

# The insurrection at the Capitol challenged how US media frames unrest and shapes public opinion | The Conversation

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The chaos at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday wasn't typical. Nor was the coverage.

Footage carried live by cable news and clips and photos shared across social media were jolting. One image showed a man who had broken into the building sitting in a chair, foot on desk, in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office. A video clip showed a crowd chasing a police officer as he retreated up the stairs.

As a researcher of media and social movements, I was absorbed by the violent events that unfolded. My research on protests shows that how the media portrays unrest – as riot or resistance, for example – helps shape the public's view of the protest's aims. Typically news coverage pays more attention to disruptive tactics than to the aims of protesters, especially when it comes to anti-Black racism protests or action that radically challenges the status quo.

[...]

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