover as part of the Debate frame.

Talking of the second theme namely the 'Presence of differing opinions' refers to the frequency at which media coverages involve both sides being represented including the government and the protestors, without taking a stand for themselves. In the French pension reform protests, this theme was found in 25 articles out of 30 and in the Indian case, it was found in 17 articles out of 30. Most of the coverage surrounding this theme involved what the government said in response to the criticism of the law such as "The 45 year old Centrist on Monday said that the changes were essential when we compare ourselves to the rest of Europe " (Le Monde, 2023, para.15) and "The Government says that the CAA which makes the religion a test of citizenship for the first time, makes non-Muslim minorities from Muslim-majority countries if they fled religious persecution..." (Ghazali, 2020, para.7). The outlets appear to be neutral by presenting both the demonstrator and authority but remain in a position where they would not be threatened by the state.

The third theme titled "Criticism for country's leaders" lies in relevance to a commonly occurring criticism in the news coverage that came with the public's lack of acceptance regarding the new laws. They include people making remarks on the country and the ruling party leaders including Emmanuel Macron, Elizabeth Borne and Narendra Modi. It was found in 18 of 30 French articles and 7 out of 30 Indian articles. There lies several convictions of workers upset with Macron who stated " I have doubts about Macron, his ability to move, to listen to the people" (France 24, 2023, para. 13) and in the Indian case, the criticism included "It is very sad that the Prime Minister only cares to talk about what's on his mind. If he was ready to listen to what's on the minds of students, the country wouldn't have been facing such a situation today" (Razdan,2019, para.6).

Table 3.

Frequency of “Debate” Frame

	French Newspapers	Indian Newspapers	Total
Views of the public	24/30	23/30	47/60
Presence of differing opinions	25/30	17/30	42/60
Criticism for country’s leaders	18/30	7/30	25/60

4.3: Resolute

Being resolute implies a nature of bold and steely determination- a frame which found significance when the protest leaders of the two movements in this study were represented in media. The ‘Resolute’ frame that was thus formed can be divided into three distinct and dominant characteristics namely; ‘Determination and Assertiveness’, ‘Motivating words’ and ‘Strategic Ideation’.

The first dominant angle of ‘Determination and Assertive’ adheres to various articles talking of protestors continuing on with their demonstrations, not letting the crackdown from the authorities stop them and the leaders being central along this journey. This angle was found in 18 French articles out of 30 and 8 Indian articles out of 30. Union and student protest leaders such as Phillippe Martinez, Laurent Berger, Simon Duteil, Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Aishe Ghosh and more have been mentioned across newspapers showcasing their determination and dedication for the cause. A response given to President Macron by CFTD (French Democratic Confederation of Labour) leader Phillippe Martinez was “we’re counting on the spirit of responsibility of the president and the government so that we end up not being forced to step up the protests with rolling strikes” (Métais, 2023, para.7) and a response given by JNSU (Jawaharlal Nehru Student Union) President Aishe Ghosh who was attacked by right wing goons during this time was “There will be no change in our fight against wrong policies despite

attacks...we will keep fighting”(Singh, 2020, para.2) . Coverage also included the leaders seen calling the public to action so the government would have no choice but to listen such as “CGT leader Phillipe Martinez calls for tougher, more massive, more numerous strikes...” (France 24, 2023, para.8) and the certain “Daadis” or ‘grandmothers’ of Shaheen Bagh saying “We will march to Amit Shah’s (Minister of Home Affairs) house along with everyone here. We will speak in front of everyone. We will ask him to give in writing that CAA and NRC will be taken back” (Shukla, 2020, para. 3).

The second theme of ‘Motivating Words’ lies in relation to the first theme. It involved the prevalence of leaders motivating crowds in the newspapers. In the French case, evidence was found in 24 articles out of 30 whereas in the Indian case, it was found in 11 out of 30. Speeches given by Umar Khalid, the currently incarcerated student leader included statements such as “It is a fight all such concerned citizens who reposed faith in the Constitution, which guarantees a democratic and secular nation” (Deogharia, 2020, para. 2). In France, leaders such as Laurent Berger is mentioned mobilizing crowds - “we must strike hard and be on strike in large numbers” (Bisseul, 2023, para. 8).

Within the two cases, certain leaders or individuals provided strategic steps on how to move forward to raise their voices. This makes up the third theme in the frame of “Strategic Ideation”. This theme was present in 19 French newspapers and in 13 Indian newspapers out of 30 each. Key mentions include French Union leader Laurent Berger calling for a “pause instead of a withdrawal on the reform being passed for the government and the unions to get back on track” (Le Monde, 2023, para.3) and in the Indian context those against the passing of CAA/ NRC organizing rallies across the country while adhering to protective measures against the pandemic and criticizing the government for not having a handle on the situation- “If PM Modi wants us to be safe from the coronavirus, then he should have withdrawn CAA, NRC and NPR. Here, the women are maintaining social distance and using hand sanitisers and phenyl to maintain cleanliness at the protest site” (NDTV, 2020, para.3)

Figure 5.

French Labour Union Leaders gathered (Schittly & Métais , 2023)



Union leaders Laurent Escure (UNSA), Frédéric Souillot (FO), Cyril Chabanier (CFTC), Benoît Teste (FSU), François Hommeril (CFE-CGC), Laurent Berger (CFDT), Murielle Guilbert (Solidaires) and Philippe Martinez (CGT), in front of the Assemblée Nationale, on March 16, 2023 JULIEN MUGUET FOR « LE MONDE »

Figure 6.

Women at an organized sit-in in Shaheen Bagh, New Delhi (Business Standard, 2020)



Table 4.

Frequency of “Resolute” Frame

	French Newspaper	Indian Newspapers	Total
Determination and Assertiveness	18/30	8/30	26/60
Motivating words	24/30	11/30	35/60
Strategic Ideation	19/30	13/30	32/60

4.4: Conspirators

With the protestors being viewed through a negative lens at times in newspapers as a collective, there lies evidence of protest leaders being framed in such a distinction. Taken from primarily the Indian context, the frame that finds significance when protest leaders are mentioned, lying in contrast to the ‘Resolute’ frame is ‘Conspirators’. Within this frame, the coverage was divided into two further sub themes including ‘Negative view of Leaders’ and ‘Challenges faced by Leaders’.

During the Indian case, the ‘Negative view of Leaders’ was represented in 5 articles and 5 as well in the French case. In the Indian context, this was undertaken by several articles dedicated solely to the allegations made towards certain activists such as Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam who were described as “anti-national” and to be the instigators of riot and violence in various parts of the country (NDTV, 2020, para.2). In the French context, PM Borne is mentioned on several occasions calling for an end to the strikes and for unions and their leaders to adhere to social responsibility. Mentions such as the “internal affairs unit of the French police, said it had opened 17 investigations into incidents since the protests began on January 19” (France 24, 2023, para.6) bring forth a negative appearance of leaders.

For the second sub theme, evidence was found in 12 French newspapers and 9 Indian newspapers out of 30. Several articles in the data set involve challenges faced by union leaders particularly at the time of the movement slowing down in France and student leaders arrested and charged in India for their speeches and mobilizing of crowds against the new laws. Most

articles and mentions in this context come with an underlying sense of influence from the authorities. Examples include “Umar Khalid under lens for provocative speech” (Times of India, 2020, para.1) and “The unions are facing pressure to step up the protests by some of their members” (Metais, 2023, para.13)

Table 5.
Frequency of “Conspirator’ Frame

	French Newspapers	Indian Newspapers	Total
Negative View of Leaders	5/30	5/30	10/60
Challenges faced by Leaders	12/30	9/30	21/60

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the objective of finding out how mainstream media outlets covered the anti-establishment 2019 Indian Anti CAA/ NRC and 2023 French pension reform protests and their leaders. It was discovered that mainstream media outlets covered these anti-establishment protests and their leaders through a series of frames that brought out their dramatic details while also attempting to maintain neutrality. Mainstream media across India and France may be different but one of the main findings indicated that the majority of news coverage at a protest is dominated by its most dramatic elements. When it comes to creating a spectacle out of the protest activities taking place, the frame is defined by the tendency to rely heavily on the most dramatic or odd elements for maximum engagement (Mcleod & Hertog, 1999; Mcleod, 2007; Brown & Harlow, 2019), which the media coverage in both of the cases in this study employed to a large extent.

With an introductory overview of the protestors and their objectives, the higher journalistic practice remained to be how can more eyes be on a news story. What is to be noted however is the concept of the Protest Paradigm finds itself limited to fully encapsulate the occurrences of these two movements. While the Protest Paradigm relates to the protestors engaging in activities they know would garner media attention, these two cases did not outwardly work to reach that goal. It came across through the research that the numbers as well as the disillusionment with the government existed at a high level already. Both movements initiated extreme acts right from the start and garnered support and media attention. It was only at the end of the strikes and sit-ins that the leaders had to push for engaging in acts that would keep the momentum going and prolong media attention so that the authorities would continue to take them seriously. News coverage through its focus on the dramatic also significantly utilise language, another significant aspect of media coverage as covered in previous research, in relation to creating these dramatic moments. Language is often used to inculcate a sense of fear and anxiety (Baranauskas, 2022; Gause et al., 2023) towards protests. It is through a combination of these- language and sensationalized elements that the ways in which protestors are received by the public is determined.

The research also pointed towards media coverage being quite liberal when it comes to handling responses, particularly that of the public. While previous research indicates that the Debate frame appears less often (Brown & Harlow, 2023), it finds a strong presence in the cases presented in this study. Across the different media outlets, weight was given to the voice of protestors and their grievances were addressed. From a leader handling an entire labor union to a college student fighting alongside their peers, individual statements were recorded across the French and Indian newspapers, a journalistic approach that not all would be inclined to employ. Another key area discovered was the responses of the public not just containing their apprehensions of the law but making them question the current ruling party and their decision of voting them to power. Although criticism for Narendra Modi is never well received or hardly printed, the times proved to be so taxing that voices were raised.

The results also points towards the leaders and their role in a large social movement. It was found that the dominant coverage when covering leaders are speeches and statements made by them in hopes of motivation and mobilization. Across the Indian and French newspaper, coverage emphasized on why they can be kept at the forefront through their skills of public speaking. This lies in relation to the leaders being portrayed as determined and representative of the multitudes gathered with them. Media coverage, however, falls short of picking a side and attempts to maintain neutrality. While it showcases determination, it also highlights criticism faced by leaders, painting a negative portrayal. The research shows that the media coverage also has a hand in signifying the challenges faced by the leaders such as incarceration and protests losing traction, that literature does not cover. The word 'Conspirator' is picked up directly from statements given by the police and the current ruling party while describing leaders such as Khalid and Imam. They have since been charged with sedition and remain in confinement till today and news articles of the time rehash the charges against them, contributing to their widely negative portrayal and perception. In the French case as well, statements taken from PM Borne or President Macron often criticise union leaders and demonstrators. Moreover, a majority of internal union issues and prolonged strikes were challenging to maintain.

While it comes across that the media is being objective in its portrayal, traces of influence can be felt, nonetheless. It becomes rare then to find articles offering full-fledged support to the movement out of possible fear of the government. They maintain a stand of neutrality while covering up influence derived from elsewhere. However, what should additionally be noted here is the coverage of dramatic events but without always pushing the need to be negative. It was surprising to see that there were instances of solidarity, public strength and social responsibility found in the articles which convey more of a positive message than a negative one. Hence, the “Spectacle” frame need not always be looked at as delegitimising protest actions.

This study first and foremost implies that media coverage, whether they are unprejudiced, influenced by the government or whether they place profit over everything else, still manage to capture the resilience that is in the air during a protest. While most of literature points towards only the negative portrayals of protest actions and activists, also present in the coverage of India and France, the mainstream media manages to also go against this literature and offer not just public opinion on discriminatory laws but also an outlet for leaders. Moreover, literature indicates only a few chosen frames that help understand coverage of protests, however this study indicated that more levels of frames can be explored since each case has a specific context and background. The role of political leaders and the choices they make while people rise up against them was also discovered during this study. In terms of maintaining neutrality, it was noted that the media is never fully able to. This may be owing to the media restrictions that exist across both India and France especially with the current parties in power. Protesting becomes a difficult act to participate in when the government is one not to listen and controls the media accordingly. Nevertheless, this study implies that protests are meaningful and the frames that define them cannot be restricted to just a few.

In terms of limitations of this study, the sample could be broadened. Newspapers are not the only source when it comes to representation which is why television or radio broadcasts can also be looked at. What would be interesting to look at post this research is more of a focus given to incarcerated protestors and how they cope with their circumstances. The significance of labor unions when it comes to confronting the ruling authority is another

subject worthy of further research. Since our world now is more digital than ever, it would also be interesting to look at the role of social media in the portrayal of protests and protest leaders. Questions can be formed along what discussions take place on such topics online or whether they contribute to further support or negatively view the people fighting.

This study is significant for protests continue to remain a universal form of dissent for local people demanding respect. Since media plays an extremely significant role in attracting both support and attention, understanding how it does so becomes important. Issues that face the world today, that governments are responsible for, continue to be confronted by protests and demonstrations. The slogans mentioned in the beginning of this thesis symbolize the creativity of common people in drawing attention towards their cause. Both were widely popular and beyond getting their point across, helped the common people identify themselves with those who were risking their lives to protest. There exists the mobilization of people putting pressure on the government to take action in recent times as well. Student protests in particular are challenging to be taken seriously. The encampments at universities for Gaza continue to be met with opposition and are subdued but signify determination that also demands respect. The research of this study implies how important the media's role is in covering a movement while also bringing to light the various ways in which it does the same. These methods need to be considered before internalizing any piece of media one is exposed to. The frames that the media uses as representative tools in their news stories can be navigated for hints of bias and influence. With protests and protest leaders still being exposed to brutal subjugation or not being allowed to express their grievances, we need unbiased media that would keep audiences on their toes. This study hence becomes helpful in identifying the approaches that the media takes when it comes to covering the coming together of a large group of people united by a common goal.

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[constitution-says-kamal-nath-leads-peace-march-2154303](https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/nrc-caa-onslaught-on-constitution-says-kamal-nath-leads-peace-march-2154303)

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Appendices

Appendix A

Figure 7 a: Initial Coding Code Book

ATLAS.ti Report

Master Thesis

Codes

Report created by Jolynne John on 26 Jun 2024

o **A larger message**

Quotations:

- 20:32 p 5, This is about more than pensions, it is about what kind of society we want, in France sees bigger crowds on second strike day against Macron pension reforms.pdf

o **Accused for going against the govt**

Quotations:

- 32:18 p 2, Mr Khalid is also said to have taken part in anti-CAA demonstrations in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, B... in "Umar Khalid Conspired To Fuel Delhi Riots," Says Police Charge Sheet.pdf

o **Accusing government for not listening**

Quotations:

- 42:17 p 2, "It's very sad that the Prime Minister only cares to talk about what's on his mind. in Kanhaiya Kumar Says Not Just Muslims, Citizenship Act And NRC Will Affect All Of India.pdf
- 50:9 p 2, This movement should not stop till the objective is achieved. We have been fighting for justice (for... in Fight against CAA & NRC will go on, vow Medha & Aishe Ghosh | Bhopal News - Times of India.pdf

o **Accusing leaders for evoking fear**

Quotations:

- 40:23 p 2, "By a sustained and well oiled campaign, they created an acute sense of fear and insecurity in the m... in Delhi Riots Accused Committed Crime Against Humanity: Police.pdf

Figure 7b: Initial Coding Code Book

<p>Quotations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 32:18 p 2, Mr. Khalid is also said to have taken part in anti-CAA demonstrations in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, B... in "Umar Khalid Conspired To Fuel Delhi Riots," Says Police Charge Sheet.pdf ● 34:18 p 1, "It was noticed that Sharjeel Imam, a resident of Bihar and student of the JNU, has been delivering... in Another Seditious Case Against JNU Student For Separate Assam Remark.pdf ● 40:14 p 1, a "sustained and well-oiled" campaign, they created an acute sense of fear and insecurity in the min... in Delhi Riots Accused Committed Crime Against Humanity: Police.pdf ● 40:21 p 2, With the leaders choosing to either remain safely glued to their television sets in the comfort of t... in Delhi Riots Accused Committed Crime Against Humanity: Police.pdf <hr/> <p>○ Acknowledging shortcomings</p> <p>Quotations:</p>
<p>● 18:18 p 3, Laurent Berger had recognized at the launch of the Parisian demonstration "a small handicap with the... in Despite a declining mobilization, pressure continues against pension reform.pdf</p> <hr/> <p>○ Actions targeted towards Muslims</p> <p>Quotations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 41:18 p 3, That the Muslim community has had to face the brunt of police action in recent days only in those st... in India Does Not Need Citizenship Amendment Act CAA, NPR Says Open Letter By 100 Ex-Civil Servants.pdf ● 42:9 p 1, "The government says that the two initiatives will not affect the country's Muslim citizens. On the... in Kanhaiya Kumar Says Not Just Muslims, Citizenship Act And NRC Will Affect All Of India.pdf ● 42:13 p 1, "The government says that the two initiatives will not affect the country's Muslim citizens. On the... in Kanhaiya Kumar Says Not Just Muslims, Citizenship Act And NRC Will Affect All Of India.pdf <hr/> <p>○ Adding fuel to fire</p> <p>Quotations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 30:10 p 3. The decision runs the risk of further inflaming the protests and strikes that have rocked

Figure 7c: Initial Coding

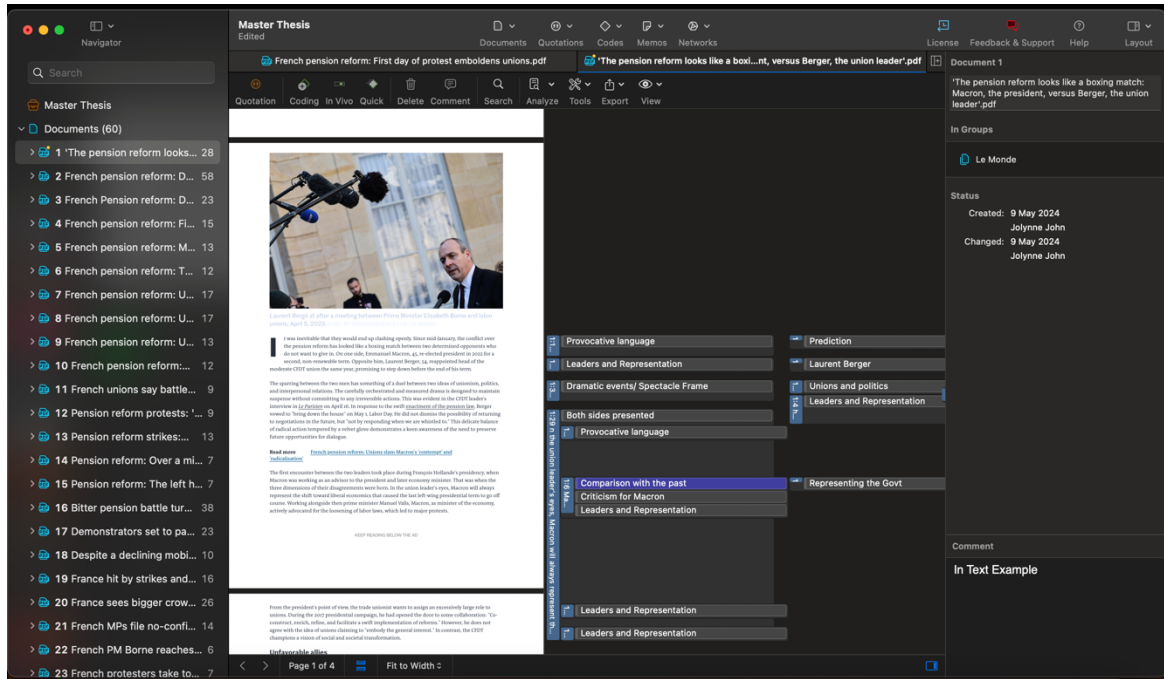
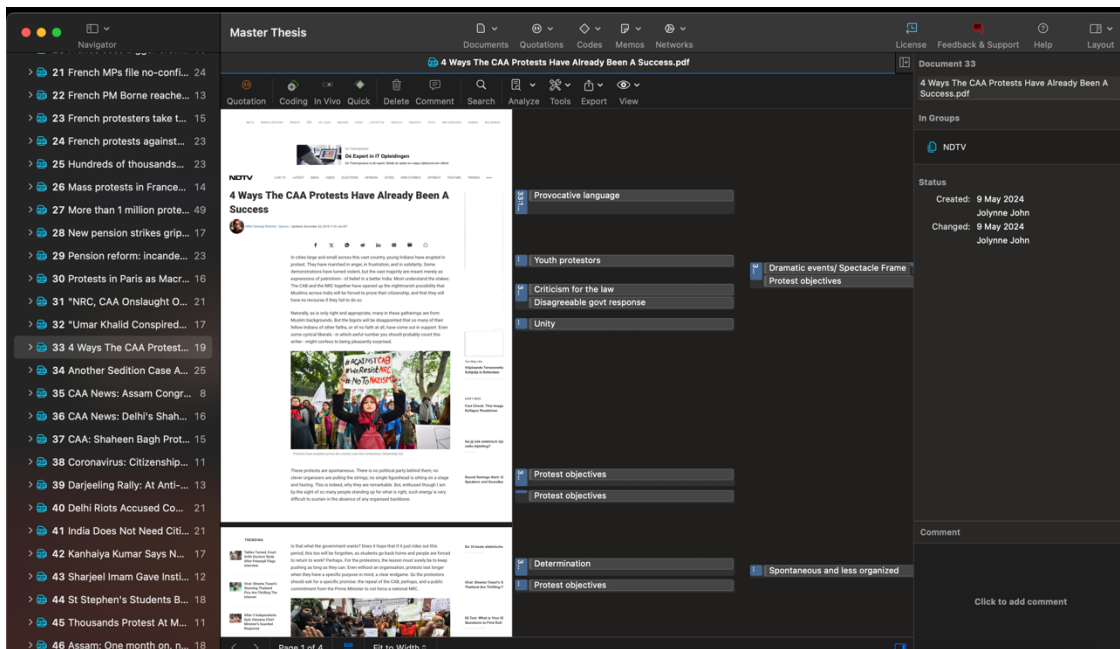
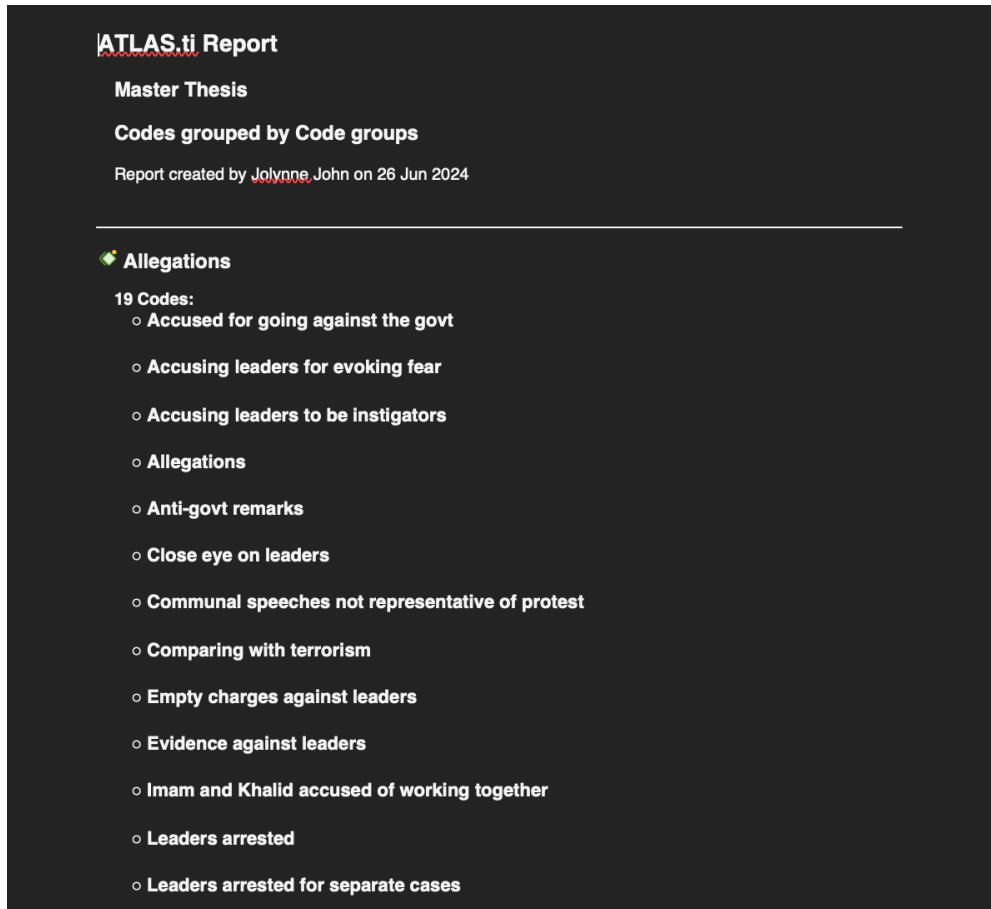


Figure 7d: Initial Coding



Appendix B

Figure 8a: Axial Coding Code Book



ATLAS.ti Report

Master Thesis

Codes grouped by Code groups

Report created by [Jolyne, John](#) on 26 Jun 2024

Allegations

19 Codes:

- **Accused for going against the govt**
- **Accusing leaders for evoking fear**
- **Accusing leaders to be instigators**
- **Allegations**
- **Anti-govt remarks**
- **Close eye on leaders**
- **Communal speeches not representative of protest**
- **Comparing with terrorism**
- **Empty charges against leaders**
- **Evidence against leaders**
- **Imam and Khalid accused of working together**
- **Leaders arrested**
- **Leaders arrested for separate cases**

Figure 8b: Axial Coding Code Book

