

FEAR IN THE MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF U.S. AND BRITISH NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF A TERRORIST THREAT

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism has become a significant media event. Research has shown the consumption of media focused on terrorism leads to higher levels of fear. This comparative content analysis of three U.S. papers (The New York Times, The New York Post, USA Today) and three British papers (Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, the Sun) focuses on the usage symbols, claims making, security measures, and techniques of investigation to articulate the difference of fear producing symbols within select print media of each respective country. The focus is derived from an August 10, 2006 terrorist attack that was thwarted by British intelligence agencies. By collecting articles from each newspaper for the subsequent week after the event I was able to construct a sample of coverage. Using theories of the discourse of fear and the politics of fear this paper focuses on the amount of symbols used in the coverage. The analyses concludes that American print media contains more symbols that potentially produce fear, than the British print media.