How to Frame a Terrorist?

Frame analysis of coverage about Caucasian and Muslim terrorists.

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Master Thesis
June 2021

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1.Introduction

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik committed two sequential domestic terrorist attacks against Norway. He detonated a car bomb within the executive government quarter of Norway in Oslo. After less than two hours, he attacked the summer camp of the Norwegian Labour Party's youth organization on the island of Utøya. In the end, 77 people were killed because of his actions (Hemmingby & Bjørgo, 2018). This act of terrorism turned out to be the deadliest attack in Norway since World War II. Even though he committed a terrorist attack, Breivik was often not only referred to as a terrorist. Breivik's actions were politically motivated and involved the use of violence, which are elements of the definition of terrorism (Weinberg et al., 2004, p. 786). But in the media, the name of Breivik was often accompanied by terms such as "legally insane" (Fox News, 2015) or "mass murderer" (CNN, 2011), which shows that the media chose to portray Breivik not as a terrorist even though his actions justified this portrayal. Besides Anders Breivik, there are multiple examples of far-right Caucasian men who murdered people because of their extremist ideologies. However, there are also examples of Muslim attackers, such as those who committed the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015. In this case, the attackers were Muslim men from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Lebanon. The news outlets used different concepts to describe these men. During and shortly after the Paris attacks, the news outlets referred to the attackers as terrorists (NOS, 2015). While on the other hand, after the attacks on the mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, the same media outlet used the attacker's name or "suspect" to refer to the Caucasian attacker (Mikelionis, 2019; NOS, 2019).

The diverging portrayals by the media can be researched by mapping how Caucasian and Muslim terrorists are depicted and labeled by the news outlets and by comparing these descriptions to each other. Therefore, for this thesis, I research the portrayal of Caucasian and Muslim attackers, or terrorists, by Western news outlets. This research is of societal and scientific relevance because of the increasing presence of Muslim and Caucasian right-wing extremist groups in society (Tokmetzis, 2020). For example, it has recently been discovered that party members of the Dutch right-wing party FvD shared antisemitic and racist messages via WhatsApp and used language that is also used by American right-wing extremists (Herter, 2021). Another example is that The United States experienced seven mass shootings in one week in March 2021 (Rocha et al., 2021). These mass shootings were performed by Caucasians and Muslims and reignited the discussion about the safety of civilians against the rising threat of extremism.

Besides these two examples, numerous other examples show how right-wing and Muslim extremism are becoming more visible in everyday society and the mainstream media. Therefore, it is relevant to research the media's portrayal to receive a better understanding of how to describe these forms of extremism and how to identify the different frames that are applied by the news outlets to write about the terrorists.

After the 9/11 attacks, scholars intensified the research on the portrayal of Muslim terrorists by the news outlets. These studies have analyzed how the portrayal of Muslim terrorists by these outlets impacted the public perception of Islam and Muslims. For instance, Harmon (2000) discovered that because of the gender stereotypes, Muslim women are considered to be less of a threat. But the research shows that these women often take a central role in the terrorist organizations. Besides, Nickerson (2019) explains that the portrayal of Muslims by the media is biased and it reinforces prejudices against Muslims, causing that the current public perception of Muslims is negatively influenced by the media. While several studies have been done about Muslim terrorists, past studies have lacked an examination into other groups that commit terrorist attacks, the far-right extremists. Research has been done about right-wing extremists' ideology and how to identify extremists by looking at features that make these people different from others (Mudde, 2002). Caiani and Parenti (2009) point out that the extremists groups are present in society through the internet and they are able to diffuse propaganda and influence political campaigns. This study is in line with Xu's (2020) research that examines how the Alt-Right perform three actions to show their presence, namely crowdsourced gatekeeping, hashtag based framing, and political jamming. However, even though scholars have studied the presence in society and the ideology of right-wing extremists, there is a lack of research that focuses on the portrayal of right-wing extremism by the media. Therefore, there is a need to map the depictions of Caucasian terrorists by the media compared to the Muslim terrorists to fully comprehend the media's role in the public perception of terrorism. In addition, the comparison will make it possible to study how the media used different frames to portray the two types of terrorists. This need leads to the following research question:

How did U.S. and Dutch news outlets frame Caucasian and Muslim terrorist attacks between 2010 and 2020?

In order to answer this research question, this thesis will focus on elements used to frame the terrorists after four terrorist attacks, namely the Norway attacks of 2011, the Paris attacks of 2015, the Christchurch mosque shootings of 2019, and the Sri Lanka Easter bombings of 2019. The elements used in the articles about the attacks will show whether Caucasian and Muslim terrorists are portrayed differently and, if this is the case, what elements are used to cause this different portrayal.

This thesis is structured into five chapters, including this introduction as chapter one. Chapter two consists of a literature review of previous scholarly research that supports this thesis. Chapter three discusses the methodological choices made before and during the process of analysis, and the chapter ends with the coding scheme that was used for the analysis. The fourth chapter depicts the most significant findings drawn from the results of the analysis. These findings are discussed and the research question is answered in the final chapter. In addition, the fifth chapter also contains suggestions for further research into this topic.

2.Theoretical Framework

Previous research can be divided into four different sections. The first section states one definition of terrorism in general and how the concept is depicted in the media. The necessity to state one definition of terrorism is based on creating a general image of the concept throughout this thesis. By stating the definition, it will be clear what is meant when terrorism is used in this research. After providing the definition, this literature review explains how the national audience perceives terrorism in foreign countries.

The second section looks into what factors are the cause for Caucasian attacks and also how the media are covering these attacks. By receiving a general understanding of what right-wing extremism entails in this research, this literature review explains what factors are the cause for Caucasian attacks and how the media cover these attacks.

The third section is similar to the previous one, but this category considers Muslim attacks as a central topic instead of Caucasian attacks.

Finally, the fourth section will depict the framing of terrorists by the Western media and give examples of what frames are used.

2.1 Terrorism

Defining terrorism

Scholarly research claims that terrorism is one of the most difficult terms to define in contemporary political discourse (Weinberg et al., 2004, p. 777). There are three reasons why it is difficult to define terrorism. These reasons are the use for purposes of political effect, the vague line between terrorism and other forms of political violence, and the physical and social distance between the act and the observer (pp. 778-779). More in-depth, the first reason indicates that terrorists would never call themselves terrorists but instead of that, for example, freedom fighters. In addition, terrorist organizations are only labeled as terrorist by the victims or opposing groups (p. 778). The second reason explains that there is not a clear division between what is deemed terrorist or, for example, guerilla warfare. The third reason shows that observers tend to identify terrorism based on physical or social distance. The closer an act of violence happens to an observer, the more likely this person is to identify the act as terrorist (p. 779).

Weinberg et al. (2004) consider these three reasons when the definition is formed. Besides, they explain that terrorists seek the attention of the media to express their political

motives (p. 786). This claim is based on Schmid's (1992, p. 9) definition of terrorism, who mentions 22 definitional elements of the concept. There are five elements that scholars often agree on when defining terrorism (Weinberg et al., 2004, p. 782). These are a method of combat or a tactic, involvement of a threat, use of force and violence, used for a political purpose, and used for the pursuit of publicity (Schmid, 1992, p. 9). From these elements, the following definition of terrorism can be formed: "Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role" (Weinberg et al., 2004, p. 786).

A legal definition can also support this scholarly definition of terrorism. As stated by Golder and George (2004), the Australian legal definition shows similarities to the definition cited in the previous paragraph. They illustrate that the country of Australia recognizes terrorism as the concept that refers to violence caused by political, ideological, or religious motives that harm people or property. Besides, the violence should be intended to cause fear in the population or coerce the government or the population (p. 289). This definition shares similar elements with the scholarly definition, therefore, it supports that concept. Thus, the scholarly definition of terrorism is used when the term terrorism is begin used throughout this thesis.

Bringing home terrorism

Alasuutari et al. (2013, p. 695) claim that the information about the acts of terrorism is often biased and influenced by a political agenda of a country. This claim is based on the idea that the further away a country is physically or socially, the more analytical and professional the stance of the media. While if a country is closely connected to the afflicted country physically or socially, the media tends to be more subjective (Gans, 1979, pp. 37-38).

Besides the physical and the social distance between countries, the domestication of foreign news is also of influence to people's perception of other countries. On the one hand, the ability to receive foreign news from the national media links people who live in different corners of the world, which causes them to hear or read about the same event. This ability shows how the domestication of foreign news contributes to the global agenda (Alasuutari et al., 2013, p. 696). However, on the other hand, the way in which this news is served to the audience is influenced by domestic politics, which can cause that the news focuses on the reactions and opinions of domestic politicians on global events. This focus causes the domestication of

foreign news to become more biased as the media turns to political sources to introduce and interpret the frame of an event (Van Leuven et al., 2013, p. 586).

Next to the domestication of foreign news as an influence on media bias, there are also other reasons why some terrorist attacks receive more attention than others. One reason for the lack of media attention might be that the authorities prevent news outlets from reporting on these attacks in the afflicted country. In these countries, press freedom is suppressed, and coverage of terrorism is minimized to prevent public anxiety (Drakos & Gofas, 2006, p. 733). However, the suppression of domestic media causes that news outlets from other countries have fewer resources to report about the attacks since these outlets often use coverage from those countries as a foundation of their own coverage (Walsh, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Another reason why one terrorist organization might receive more media attention than others concerns the motives or goals of the organization. On the one hand, some terrorist organizations focus on maximizing media attention to influence public opinion in different parts of the world. These organizations maximize the media attention towards them by prioritizing the media as the primary target audience for their political actions (Lynch, 2006, p. 51). While on the other hand, to other organizations, media attention is less of a priority. Such organizations might see, for example, more value in directly influencing politicians by ensuring that they are targets for murder or kidnapping (Walsh, 2010, p. 5). In this case, terrorist organizations still pursue publicity, but they emphasize less on seeking media attention.

As can be seen, there are multiple reasons why the domestic audience receives biased and incomplete coverage of terrorist attacks that take place in other countries. However, besides the idea that the audience is influenced, it is also possible to study how the media use stereotypes to influence their coverage of terrorist attacks.

Motives of the media

The stereotypes used by Western media in their coverage of terrorist attacks can also be referred to as the media's motives. Because the media has certain motives to report about events, they will be likely to use images that support their motives. The coverage of events in foreign countries is often based on an agenda that influences what the public thinks and how the public interprets the events (Salwen & Matera, 1992, p. 623). Research shows that countries that were placed high on the public agenda received a higher amount of coverage. This agenda illustrates how the media outlets fulfill the role of a catalyst of foreign news based on whether a foreign country is deemed important enough by the public (Wanta et al., 2004, p. 367). In comparison,

in the same research, countries placed at the bottom of the public agenda were also found at the bottom of the media agenda (p. 373). When a country is placed at the top or the bottom of the public agenda, it indicates that the public, or the population of a country, thinks whether a country is important or a threat to them or whether this country is insignificant in their opinion (p. 369).

Besides the public agenda, there are other motives for media outlets to report in a specific manner. First, it depends on what group the terrorist belongs to. This motive is shown by the claim that international media outlets are more likely to increase their coverage of an act of terrorism if a terrorist organization has international goals and actions (Terzis, 2014, p. 97). Second, the type of terrorism is also a motive of the media outlets. The international media outlets decide whether a terrorist attack is interesting enough for the international audience based on the type of terrorism. Because fewer people in the western world focus on international news, the media outlets have to pick specific events that are deemed interesting enough and send out correspondents to a country for a single event (p. 98). This selection causes that the correspondents lack background information about the local people and that they have to work together with a domestic news outlet of that country which is often influenced by a domestic agenda (Biernatzki, 2002, p. 11). Due to the lack of comprehension of the situation, the correspondent is more likely to use stereotypes in media coverage (Terzis, 2014, pp. 98-99).

Next to the type of terrorism, the type of medium is also a motive. Broadcast and online media have to consider the fact that there is a 24-hour news circle of media. Therefore, speed is a significant factor for those outlets. The speed of the delivery causes that it is difficult for the media outlets to double-check their facts, which can often lead to mistakes or stereotyping what makes the content unreliable (Seib, 2012, p. 67). Besides speed, the political affiliation of the medium can also be the cause for stereotyping. In comparison, left-wing media outlets tend to be more sympathetic towards progressive organizations, while right-wing media outlets report more unfavorable about acts committed by those organizations (Terzis, 2014, p. 99).

The motives of the media to influence their audience are based on the public agenda and the role of the media as a catalyst of foreign news (Wanta et al., 2004, p. 367). Because of this role, the agenda of media outlets influence the public perception of foreign news. Therefore the motives of the media are a significant influence to the public agenda.

Another influence on the public perception of terrorism is the presence of hate groups on the Internet. While not everyone is aware of their presence, many people do know the content

that these groups share. For example, Anders Breivik shared a 1500-page manifesto a few hours before his act of terrorism which contains a detailed description of how he planned his attack (Sandberg, 2013, p. 70). This manifesto enabled people to form an opinion on the mental state of Breivik (Leonard et al., 2014, p. 414). Another example is the content of the beheading videos shared by Islamic terrorist organizations such as ISIS. Because of these videos, terrorist organizations show their willingness to engage in extreme violence (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler, 2017, p. 956).

There are four reasons why the internet is a powerful tool. Gerstenfeld et al. (2003, p.38) discuss the first reason that the Internet is a powerful tool for terrorists to reach an international audience. The extremist groups appeal to people all over the world by using content in languages other than English. The second reason is the ability to recruit new members for their community or organization. Extremist groups target people who are more inclined to agree with hate group doctrines (p. 39). The targets for recruitment are often people who are likely to surf the Internet because they feel lonely or disappointed (Sher, 2000). The third reason is that different groups can connect. As a result, geographically isolated groups can become part of a whole (Gerstenfeld et al., 2003, p. 40). This connection causes that the separated groups build a stronger sense of community and create a collective identity (Perry, 2000, p. 123). The final reason is the ability to enable maximum image control. Websites often appear to reflect mainstream views. In these cases, they claim that they reject violence and are not hate-oriented. However, only after exploring the websites, it becomes evident that they are based on a right-wing extremist ideology (Gerstenfeld et al., 2003, p. 41).

2.2 Caucasian Attacks

Defining right-wing extremism

By defining right-wing extremism, the definition can create a general image of the Caucasian attackers and their ideologies. For example, Previous research illustrates that the presence of a right-wing extremist ideology in politics consists of white nationalism, Islamophobia, and chauvinism (Macridis, 1989, p. 231). To study these elements, right-wing extremism is defined in this section. Research shows that scholars have not agreed on a general definition of the concept (Mudde, 2002, p. 11). However, one can bring together five important features from literature, namely nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state (Mudde, 1995, p. 206). Mudde's (1995) claim can still be supported by the fact that both Lim (2017) and Fielitz and Thurston (2019) use features of the definition in their respective

studies. Lim (2017, p.14) mentions that nationalism, racism, and anti-democracy are increasingly present in Indonesian politics and contributed to the polarization among the country's population. Meanwhile, Fielitz and Thurston (2019, p. 117) use nationalism, racism, xenophobia, and the strong state to identify alt-right groups and understand their ideologies. They apply these features and give examples from countries such as Germany, The United States, Poland, and Hungary, where right-wing extremist groups are visible in society throughout history.

Another feature of right-wing extremism can be found in the existence of militias. Groups of armed people within organizations were founded because of their distrust of the government and the belief that the government wants to disarm them (Baysinger, 2006, p. 5). People who are part of militias join for different reasons since the militias differ in their beliefs and priorities. However, the preservation of the right to possess weapons is commonly regarded as a central issue because, according to the militias, the possession of firearms is a form of protection against the totalitarianism of the government (p. 7).

The ideological differences between militias might also be the cause for members to leave a specific militia. In that case, individuals believe that the militia does not address issues that are more important to them. Previous research has stated three options for those members (Baysinger, 2006, p. 8). The first is that a member leaves because this person has grown bored of militias and will not join a new militia. The second option is that a member leaves the militia for another organization that does fulfill the individual's expectations. The final option for an individual is to separate themselves from the militia and act like a loner to prioritize the issues that are important to them. When this is the case, they often create their own personalized and customized ideology (Hemmingby & Bjørgo, 2018, p. 170). Nevertheless, even though it is customized and personalized, this ideology is also founded by the five commonly used features to describe right-wing extremism, as mentioned by Mudde (1995, p. 206).

These "lone wolves" are a major right-wing extremist threat to society because they form unlinked cells, making it difficult for the government to detect them, gather information about them, and find informants that provide a connection with these lone wolves (Baysinger, 2006, p. 15). Another reason these loners are a more significant threat than other right-wing extremists is that they often leave the militia because it did not sufficiently address their issues. This causes that when they act alone, they are also more likely to act more radical on those issues and therefore do not shy away from violence to achieve their goals.

Media coverage of right-wing extremism

The media uses certain depictions to portray right-wing extremists. An example of such a depiction is Drageset's (2013, p. 70) portrayal of extremists as dark celebrities. He claims that a lone wolf, such as Anders Breivik, receives celebrity status because the media continuously puts news about the terrorist in a prominent position. This position also causes that the media gives the terrorist the attention he wants. The media risk that they forward the terrorist's message by sharing it with the audience. Therefore, they gift the terrorist the celebrity status that he was seeking (p. 78).

The media's reason to award the terrorist with the dark celebrity status is that the media attempts to use a nationalist frame to cover the event to restore order and bring back normality in society (Nossek, 2008, p. 326). With the emphasis on unity and solidarity, the media shows that societal values will remain and do not perish because of an attack. The media sends a message to society and potential future killers as well (p. 328). Even though the act of terrorism was successful, the terrorist does not get his preferred outcome.

The preferred outcome for a terrorist is to cause anxiety and shock in society. To prevent this from happening, Nossek (2008, p. 327) argues that it is the media's task to defuse this threatening message of the terrorists while lessening the anxiety and shock among the people through the facilitation of normality. The media applies this strategy to boost the resilience of the people against terrorism and confirm that democratic values are the foundation to resolve conflicts.

This strategy is the case for both national and international news outlets. While national news outlets might focus more on the nationalistic feelings of the audience, international coverage of a terrorist attack emphasizes the narrative of the attack (Drageset, 2013, p. 79). Because of this emphasis, the international media outlets cover the events in a way that is most relevant to their audience. This relevance is based on four elements (Kearns et al., 2018, p. 9). The first element focuses on whether or not there were casualties and also how many. If there are casualties, an international media outlet is more likely to cover the event. This likelihood increases with a higher number of deaths. Second, the media cover an event if it was a hijacking. This element suggests that there are hostages involved. The third element illustrates an increased likelihood of the media covering an event when an airline is targeted. The fourth element shows the main connection to this section since it explains that international media were more likely to cover terrorist attacks when domestic groups were involved. When a right-

wing extremist commits an act of terrorism, the terrorist is often linked to domestic right-wing extremist groups by the international media because of the political relevance to the audience (p. 10). Thus, the media outlet of that country can bring the event closer to home to the audience since these extremist groups and the lone wolves can also be present in their country.

2.3 Muslim Attacks

The third category of this literature review considers the acts of terrorism performed by Muslims. The category can be studied by discussing what factors are the cause for the coverage of Muslim attacks. Before studying the factors, the Western image of Muslims in general and Islam as a religion in Western society should be illustrated. Since the media is influenced by the Western image of Islam and contributes to this image, it is possible to research the coverage of Western media and how this influences the public perception of Islam.

The Western image of Islam

The Western image of Muslim people leads to Islamophobic hate crimes in everyday life and online (Awan & Zempi, 2019, p. 20). Research shows that hate speech sends out the message to the receivers that they are not welcome in the community, and if they ignore that message, the receivers will not be safe (Perry, 2014, p. 51). Thus, Islamophobia is the foundation of this form of hate towards Muslims.

Awan and Zempi (2019, p. 23) also discuss the impact of discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia on young Muslims. They observe that the hate crimes towards this group affect their career development and progression. These hate crimes are based on the Western portrayal of Islam and these portrayals are often founded by generalizations and assumptions of the media (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p. 222). Islam is often depicted as a massive, homogenized, and sexist religion that supports irrational violence and suppresses women. This claim is supported by the framing of Muslims as violent, barbaric, heartless, religious zealots (p. 222) who often become terrorists (Powell, 2011, p. 94). Besides that, Muslims are also depicted as societal problems that are violent jihadis and suicide terrorists who hate Western society (Bowe et al., 2013, p. 638). This portrayal of Islam and Muslims is based on the idea that the media presents them as a threat to the "us," meaning the Western society (Osuri & Banerjee, 2004, p. 167).

The Western image of Islam has been a cause for hate crimes. One type of group that purposely commits these hate crimes is the group of right-wing populists. After the 9/11 attacks, an increase of hate crimes founded by Islamophobia has been reported (Pupcenoks & McCabe, 2013, p. 8). Research depicts the influence of right-wing populist groups on mainstream

political discourse and politics. This claim concludes that these groups have influenced the national discourse (p. 12). That idea is of significance since it adds to the already existing Islamophobia among the population of a country.

The increasing Islamophobia is in line with Said's (2003, p. 284) explanation of the development that after World War II, the Western image of Arabic, or Islamic, people changed from peaceful nomads to the embodiment of incompetence. This image then changed after the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 because the Western society saw a violent side of the Muslims. After the war of 1973, Muslims were not depicted as incompetent people but as intimidating people (p. 284). The shift illustrated by Said (2003) clearly presents the foundation of present-day Islamophobia since it is based on the idea that Muslims are violent and intimidating people. Moreover, the media support this image of violence by sharing pictures that show the mass anger of Muslims. Through these pictures, the media attempt to share the message that behind the Islamic community, the jihadist ideology is always present. This message is cause for the fear that Muslims will conquer the world (p. 287).

Media coverage of Muslim attacks

Besides the Western image of Islam, the discussion of the factors that influence coverage of Muslim attacks contributes to the understanding of how Caucasian and Muslim terrorists are portrayed differently. Research shows that Western media outlets are prejudiced towards Islam and, therefore, report more negatively about Muslim attacks than attacks carried out by other groups. This prejudice is based on erroneous self-reported expertise about the Islamic religion and Muslims by the media (Sultan, 2016, p. 5). The erroneous self-reported expertise affects the Western's prejudice towards Muslims and creates a downward spiral. This downward spiral came into existence after the 9/11 attacks. Even though Islamophobia already existed before the terrorist attack in 2001 (Said, 2003, p. 284), Islam came into the spotlight of terrorism after the attack. The spotlight is a significant cause of the negative perception of Islam by Western people because it depicted how religion can become the cause for feelings of fear and danger among the people (Sultan, 2016, pp. 6-7). These feelings were ignited by the images of large numbers of angry and miserable Muslims who want to act together in order to take over the world (Said, 2003, p. 287).

Two groups take advantage of the media's prejudice towards Muslims. The first being the Islamic extremist groups that appropriate their religion to legitimize their violence towards others. This group uses prejudice as proof that the West has declared war on Islam and that they

have to defend themselves against it (Sultan, 2016, p. 7). Furthermore, the second group that takes advantage is the groups of the right-wing extremists. They use the media's biased coverage as evidence that Islam should not be present in the secular West and that the West has to declare war on Islam (p. 7).

The biased coverage comes into existence with the use of several labels. Yusof et al. (2013, pp. 109-110) mention twelve labels used by the media. Since not all labels are based on prejudice, only a fraction of these labels will be depicted. One label that is based on bias is the label "Nuclear threat," which implies that, according to the Western media, Muslim countries are always considered to be threats if they are in possession of nuclear weapons. Therefore, if a Muslim country owns such weapons, they are depicted negatively by the media because they do not want these countries to have nuclear weapons (p. 109). Another label, the "Militant" label, is the existence of militant groups within the political movements of Muslim countries. The existence causes that a political opinion of a Muslim is often connected to the ideology of a militia in a Muslim country. This idea led to the label of Muslims worldwide that they are also members of such militias and, because of that, are terrorists (p. 110). A final example of the twelve labels is the "Fundamentalist" label. The term fundamentalism exists in other religions such as Christianity and Judaism as well, but it is connected to Islam more often. It focuses on the belief of Muslims that secularism should be rejected, while Western media supports freedom of religion and, therefore, secularism (p. 110). The media feel threatened by the fact that a group rejects an idea that they support. Thus, they are biased in their coverage of Muslims to protect secularism and other Western ideas.

The prejudice of the Western media on the image of Islam can become the cause for people to make mistakes when they portray Muslims. Besides the idea that a false image negatively influences people's perceptions of Islam and Muslims, it can also be dangerous to make wrong assumptions. For example, previous research has studied the portrayal of female terrorists in the media (Nacos, 2005, p. 437). Because of the gender stereotype, in which women fulfill a less significant role in Muslim society, women are often not considered a threat in counterterrorism policies. If there are female terrorists, they are deemed an exception to the rule (Nacos, 2005, p. 446). However, Harmon (2000) studied that female terrorists are a common presence within terrorist organizations. He shows that more than 30 percent of all terrorists are female and that they often take central roles in these organizations (p. 212). These cases show that a false portrayal of a group can have dangerous consequences. These false images, created

by the mass media, are based on stereotypes that influence the implementation of anti- and counterterrorism policies and the perception of female Muslim terrorists (Nacos, 2005, p. 447).

This example shows that the biased Western media uses labels that contain gaps and mistakes to portray an entire religion and its followers. The prejudice influences the coverage of Muslims and also terrorist attacks committed by Muslims. There are differences to be found when it comes to the portrayal of right-wing extremists and Muslim terrorists. Therefore, the media's use of stereotypes and prejudices should be studied because it is the cause for the audience's deviating opinions about different acts of terrorism.

2.4 Framing Terrorism

Now that terrorism has been defined for this thesis and the factors that influence coverage about Muslim and Caucasian, or right-wing extremist, attacks have been discussed. The fourth category of this literature review will examine previous research about the framing of terrorists by the Western media. Therefore, this section will focus more in-depth on the media coverage itself.

Media frames

When reporting on terrorism, news outlets and journalists are likely to use specific news frames that are assigned to types of terrorism or the perpetrator. The frames are used to place an act of terrorism within a broader context and do often consist of certain key concepts, iconic images, and stock phrases (Norris et al., 2003, pp. 10-11). These elements support common interpretations about the events and they cause news outlets to prioritize specific facts, developments, and images over others. The prioritization causes that the media promotes one particular interpretation of the event. However, using frames does also have advantages. For example, by using a terrorist frame, we do not require much information about the terrorists and the organizations, the victims, the places involved, or the issues. A terrorist frame enables the media and the audience to explain, label, and evaluate the events (p. 11).

Even though the "war on terrorism" frame offers a general interpretation of terrorism for journalists to report on terrorist attacks in a broader context (Norris et al., 2003, p. 15), different frames should be mentioned that report on specific types of terrorism or particular terrorist organizations. Research has indicated that right-wing extremists are portrayed differently from Muslim attackers (Powell, 2011, p. 95). Western media depict right-wing extremists as a minor threat who are characterized as individuals with mental health issues. Meanwhile, Muslim attackers are portrayed as a significant hostile threat who act because of

their Jihadist ideology (Taylor, 2019, p. 235). Besides that, research also found that acts of terrorism committed by Muslims received more media attention than when the perpetrators were non-Muslim (Kearns et al., 2019, p. 18). The idea that one group receives more media attention than another shows that the media uses different standards or frames when they cover terrorist attacks.

Five themes in frames

In general, the media consider five themes when they create a frame (Powell, 2011, pp. 95-105). The importance of a theme in a terrorist attack influences the amount of media coverage about the event. The first theme is the naming of the terror suspect. By naming the terrorists, the news outlets focus on whether the terrorist is a Muslim or not (p. 95). The focus on this aspect shows that the media divides the terrorism frames into two groups that use key concepts, iconic images, and stock phrases that fit with Muslims or non-Muslims. Even though suspects are often immediately identified as terrorists even before an act is established as terrorism (p. 98), the media use different approaches for the two groups. For example, when it comes to Muslim suspects, the media focuses on the religious aspect of the terrorists by connecting terms such as "Muslim" to them. Meanwhile, in the case of non-Islamic suspects, the media makes an effort not to focus on terrorism (p. 98) by refraining from using terms such as "terrorist" but instead using the suspect's names. In other words, a Caucasian suspect is identified as a terrorist even before there is proof, but the media also tries to find other motives when it comes to this group.

The second theme considers what descriptors are assigned to the agent. The focus on descriptors illustrates what adjectives are used to depict the terrorist. Powell (2011, p. 98) shows that domestic terrorism is covered as less of a threat than international terrorism. In the case of Muslim terrorists, the media often describes the terrorists as "angry" or "jihadist" people (p. 99). However, Caucasian terrorists are often depicted as both "mentally unstable" and "intelligent." Besides that, another difference between the two groups is that the media heavily personalizes Caucasian terrorists while depersonalizing Muslim terrorists. The idea that there are different levels of threat is connected to the first theme because it illustrates that Western media interpret domestic, or Caucasian, terrorist attacks differently from Muslim attacks.

The third theme that is the foundation of terrorism frames weighs the motive for the act (Powell, 2011, p. 100). The motives of right-wing extremists and Muslims are discussed in the previous sections. Muslims act inspired by their Jihadist ideology and the idea that they have

to defend themselves in the war against the West (Sultan, 2016, p. 7). The media uses the labels of " avenge killing," "Islamic radicalism," and "the desire to kill" to identify the motive of Muslim terrorists (Powell, 2011, p. 101). Meanwhile, right-wing extremists act on their feelings of nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state (Mudde, 1995, p. 206). These motives are identified by the media as "creating fear," "a message of antigovernment," and "attention-seeking" (Powell, 2011, p. 100). The division within this theme causes that there should be different frames that focus on a particular side or motive.

The fourth theme mentions the probability of a future threat. When the threat of a future attack becomes salient, news outlets will be more likely to increase their coverage of the attack and its aftermath (Powell, 2011, p. 102). The fact that a right-wing extremist lone wolf acts alone (Baysinger, 2006, p. 15) decreases the probability that the perpetrator will commit another act of terrorism. Therefore, the media emphasize the "lone wolf" concept to show that a future attack is unlikely (Powell, 2011, p. 103). However, Muslim terrorists often act in the name of a terrorist organization. They are depicted as part of a group, which indicates that there is no sense of personal characteristics or experiences that could be the cause for the attack (Said, 2003, p. 287). The lack of personal characteristics or experiences increases the chance that there will be another attack in the name of that organization since they were able to receive the media's attention as a group instead of an individual. Therefore, the media will likely focus on the "name of the organization" to suggest its future threat. The deviating likelihood of a future threat causes lone wolves and organizations to be framed differently based on the chance that they will commit another act of terrorism.

The last theme considers the portrayal of the victims. The portrayal is often based on three topics: the victims' efforts to stop the attack; their positive qualities highlighted to portray them as good or innocent; and the portrayal of the victims as spiritual, or Christian, in contrast to the religion of the Muslim terrorists (Powell, 2011, p. 103). By considering the three topics, it is possible to apply different frames based on the characteristics of the victims. These three topics can be labeled by different terms. First, the victims' efforts to stop the attack label them as "heroes" who protect the people from danger (p. 104). Second, the fight between good and evil is highlighted by positive descriptions of the victims as "social" or "religious" (p. 104). Finally, the depiction of the victims thoroughly emphasizes the religious aspect as "Christians" (p. 105).

The given themes indicate how the Western media create the frames. However, they also illustrate that the frames provide biased, predictable, and plain narratives on how the media should cover an event within the social context (Nickerson, 2019, p. 550). This bias is caused by the claim that a well-written frame is a good story at best and Western media are more likely to be drawn to shocking and sensational stories about conflict (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2008, p. 55). This claim explains why Western news outlets are attracted to large terrorist attacks since they can focus on the key elements of coverage about terrorism. These key elements consist of drama surrounding the event, the graphic visuals and audio fragments shared by the news outlets and people on social media, the relevance of the story to the audience, and its newsworthiness in general (Nickerson, 2019, p. 551).

3.Methods

This chapter discusses the research design used for this thesis. The chapter is structured by five elements that are used in scholarly research. First of all, the discussion of the research approach explains the choice for a qualitative research approach. Second, the data collection method section shows why it is important to do a qualitative content analysis. The third section illustrates the sampling process by providing information about the sampling units, the units of analysis, and the sampling strategy. Fourth, the section about the data analysis explains the choice for frame analysis and mentions the categories used to analyze the data. The final section discusses how the deductive coding approach is implemented and the coding scheme is provided. These five sections clarify how the data is analyzed. The clarification is provided in order to comprehend the results chapter, which gives the outcome of the analysis.

3.1 Research Approach

To answer the research question, this research took a qualitative instead of a quantitative research approach. While the quantitative approach uses numbers and numerical correlations to analyze causal relationships between variables (Brennen, 2017, p. 3), the qualitative approach engages in deeper explanations of meanings by the observation and recording of patterns in a text (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2008, p. 69). Due to this interpretive nature and the attempt to understand human relationships, the qualitative approach was more useful to this research than the quantitative approach. Since the portrayal of the media and their opinions of the attackers require interpretation instead of numerical correlations to analyze variables, the qualitative research approach proved to be most effective. This approach has also proven to be effective in similar studies that took a similar approach. For example, Vucetic et al. (2015, p. 22) also follow the qualitative approach to study how mainstream Canadian newspapers portray contemporary terrorism. Since they were able to identify dominant frames, which is similar to the aim of this research, it reinforced the idea that the qualitative approach would be most effective.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The focus on news articles from different sources of Western news outlets required studying an amount of data, which led to the choice for a qualitative content analysis of the data. Qualitative content analysis was performed by gathering and analyzing news articles about terrorist attacks reported by U.S. and Dutch news outlets. Since the data was scattered and therefore difficult to detect through casual observation, the choice for content analysis was

justified because it is the most advantageous form of analysis to study a data set (Neuman, 2013, p. 363). This choice enabled qualitative content analysis to systematically describe the meaning of the qualitative data (Mayring, 2000, p. 8; Schreier, 2012; Schreier, 2013). Schreier (2012, pp. 170-171) explains this meaning more in-depth by providing three key features of qualitative content analysis. First, it requires focusing on selected aspects of meaning which can answer the research question. Second, the systematic nature requires examining every single part of the data relevant to this research. Finally, qualitative content analysis is also flexible because the coding frame should always match with the material (Schreier, 2012, p. 171; Schreier, 2013, p. 7). Therefore, qualitative content analysis was used for this thesis because of its flexible nature, since it required focusing on specific elements of the news articles, and the demand that it examined every article separately.

3.3 Sampling

For the sampling process, two U.S. and two Dutch news outlets were selected. The selection enabled the analysis of how media from these two countries portrayed these groups and the terrorist attacks. The choice for the two countries was based on the idea that The United States started the so-called "war on terror" after 9/11 (*The Washington Post*, 2001). Besides that, the U.S. (recently) experienced seven mass shootings in seven days committed by either Caucasian or Muslim attackers (Rocha et al., 2021), which shows that the topics of terrorism and mass shootings are very present in the current media. Next to the U.S., the Netherlands is experiencing an increasing presence of Muslim and Caucasian right-wing extremist groups (Tokmetzis, 2020), which also stresses the importance of studying the portrayal by the news outlets.

For the sampling of articles, four news outlets were selected. To receive a general image of U.S. media portrayals, two news outlets were considered to represent the U.S. news outlets in general. While Democratic liberals, who are more involved and interested in political issues, prefer *CNN* and avoid *Fox News,* Republican conservatives avoid *CNN* and prefer *Fox News* (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009, p. 33). *CNN* is one of the leading left-leaning American news outlets with a negative attitude towards right-wing groups and politicians (Patterson, 2017, p. 9). *Fox News* is also one of the major American news outlets. However, *Fox News* is right-leaning since they are sympathetic about right-wing politicians (p. 10). Besides that, *Fox News* is considered to be right-leaning because it is significantly more likely to share conservative and Republican beliefs (Gil de Zúñiga, Correa & Valenzuela, 2012, p. 600).

The two news outlets from the Netherlands that were used to retrieve data from were *Algemeen Dagblad/AD* and *De Telegraaf*. Even though Dutch news outlets tend to be more nuanced in their political stances than U.S. news outlets, a slight difference can still be identified. While the Dutch audience tends to place news outlets closer to their own ideology, more people identify *AD* as slightly left-leaning (News Media and Political Attitudes in the Netherlands, 2018) and *De Telegraaf* as right-leaning (Van der Pas et al., 2017, p. 497). The differences between Dutch news outlets in their political stance are less significant than between U.S. news outlets. However, *AD* and *De Telegraaf* were still used in this research to represent both sides of the political spectrum in the Netherlands. The need to represent both sides of this spectrum was based on the fact that left- and right-leaning news outlets are influenced by different agendas (Terzis, 2014, p. 99). Because of these agendas, the outlets could cover stories differently and emphasize different elements.

In order to enhance the image of the outlets as representatives of different sides of the political spectrum in their countries, this thesis could have analyzed editorials and columns that were written in the name of the news outlets. The explicit political positions of newspaper editorials would make it possible to focus on the journalists' opinions (Ho & Quinn, 2008, p. 372). These opinions are the foundation of a media outlet's portrayal of the terrorists. However, the amount of data to select when analyzing editorials and columns was very small. The small amount caused the sampling process to become biased since it was more challenging to perform relevance sampling because the data selection connected to the topic would be based on appeal. Therefore, this thesis used general news articles to create the best dataset possible. The choice increased the amount of available data, which enabled more critical sampling.

To select the units of analysis, relevance sampling was used. This choice was based on the claim that acquiring every relevant publication on an issue was difficult since it required an understanding of the entire basic population of data (Schäfer, 2010, p. 652). For the reason that this was not feasible, relevance sampling proved to be most useful. The units of analysis, the articles, were selected within a timeframe of one year after each respective terrorist attack. This research focused on two attacks by people with a Caucasian ethnicity and two attacks by Muslims. Because of that, this thesis analyzed four individual incidents that happened between 2010 and 2020. The first attack performed by a Caucasian man was the July 22, 2011, Norway attacks by Breivik. For this attack, articles within the timeframe between 22 July 2011 and 22 July 2012 were selected. The second attack was the Christchurch mosque shootings of March 15, 2019, in New Zealand. The timeframe for this attack was 15 March 2019 to 15 March 2020.

These selected articles described Caucasian attacks, while articles about the following attacks portrayed Muslim attackers: the November 13-14, 2015, Paris attacks in France, with a timeframe from 13 November 2015 to 13 November 2016, and the Sri Lanka Easter bombings of April 21, 2019, of which the timeframe was 21 April 2019 to 21 April 2020.

The relevance criteria for selecting the units of analysis were the suspects' names and the terrorist attacks. These names were "Brenton Harrison Tarrant" combined with "Christchurch mosque shootings," "Anders Behring Breivik" in combination with "Norway attacks," "Abdelhamid Abaaoud" combined with "November 2015 Paris attacks," and "Mohamed Zahran" in combination with "Sri Lanka Easter bombings." Even though the Muslim attacks were carried out by multiple people, only one name for each attack was used since Abdelhamid Abaaoud (Castillo & Cruickshank, 2015) and Mohamed Zahran (Associated Press, 2019) were identified as masterminds of their attacks. Therefore, they were considered to be key characters in coverage of the attacks, similar to Tarrant and Breivik in their attacks. Besides that, several keywords were selected that described the attacks and the suspects to get similar results over the four news outlets. These were keywords, in combination with the name of the terrorist or the act, such as "Terrorist," "Mass murderer," "Mass shooter," "Act of terrorism," "(Mass) shooting," "Terrorist organization," "Extremist," "Deranged," "Islamic," "Muslim," "Fundamentalist," "Hate crime."

In the case of the U.S. news outlets, relevance sampling was applied by entering the search sections of the websites of *CNN* and *Fox News*. For *CNN,* the date of the attack and the name of the attack in combination with one of the keywords were entered, and the articles were selected based on relevance and whether the articles were published within the timeframe. With *Fox News,* a similar approach was followed. However, one difference was the use of the filter that automatically selected the articles within the timeframe.

In the case of the Dutch news outlets, the research database Nexis Uni was used to select the articles. The name of the attack and the keywords, which were translated to Dutch, were entered in the search engine, the timeframe was selected, and the language focused on Dutch. After receiving a list of articles, it was possible to select the sources of the articles, which led to the selection of *AD* or *De Telegraaf.*

These articles about the four attacks were divided into four groups which were the different news outlets *CNN, Fox News, AD*, and *De Telegraaf*. The articles for each media outlet were divided by the four incidents. This division caused that there were a number of articles

about each incident published by each separate media outlet. Each of the articles within a specific group received a unique number which was used for random sampling. Using https://www.randomizer.org/ for each separate group of articles resulted in the selection of five articles for each incident on which frame analysis was applied. Therefore, by combining relevance sampling and random sampling, 80 articles were selected and analyzed.

3.4 Data Analysis

This thesis performed frame analysis on the news articles. The analysis, in the form of media frames, created the possibility to organize the central idea or the storyline of a news article. The categories of the analysis were based on the framing theory, which defines framing as selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality and makes 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" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). This definition illustrates how frame analysis can be performed.

Besides Entman's (1993) framing theory, the claim was considered that frame analysis involves two analytical tasks, uncovering meaning in a context and identifying how frames influence behavior and political outcomes (Björnehed & Erikson, 2018, pp. 110-111). There are two points of critique against frame analysis: the limited view of the process and the limited understanding of the frame effects. This critique is used to develop two analytical dimensions to increase the potential of frame analysis. The first dimension being the institutionalization process of frames, which captures the influences of different frames. The second dimension is the reconceptualization of frame effects that capture a frame's influence on actors that are not part of the audience (p. 110). These two dimensions considered the points of critique against frame analysis and see the overlap between news articles about different categories.

By looking at the frames, the essence of the story was suggested and the process of how the media, or the news outlets, portrayed the story and the characters in it was explained (Fahmy, 2010, p. 698). The frame analysis of this thesis considered the five frames proposed by Powell (2011, pp. 95-105) to create categories for the coding frame. For each of the five categories, it was possible to identify what elements are made more salient in the news articles. Therefore Entman's (1993) framing theory proved useful in researching the salience of some aspects in the news articles. The categories are mentioned below, but a more detailed description can be found in the literature review.

The first category, "Type of terrorist," was the naming of the terror suspect. This category focused on whether a suspect was named a terrorist or otherwise a Muslim terrorist (Powell, 2011, p. 95). The division enabled the study of whether the media emphasized the fact that a terrorist was Muslim or not.

The second category, "Assigned descriptors," focused on the assigned descriptors to the suspect. It illustrated what adjectives were used to depict the terrorist. For example, a Muslim terrorist is more likely to be called an angry or vengeful terrorist, while a Caucasian suspect is called a mentally deranged terrorist (Powell, 2011, p. 99). Therefore, the second category made it possible to study how the news outlets sketched different images depending on the terrorist's ethnicity.

The third category, "Motivation for the act," weighed the motive for the act of terrorism. This category showed how Caucasian and Muslim terrorists had different motives for their acts and the media used these motives to construct their coverage. While the Caucasian terrorists' motives are to create fear, deliver a message of antigovernment, and seek attention (Powell, 2011, p. 100), Muslim terrorists commit their acts based on the motive to avenge the killing of Muslims by the government, Islamic radicalism, and the desire to kill people (p. 101).

The fourth category, "Future threat," focused on the probability of a future threat. This category was used because when the threat of a future attack becomes salient, news outlets will be more likely to increase their coverage of the attack and its aftermath (Powell, 2011, p. 102). By focusing on the probability of a future threat, it was possible to distinguish Caucasian and Muslim acts of terrorism from each other. The likelihood that a lone wolf, Caucasian, terrorist commits another act of terrorism is lower than when a Muslim terrorist is linked to a fundamentalist organization. While the Muslim terrorist probably cannot commit another act of terrorism, the organization linked to the person still can (p. 103).

The fifth category, "Victims," considered the portrayal of the victims. The portrayal is often based on three topics: the victims' efforts to stop the attack; their positive qualities highlighted to portray them as good or innocent; and the portrayal of the victims as spiritual, or Christian, in contrast to the religion of the Muslim terrorists (Powell, 2011, p. 103).

3.5 Coding

The coding process was based on the deductive coding approach, which is the form of analysis that uses theory as its point of departure (Pearse, 2019, p. 265). The theory-driven foundation modified the five categories into a conceptual framework that analyzed how the categories were framed in the news articles. By following Entman's (1993) framing theory and adopting the two dimensions created by Björneheda and Erikson (2018), the deductive approach was brought into practice. To organize the coding process, Atlas.ti was used to arrange, collect, and systematically manage the data. For the coding process, the coding scheme below was used to systematically assign data to codes that corresponded with the five categories.

Table 1. The coding scheme containing all the codes for each of the five categories.

Type of Terrorist	Assigned Descriptors	Motivation for the Act	Future Threat	Victims
Muslim	Angry/ Vengeful	Avenge killing	Lone wolf/ Lone actor	Heroism of the victims
Domestic/ Homegrown	Jihadist	Islamic radicalism	Connection to online community	Positive descriptors
Mass murderer/ Non-terrorist	Mentally unstable/ Deranged	Desire to kill	Connection to terrorist organization	Emphasis on good versus evil
Terrorist	Intelligent	Creating fear		
	Barbaric	Message of anti-government		
		Attention seeking		

4.Results

This chapter is structured according to the five categories to fully comprehend every code's usefulness to answer the research question. While several of the provided quotes originate from U.S. news outlets that use the English language, the quotes taken from *AD* and *De Telegraaf* that use the Dutch language were translated to English.

4.1 Type of Terrorist

To refer to the "Type of Terrorist," the news outlets used two dominant ways. When it came to the Christchurch mosque shootings and the Norway attacks, both attacks were performed by Caucasian suspects, who were framed as "Mass murderer/ Non-terrorist." In three-quarters (15/20) of the articles about the Christchurch mosque shootings, Tarrant was referred to as a mass murderer. Besides, 13 out of 20 articles about the Norway attacks mentioned Breivik by using similar terms. A quote from the *De Telegraaf* about Tarrant's attack shows how the suspect was framed:

> Left-wing politicians and media immediately assigned the mass murderer's twisted
> thoughts to the ideas of Trump and Baudet and other non-progressives (Winter,
> 2019).

This example and the following example from *Fox News* about the Norway attacks illustrate how the term mass murderer was integrated into the news articles:

> As westerners wrestle with such characterizations of the Oslo mass-murder suspect
> (Associated Press, 2015).

While both Tarrant and Breivik were framed as mass murderers by the media, they also shared that they were framed as "Terrorist." In articles about the Christchurch shootings, half of them (10/20), and the Norway attacks, 11/20, "Terrorist" was used most often after "Mass murderer/ Non-terrorist." This fact illustrates that when news outlets discuss attacks performed by Caucasian men, they are most likely to frame the suspects as mass murderers but, meanwhile, do not refrain from framing them as terrorists.

The suspects of the two other attacks, the Paris attacks and the Sri Lanka easter bombings, were framed as "Terrorist." In 18 out of 20 articles about both attacks, the term was used to frame the suspects. Two examples can illustrate how the news outlets used "Terrorist" as a frame. An example of the Paris attacks from a *Fox* News article shows:

"This anniversary is a further reminder of the volatile terrorist threat faced in Europe today," said a statement by Europol, the European police agency (Associated Press, 2016).

Another quote that depicts the use of this frame is taken from a *CNN* article about the Sri Lanka bombings:

"Those scenes seemed relegated to the past – until this week when terrorists killed hundreds of people, attacking churches and major hotels on Easter Sunday" (Ghitis, 2019).

Both quotes show that the news outlets chose to use the term terrorists to frame the suspects of the attacks.

Besides being referred to as terrorists by the news outlets, the suspects were also framed by their religion. The outlets emphasized in three-quarters (15/20) of the references about the Paris attacks and the Sri Lanka bombings that the suspects were "Muslim." This focus creates a division between the attacks performed by Caucasian terrorists and the ones committed by Muslim terrorists. From the data can be concluded that the news outlets are more likely to focus on the ethnic background of the suspects when they are Muslim. Other conclusions can be drawn from Table 2 below.

Table 2. Results category 1 "Type of Terrorist" with the frequency of the use of the codes (%) for each attack (n=80).

Category 1: Type of Terrorist	Christchurch (n=20)		Norway (n=20)		Paris (n=20)		Sri Lanka (n=20)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Muslim	0%	0	0%	0	75%	15	75%	15
Domestic/ Homegrown	25%	5	20%	4	20%	4	10%	2
Mass murder/ Non-terrorist	75%	15	65%	13	5%	1	5%	1
Terrorist	50%	10	55%	11	90%	18	90%	18

Another result that can be drawn from Table 2 is the framing of the suspects as domestic. Table 2 supports Powell's (2011, p. 95) claim that news outlets are more likely to focus on the domestic or homegrown aspect of Caucasian attackers. However, the table also depicts that the news outlets applied the domestic frame to the suspects of the Paris attacks. This frame is caused by the idea that Islamic radicalism among youths in the poor neighborhoods of Paris has become a more prominent topic for discussion in France.

Tables 3 to 6 below give an in-depth depiction of how the results were spread out over the four news outlets. For example, one takeaway from the tables was that U.S. news outlets are more likely to refer to the Caucasian suspects as mass murderers since they used that term more often in total than the Dutch news outlets. In addition to this claim was found that these American news outlets never referred to Muslim suspects as mass murderers. Instead, they used "Terrorist" and "Muslim" to name the suspects. Another takeaway was that Dutch news outlets use the same terms as U.S. outlets to describe the Muslim attackers while they were less likely to describe the Caucasian suspects. Only in the case of Tarrant, *De Telegraaf* used the term "Terrorist" in every article (n=5). However, the tables show that Dutch news outlets used more references overall to describe the Muslim suspects than the Caucasian suspects.

Table 3. Results category 1 "Type of Terrorist" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Christchurch mosque shootings.

Category 1: Christchurch	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Muslim	0	0	0	0
Domestic/ Homegrown/ White	1	2	0	2
Mass murder/ Non-terrorist	5	5	3	2
Terrorist	4	0	1	5

Table 4. Results category 1 "Type of Terrorist" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Norway attacks.

Category 1: Norway	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Muslim	0	0	0	0
Domestic/ Homegrown/ White	5	1	2	2
Mass murder/ Non-terrorist	1	4	0	2
Terrorist	4	4	2	1

Table 5. Results category 1 "Type of Terrorist" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Paris attacks.

Category 1: Paris	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Muslim	4	3	3	5
Domestic/ Homegrown/ White	0	0	2	2
Mass murder/ Non-terrorist	0	0	1	0
Terrorist	5	3	5	5

Table 6. Results category 1 "Type of Terrorist" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Sri Lanka Easter bombings.

Category 1: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Muslim	4	4	3	4
Domestic/ Homegrown/ White	0	2	0	0
Mass murder/ Non-terrorist	0	0	0	1
Terrorist	5	4	4	5

4.2 Assigned Descriptors

The results depict that three assigned descriptors were dominantly present in the articles about the four attacks. In the cases of the Christchurch mosque shootings and the Norway attacks, the suspects were described as "Mentally unstable/ Deranged." In articles about the Christchurch shootings, 9 out of 20 references were made about the idea that Tarrant was mentally unstable. In a quote from *De Telegraaf*, it can be seen how this descriptor was applied:

> The argument gives a glimpse into the life of the deranged gunman (Burgers, 2019).

The article states that the gunman was deranged and therefore uses Tarrant's mental state to frame him.

In 17 out of 20 articles about the Norway attacks, the news outlets also framed Breivik as mentally unstable. A quote from *De Telegraaf* illustrates how Breivik was deemed mentally unstable:

> All these dead, all these young lives. Abruptly ended by one madman (*De Telegraaf*, 2011).

This descriptor was used dominantly because of the discussion in the media and in court about whether Breivik was mentally unstable or not. This discussion caused that the news outlets made several references about his mental state.

The descriptor that the suspects were "Barbaric" proved to be most dominant in articles about the Paris attacks because 12 out of 20 used this descriptor. A quote from *AD* states:

> He was one of the gunmen in Bataclan, one of the men who blew themselves up after executing the concertgoers (Rosman, 2016).

This quote does not directly state that the suspect was barbaric. Nevertheless, by describing how he performed the act of terrorism, the news outlets frame the suspect as barbaric.

Figure 1. Framing of the suspect as "Barbaric" through headers and images.

Note: The screenshot shows how the suspects of the Paris attacks are framed as "Barbaric," even though the news outlets do not directly mention them as barbaric.

Besides that, Figure 1 above shows that the news outlets make use of the headers and images in their articles to support this frame. In an article by Chiaramonte (2015), who writes for *Fox News*, he uses the quotes of the suspects and an image of one of them with an assault rifle to highlight the barbaric nature of the attackers.

In the case of the Sri Lanka bombings, "Intelligent" was used most often to describe the suspects. The fact that 11 out of 20 articles about the attack focused on the intelligence of the terrorists was surprising since scholarly research assigned intelligence as a descriptor to Caucasian suspects and not to Muslim terrorists (Powell, 2011, p. 99). However, this result can be explained by the fact that intelligence was often assigned to the structured plan created by the terrorist organization ISIS:

> More than 48 hours after the Easter Sunday massacre in Sri Lanka, a devastatingly
> well-coordinated assault that targeted churches and hotels around the country, the
> shock still lingers (Kugelman, 2019).

The focus on intelligence, in this case, is less on the suspects themselves and more on the coordination of the attack, which was done by ISIS. Besides, "Intelligent" is also used in half of the articles (10/20) about the Norway attacks with references to Breivik as intelligent. This statistic shows that Powell's claim is still valid, but Caucasian suspects are not the only ones who can be considered intelligent.

Table 7. Results category 2 "Assigned Descriptors" with the frequency of the use of the codes (%) for each attack (n=80).

Category 2: Assigned Descriptors	Christchurch (n=20)		Norway (n=20)		Paris (n=20)		Sri Lanka (n=20)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Angry/Vengeful	10%	2	5%	1	10%	2	0%	0
Jihadist	0%	0	0%	0	20%	4	30%	6
Mentally unstable/Deranged	45%	9	85%	17	5%	1	5%	1
Intelligent	25%	5	50%	10	30%	6	55%	11
Barbaric	30%	6	40%	8	60%	12	45%	7

Two surprising elements of Table 7 are the fact that for every attack, there is a significant amount of references made about the suspects as "Intelligent" or "Barbaric." This fact illustrates that, even though one group is more likely to receive the assigned descriptor, the news outlets use these descriptors to frame the different kinds of terrorists.

Tables 8 to 11 show more in detail how often the different news outlets use the descriptors. The tables explain the number of references that framed the Muslim suspects as "Intelligent." In the case of the Sri Lanka bombings, all outlets, except for *AD*, referred to the suspects as "Intelligent" more often than in the attacks performed by the Caucasian attackers. Also, in the case of the Paris attacks, *CNN* used the same descriptor a significant amount of times (in 3 out of 5 articles). Both cases show that the news outlets wanted to focus on the organizational power of ISIS, which coordinated both attacks

Table 8. Results category 2 "Assigned Descriptors" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Christchurch mosque shootings.

Category 2: Christchurch	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Angry/Vengeful	0	0	1	1
Jihadist	0	0	0	0
Mentally unstable/Deranged	2	1	2	4
Intelligent	1	1	2	1
Barbaric	3	2	0	1

Table 9. Results category 2 "Assigned Descriptors" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Norway attacks.

Category 2: Norway	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Angry/Vengeful	0	0	1	0
Jihadist	0	0	0	0
Mentally unstable/Deranged	5	4	4	4
Intelligent	4	2	3	1
Barbaric	3	1	1	3

Table 10. Results category 2 "Assigned Descriptors" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Paris attacks.

Category 2: Paris	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Angry/Vengeful	0	1	1	0
Jihadist	2	1	1	0
Mentally unstable/Deranged	0	0	0	1
Intelligent	1	3	1	1
Barbaric	3	4	2	3

Table 11. Results category 2 "Assigned Descriptors" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Sri Lanka Easter bombings.

Category 2: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Angry/Vengeful	0	0	0	0
Jihadist	1	2	3	0
Mentally unstable/Deranged	0	0	0	1
Intelligent	4	3	1	3
Barbaric	3	2	1	1

4.3 Motivation for the Act

In articles about the Christchurch shootings, the attack was framed by the motive of "Attention seeking." In 9 out of 20 articles, this motive was given to report about the attack. For example, the following quote illustrates how Tarrant sought attention:

> Tarrant also distributed his manifesto online. Like Balliet, he filmed his actions
> with a bodycam and streamed the live images on anonymous internet forums and
> Facebook (Naber, 2019).

Thus, Tarrant sought the attention of the people by distributing his manifesto and live-streaming his act of terrorism. Since Tarrant desired attention, the media framed him by using this motive for the attack.

The articles about the Norway attacks focused on the same motive. "Attention seeking" was used most often, 13 out of 20, by the news outlets to frame Breivik. The outlets focused on Breivik's motive to fight multiculturalism:

> Breivik, who boasts of being an ultranationalist who killed his victims to fight
> multiculturalism (Smith-Spark, 2012).

His fight against multiculturalism is a way of attention-seeking because he wants to others that people are fighting against it and that they should join him. Besides, he seeks the attention of the government to show that not everyone supports multiculturalism.

The framing of Breivik's motive is different from that of Tarrant because of a second dominant motive. The news outlets portray Breivik's "Message of anti-government" 7 out of 20 times. This motive shows that Breivik directly attacked the government of Norway in order to gain their attention, while Tarrant did not specifically target the government of New Zealand.

In the case of the Paris attack, there was not a dominant motive used to frame the suspects. While "Creating fear" was used in 6 out of 20 articles, two motives were used almost as often since "Islamic radicalism" was used in a quarter of the articles (5/20) and "Avenge killing" in one-fifth (4/20). A quote that depicts the motive of "Creating fear" shows how this motive is exploited to frame the attackers:

> Creating chaos, fear and uncertainty. That is precisely what IS wants to achieve"
> (Van Der Mee, 2015).

This quote also explains why "Islamic radicalism" and "Avenge killing" were used dominantly. While creating fear is the end goal of the terrorist, Islamic radicalism and avenge killings are the fuel to reach that goal. Therefore, the two other motives are used as frames to support the most dominant motive.

Finally, in coverage of the Sri Lanka bombings, "Islamic radicalism" was used most often, 9/20, to frame the motive for the attack. For example:

the Muslim groups are trying to outdo each other on their radicalism to please their Middle Eastern backers (Ghitis, 2019).

This example illustrates that the media considers radicalism among Muslim groups as the key motive for the bombings in Sri Lanka since Islamic radicalism pushed the suspects to commit the acts.

Table 12. Results category 3 "Motivation for the Act" with the frequency of the use of the codes (%) for each attack (n=80).

Category 3: Motivation for the Act	Christchurch (n=20)		Norway (n=20)		Paris (n=20)		Sri Lanka (n=20)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Avenge killing	10%	2	0%	0	20%	4	15%	3
Islamic radicalism	0%	0	0%	0	25%	5	45%	9
Desire to kill	15%	3	5%	1	5%	1	0%	0
Creating fear	5%	1	5%	1	30%	6	15%	3
Message of anti-government	5%	1	35%	7	0%	0	0%	0
Attention seeking	45%	9	65%	13	5%	1	0%	0

One surprising element from the analysis was the number of references that focused on the "Desire to kill." While Powell (2011, p. 101) claimed that the media uses this frame as one of the frames to identify the motive of Muslim terrorists, the "Desire to kill" was only found in 1 out of 20 articles about the Paris attacks and in none about the Sri Lanka bombings. The finding illustrates that Powell's frame does not apply to all terrorist attacks performed by Muslims.

Tables 13 to 16 present the results in more detail. This detail also highlighted a relevant takeaway from these tables. The first was about the focus of U.S. news outlets on "Islamic radicalism" when it came to the attacks performed by Muslim terrorists. While *CNN* focused on this motive in the case of the Paris attacks (in 3 out of 5 articles), *Fox News* was leading in the number of references that connected this motive to the Sri Lanka bombings. This difference is explained by the fact that *CNN* emphasized the growing radicalization among Muslim youths in the poor suburbs of Paris to support that this problem should be solved to prevent another attack from happening. Meanwhile, *Fox News* addressed "Islamic radicalism" to illustrate that radicalization is a dangerous foundation for people who disagree with the Christian, Western, values and culture.

Table 13. Results category 3 "Motivation for the Act" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Christchurch mosque shootings.

Category 3: Motivation for the Act	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Avenge killing	0	0	0	2
Islamic radicalism	0	0	0	0
Desire to kill	1	0	1	1
Creating fear	1	0	0	0
Message of anti-government	0	0	1	0
Attention seeking	2	3	2	2

Table 14. Results category 3 "Motivation for the Act" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Norway attacks.

Category 3: Motivation for the Act	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Avenge killing	0	0	0	0
Islamic radicalism	0	0	0	0
Desire to kill	1	0	0	0
Creating fear	0	1	0	0
Message of anti-government	2	1	3	1
Attention seeking	4	4	3	2

Table 15. Results category 3 "Assigned Descriptors" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Paris attacks.

Category 3: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Avenge killing	1	2	1	0
Islamic radicalism	3	1	1	0
Desire to kill	0	0	1	0
Creating fear	1	1	2	2
Message of anti-government	0	0	0	0
Attention seeking	0	0	1	0

Table 16. Results category 3 "Motivation for the Act" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings.

Category 3: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Avenge killing	0	2	0	1
Islamic radicalism	2	5	1	1
Desire to kill	0	0	0	0
Creating fear	0	1	0	2
Message of anti-government	0	0	0	0
Attention seeking	0	0	0	0

4.4 Future Threat

The framing of the "Future Threat" can be divided into two groups, the articles about Caucasian attackers and Muslim attackers. In the case of the Christchurch shootings, both "Lone wolf/ Lone actor" and "Connection to online community" were equally represented in half (10/20) of the articles about Tarrant. The following quote illustrates how the news outlets combined these two to frame the suspect:

> In the gunman's rambling manifesto, he said he was not a member of any organization but had donated to and interacted with many nationalist groups, though he acted alone and no group ordered the attack (Joyce, 2019).

This quote shows that, even though Tarrant was a lone wolf, he communicated with other like-minded people through online communities.

In the case of the Norway attacks, the news outlets used the "Lone wolf/ Lone actor" frame 11 out of 20 times, which is more than the use of the "Connection to online community" that was found in half (10/20) of the articles. The news outlets focused on the idea of the lone wolf since there was no evidence that Breivik was connected to an organization:

> Breivik claimed to belong to a far-right group called the Knights Templar but the court found no evidence of its existence, the judge said (Smith-Spark, 2012).

However, the connection to the online community is made by the news outlets since he shared his manifesto with others and published a YouTube video before his act of terrorism:

> Dow Jones reported that several hours before the Oslo car bomb blast in a downtown government quarter, Breivik released a YouTube video calling for conservatives to "embrace martyrdom" (*Fox News*, 2011).

The "Connection to a terrorist organization" was often used in articles about the two attacks committed by Muslim terrorists. The following quote illustrates how this connection was made in the case of the Paris attacks:

> Three Syrian nationals suspected of being ISIS members were arrested Tuesday in Germany, and are being investigated in connection with November's deadly terror attacks in Paris, authorities said (McKirdy et al., 2016).

The quote shows how in 14 out of 20 references, the news outlets framed the future threat by connecting the suspects to a terrorist organization. This connection was also made for the suspects of the Sri Lanka bombings in 13 out of 20 articles:

ISIS claimed responsibility Tuesday morning for the coordinated Sri Lanka Easter bombings as the death toll in the massacre has risen to 321. The international terror group tweeted via its propaganda wing that the violence was carried out by "fighters of the Islamic State," reports said. It later put out a second message naming the alleged bombers and the sites they targeted (Norman, 2019).

ISIS openly claimed responsibility for the bombings by stating that they coordinated the attacks. The claim increases the chances of a future threat because it shows that the organization is capable of coordinating people all over the world to perform acts of terrorism.

Table 17. Results category 4 "Future Threat" with the frequency of the use of the codes (%) for each attack (n=80).

Category 4:	Christchurch (n=20)		Norway (n=20)		Paris (n=20)		Sri Lanka (n=20)	
Future Threat	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Lone wolf/Lone Actor	50%	10	55%	11	10%	2	0%	0
Connection to online community	50%	10	50%	10	5%	1	0%	0
Connection to terrorist organization	0%	0	0%	0	70%	14	65%	13

Table 17 above depicts the results of news outlets combined, while Tables 18 to 21 illustrate these results separately. One finding that stood out was that Dutch news outlets were more likely to refer to the "Connection to online community" than U.S. outlets in the case of the Christchurch shootings. An explanation for this difference is that the presence of online right-wing extremist communities is growing. This growth has become a more prominent topic in the Dutch media since Dutch extremists are connected to like-minded people in other countries (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021).

Another conclusion drawn from the tables below was that U.S. news outlets use the "Connection to terrorist organization" more often than Dutch outlets. This difference is caused by the fact that The United States started the war against terrorist groups, therefore the outlets are more likely to focus on the fact that the suspects were connected to such groups.

Table 18. Results category 4 "Future Threat" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Christchurch mosque shootings.

Category 4: Christchurch	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Lone wolf/Lone Actor	3	2	3	2
Connection to online community	1	2	4	3
Connection to terrorist organization	0	0	0	0

Table 19. Results category 4 "Future Threat" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Norway attacks.

Category 4: Norway	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Lone wolf/Lone Actor	3	2	3	3
Connection to online community	2	3	3	2
Connection to terrorist organization	0	0	0	0

Table 20. Results category 4 "Future Threat" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Paris attacks.

Category 4: Paris	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Lone wolf/Lone Actor	2	0	0	0
Connection to online community	0	0	1	0
Connection to terrorist organization	5	5	2	2

Table 21. Results category 4 "Future Threat" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings.

Category 4: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	*Fox News*	*AD*	*De Telegraaf*
Lone wolf/Lone Actor	0	0	0	0
Connection to online community	0	0	0	0
Connection to terrorist organization	4	4	3	2

4.5 Victims

Several facts can be drawn from the analysis regarding the framing of the "Victims." First of all, in the case of the Christchurch shootings, the news outlets framed the victims by using "positive descriptors" in 6 out of 20 articles. The outlets focused on the fact that some of the victims forgave Tarrant for his actions:

> Farid Ahmed, one of the survivors of the attack on a mosque in New Zealand two
> weeks ago, forgives the attacker (Van Leeuwen, 2019).

Besides focusing on the forgiving character of some victims, a quarter (5/20) referred to "Heroism of the victims" by telling heroic stories:

> A mosque shooting survivor in New Zealand has been hailed as a hero for
> preventing more deaths after confronting the shooter by yelling "Come here!" and
> leading him on a chase that ended with the shooter speeding away in his car
> (Mikelionis, 2019).

Combined with the "positive descriptors," the "Heroism of the victims" illustrates that the news outlets tried to frame the victims as people who overcame the attack and want to move on.

The same thing can be reported about the articles about the Norway attacks. However, the amount of references about Breivik's victims is even lower than Tarrant's. While 3 out of 20 contained articles "Positive descriptors," only 2 out of 10 mentioned "Heroism of the victims." Therefore, these two are only dominant in their own category and do not significantly influence the research. Nevertheless, one element that was different in articles about the Norway attacks was the demand for justice of the victims:

> Bjorn Ihler, a survivor of the Utoya Island attack, told CNN he was glad the trial
> had concluded and that justice had been done (Smith-Spark, 2012).

While the victims of Christchurch want to move on, the victims of Norway call for justice in order to move on.

The victims of the Paris attacks were also framed by positive descriptions and their heroism. Both "Heroism of the victims" and "Positive descriptors" were referred to in one-fifth (4/20) of the articles. The media framed heroic acts by writing about acts performed by the victims that saved others:

> 30-year-old Michael O'Connor from Great Britain did not hesitate for a moment
> when the terrorists shot around in the Bataclan concert hall. He threw himself on
> his girlfriend to protect her from the flying bullets (*AD*, 2015).

Besides the descriptions of heroism, the news outlets also depicted the lives of the victims before the attack:

> Four Dutch guys who have tickets for their favorite band Eagles of Death. Just
> before the concert, they pose together laughing with a beer on Facebook. Less than
> an hour later, they are in hell on earth and try to get out of the majestic Bataclan
> theater while crawling over the corpses (*De Telegraaf*, 2015).

The news outlets show that most victims were in the prime of their lives, and the terrorists wanted to take that away from them.

The victims of the Sri Lanka bombings were framed differently compared to the other three attacks. The news outlets framed the victims in 9 out of 20 articles with an "Emphasis on good vs. evil." The presence of a different portrayal of the victims can be explained by the fact that this frame is connected to the idea of Christianity versus Islam. Since only the targets of the Sri Lanka bombings were Christian, it shows that news outlets are most likely to use this frame when the victims are Christian and the suspects Muslim. The following example shows how the news outlets focus on the fact that the victims were Christian:

> [A]s these are attacks fomenting religious hatred by attacking multiple churches on
> a high religious holiday (Betz, 2019).

Table 22. Results category 5 "Victims" with the frequency of the use of the codes (%) for each attack (n=80).

Category 5: Victims	Christchurch (n=20)		Norway (n=20)		Paris (n=20)		Sri Lanka (n=20)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Heroism of the victims	25%	5	10%	2	20%	4	0%	0
Positive descriptors	30%	6	15%	3	20%	4	20%	4
Emphasis on good vs. evil	5%	1	5%	1	0%	0	45%	9

Table 22 above depicts the results of the framing of the "Victims." One extra takeaway from this table is that one-fifth (4/20) of the Sri Lanka bombings articles framed the victims by using "Positive descriptors." The percentage indicates that the amount of positive descriptors about victims does not depend on the ethnicity of the terrorists.

One takeaway from Table 23 to 26 is that *CNN* made significantly more references about "Heroism of the victims" in the case of the Christchurch shootings compared to the Norway attacks. Besides that, while Dutch news outlets used positive descriptors to write about the victims of Tarrant, they did not do the same about the victims of Breivik. These two findings show that the news outlets focused more on the victims of the Christchurch shootings because of their attitude towards the terrorist. As said before, the victims of the Christchurch shootings forgave Tarrant for his acts, which shows the mental strength of the victims. While they do not seek revenge, Breivik's victims demand justice. Such a demand is not unusual and, therefore, less newsworthy than a unique act of forgiveness.

Table 23. Results category 5 "Victims" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Christchurch mosque shootings.

Category 5: Christchurch	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Heroism of the victims	3	1	0	1
Positive descriptors	2	2	1	1
Emphasis on good vs. evil	0	0	0	1

Table 24. Results category 5 "Victims" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Norway attacks.

Category 5: Norway	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Heroism of the victims	0	1	0	1
Positive descriptors	2	1	0	0
Emphasis on good vs. evil	0	1	0	0

Table 25. Results category 5 "Victims" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Paris attacks.

Category 5: Paris	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Heroism of the victims	1	0	1	2
Positive descriptors	0	1	1	2
Emphasis on good vs. evil	0	0	0	0

Table 26. Results category 5 "Victims" references of each of the four news outlets (n=20) about the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings.

Category 5: Sri Lanka	U.S		Dutch	
	CNN	Fox News	AD	De Telegraaf
Heroism of the victims	0	0	0	0
Positive descriptors	1	0	1	2
Emphasis on good vs. evil	2	3	1	3

5.Conclusion & Discussion

This thesis aimed to map the portrayal of Caucasian and Muslim terrorists by U.S. and Dutch news outlets between 2010 and 2020. The results depict how the news outlets framed the terrorists and whether there was a difference between the portrayal of Caucasian and Muslim terrorists.

The results show that news outlets framed Caucasians as mass murderers or terrorists while Muslim suspects were described as Muslim terrorists. In the case of the Caucasian attackers, the outlets shifted between calling them out as terrorists and mass murderers. In other words, they shifted between whether they should call the suspect a terrorist or not (Powell, 2011, p 98). While Tarrant and Breivik were not only framed as terrorists but also as mass murderers, the news outlets were very consistent in the case of the Muslim suspects. The news outlets combined the terrorist frame with an emphasis on the fact that they were Muslim, therefore the outlets attempted to connect the two terms.

In addition, there were also differences between the outlets in their portrayal of the suspects. The U.S. news outlets made an effort to identify the Caucasian attackers as mass murderers, whereas Dutch news outlets made fewer references to describe that type of terrorist. This effort shows that it is more important to U.S. news outlets to identify the type of terrorist in order to create an image of the suspect for the audience to comprehend how Caucasian terrorists are different from Muslim terrorists. The detailed descriptions of the Caucasian terrorists cause that these terrorists receive the dark celebrity status from the news outlets, which enables the audience to identify Caucasian terrorists differently from Muslim terrorists (Drageset, 2013, p. 70).

Even though Dutch news outlets made less of an effort to frame Caucasian suspects than the U.S. outlets. It became evident that Dutch outlets focused more on the framing of Muslim suspects instead. An explanation for this is that the Dutch audience is less aware of the threat of right-wing extremism because the extremists are more likely to perform non-violent actions in the Netherlands (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2021). Therefore, the audience is less interested in reading about the threat of violence of the Caucasian terrorists.

The finding that Caucasian attackers are framed as either terrorists or mass murderers contradicts the claim of previous research that the media often focus on the domestic or homegrown aspect of these suspects (Powell, 2011, p. 95). Besides that, there is also no proof

that the four outlets were more likely to cover the attacks committed by Caucasian suspects (Kearns et al., 2018, p. 9). The second claim is also contradicted by the fact that Dutch outlets were more likely to write about Muslim than about Caucasian terrorists.

Besides differences from previous research, the results shared similarities to other studies. The fact that the news outlets connected the term Muslim with the terrorist frame in the cases of the Muslim attacks supports Said's (2003) claim that this connection is based on the Western image of Islam that Muslims are violent and intimidating people.

These findings illustrate how the audience receives a skewed image of the suspects from their news outlets. While the outlets attempt to identify Caucasian suspects as mass murderers or terrorists, the Muslim suspects are immediately identified as terrorists. Besides that, in the cases of the Paris attacks and the Sri Lanka Easter bombings, an entire religion was connected to the suspects. The connection causes that people become more likely to identify the terrorists based on the Western image of Islam which depicts Muslims as violent people (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p. 222).

It also appeared that different descriptors were assigned to the two kinds of terrorists. While the Caucasian terrorists were framed as mentally unstable, the news outlets framed Muslim terrorists either as Barbaric or Intelligent. In the case of the Caucasian terrorists, the news outlets focused on the mental health of Tarrant and Breivik since this was a central element during their trials. Especially in the case of Breivik, a central aspect was to find out whether Breivik was mentally unstable or not when he committed his act of terrorism (Leonard et al., 2014, p. 410). Because of the central place of this topic in the courtroom, news outlets took this element in order to frame the terrorist.

In the case of the Paris attacks and the Sri Lanka Easter bombings, the Muslim terrorists were framed as barbaric or intelligent men. This contrast can be explained by the fact that the news outlets portrayed the Muslim terrorists of the Paris attacks, more subjectively, as barbaric since it was closer to home (Gans, 1979, pp. 37-38). Moreover, because the target was a European city, the outlets attempted to focus on the actions of the terrorists. Meanwhile, in the case of the Sri Lanka Easter bombings, the outlets highlighted the coordination of the attacks. Therefore, in that case, they emphasized the intelligent aspect of the attack, which is how the multiple attacks were coordinated.

Compared to previous research, the first finding supports claims made by others. The fact that news outlets frame the Caucasian terrorists by questioning their mental stability is in accordance with Powell's (2011, p. 98) claim that these terrorists are often depicted as mentally unstable. However, the second finding contradicts the same claim because it states that Caucasian terrorists are intelligent (p. 98) while the findings show that not only Caucasian terrorists were depicted as intelligent but that Muslim terrorists were framed accordingly more often.

The fact that the Muslim terrorists are framed as barbaric men supports the western image of Islam that frames Muslims as violent, barbaric, heartless, religious zealots (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p. 222). However, surprisingly, the Caucasian terrorists are also portrayed as barbaric men even though this descriptor was supposed to be a frame to identify Muslim terrorists by.

These findings offer new perspective into what terms the media use to describe a suspect since they show what descriptors are used to frame a specific type of terrorist. The fact that the news outlets are most likely to focus on the mental state of a Caucasian suspect causes that these outlets can overlook the intelligent or barbaric sides of the attack, which are assigned to the Muslim terrorists as the results illustrated. These two elements are relevant because it becomes possible to study the importance of distance from an attack. Even though the same terrorist organization committed the Paris attacks and the Sri Lanka Easter bombings, the news outlets focused on different elements because the Paris attacks were closer to home. This can be explained by the idea that the further away a country is physically or socially, the more analytical and professional the stance of the media. While if a country is closely connected to the afflicted country physically or socially, the media tends to be more subjective (Gans, 1979, pp. 37-38). Therefore, it is relevant to consider the strategic or intelligent elements of attacks closer to home since that will make it possible to identify a pattern when it comes to the coordination of the attacks claimed by ISIS.

The significant findings from the results show that the motive of Caucasian terrorists is most often based on the desire for attention. While Tarrant wanted to have the people's attention to address his Islamophobia, Breivik wanted to show that he disagreed with the multicultural society and expressed his feelings of racism and xenophobia. The Caucasian terrorists seek the attention of other people in their attempt to show that people should not accept foreign cultures into their countries. In doing so, they also want to gain as much attention as possible so that like-minded people will follow their examples (Weinberg et al., 2004).

In contrast to the Caucasian terrorists, who are framed most often by their motive of attention-seeking, the motive of Muslim terrorists differs between the two attacks. For the Paris attacks, the news outlets combined the motives of avenge killings and Islamic radicalism to support the aim of the terrorists to create fear. The motive of avenge killings is based on the fact that France was more active against ISIS than other countries at the time of the Paris attacks (Black, 2018). Since France was most active, the terrorists were more likely to target that country to avenge their fallen brothers more directly. Besides this motive, Islamic radicalism plays a central role in the motive for the Paris attacks. Young Muslim men in France are recruited and travel to Syria, where they are radicalized. When these men return home, it becomes possible that they act on these new radicalized feelings. These two motives support the final motive of the terrorists for their attacks. Their desire to avenge others and their radical ideas cause that, besides the fact that they kill people, they want to have an impact on as many people as possible. Therefore, their main motive is to create fear among the Western civilization.

The case of the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings is different. The motive of the terrorists was based on their Islamic radicalism. Since Sri Lanka receives Western tourists and because a part of the population consists of Christians, the terrorists acted out of their radical beliefs to oppose these Western people and ideas.

Compared to previous research, the motives of the Caucasian terrorists are in line with the claim that right-wing extremists act on their feelings of nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, and the strong state (Mudde, 1995, p. 206). In both cases, the terrorists act out of racist and xenophobic feelings. In addition to that, Breivik also acted out of nationalistic and anti-democratic beliefs to attack multicultural society.

One element which opposes previous research was the motive of creating fear for the Paris attacks. Even though Powell (2011, p. 100) assigned this motive to the Caucasian terrorists, the motive was used to frame Muslim terrorists. However, the fact that this motive is assigned to Muslim terrorists is in line with Sultan (2016, pp. 6-7), who explains that religion can become the cause for feelings of fear and danger among the people. The statement shows that even though this motive was assigned to Caucasian terrorists, it can also be applied to Muslim terrorists since their actions are based on avenge killings and Islamic radicalism. These actions caused people to fear that Muslims wanted to conquer the world (Said, 2003, p. 287).

These findings shed an interesting light on what elements can cause someone to commit an act of terrorism. The idea that Caucasian terrorists often act because they seek attention to address their nationalistic, racist, xenophobic, and anti-democratic opinions enables counter-terrorism forces to focus on people with these opinions in order to prevent new terrorist attacks from happening. Besides that, the findings also illustrate the importance of fighting against feelings of fear caused by terrorists since this takes away part of their success when they succeed in committing an attack. Besides, the findings show that it is relevant that governments focus on decreasing Islamic radicalism to prevent new attacks from happening since radicalism is often the foundation of a terrorist attack.

Other findings depicted the chances of a future threat. The Caucasian terrorists were framed as lone wolves who acted out of their own beliefs and did not receive help from others to coordinate their attacks. However, even though these terrorists were described as lone wolves, they were also connected to online communities and right-wing extremist organizations. When it came to Caucasian terrorists, often the discussion arose about how they became extremists. While Muslim terrorists are radicalized by members of the terrorist organizations, Caucasian terrorists are not since they are acting alone and not in the name of an organization. Therefore, the discussion arises about what kind of websites the Caucasian terrorist used to support his ideology and become more radical. The discussion then caused that the news outlets connect the terrorist to online communities besides the fact that the terrorists were lone wolves.

In the cases of the two attacks committed by Muslim terrorists, the news outlets connected the terrorists to a terrorist organization. The connection to an organization or, in the case of the Caucasian terrorists, an online community increases the chances of a future threat. However, since Caucasian terrorists are also framed as lone wolves, it becomes less likely that there will be another attack. Meanwhile, the Muslim terrorists are often not framed as lone wolves, but they are part of the terrorist organization. If the terrorist attack was successful, the Muslim terrorists themselves are most likely not going to commit another attack, especially because one strategy of the terrorist organization is to send terrorists out as suicide bombers. However, when an organization claims responsibility for the attacks afterward, they show the world that they are capable of committing these kinds of attacks, which increases the chances of a future threat.

The two significant findings are in line with previous research. Baysinger's (2006, p.15) claim that lone wolves can often not be connected to other extremists shows that the probability

of a future threat after a Caucasian attack decreases. Meanwhile, Muslim terrorists are often depicted as part of a group (Said, 2003, p.287) which increases this probability. This increase has an impact on the amount of coverage about an act of terrorism. If the terrorists are connected to an international organization, there will be more coverage about the event (Terzis, 2014, p. 97). However, since Caucasian terrorists are often not connected to organizations, the amount of coverage about the future threat is lower than the coverage about Muslim terrorists who are connected to an organization.

These findings emphasize on the importance of finding a connection between a Caucasian terrorist and an online community. If there are more connections to be found, the news outlets are more likely to treat these online communities and their threat to society similar to the threat and presence of terrorist organizations such as ISIS. As a result, the portrayal of Caucasian and Muslim terrorists will become less skewed.

Finally, there was not a clear pattern to be discovered when it came to the framing of the victims. In all cases, the news outlets used positive descriptors to write about the victims. However, in the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings case, the victims were not defined by their heroism like the victims of the other three attacks. Instead, in this case, the news outlets made a more extensive effort to frame the war between good and evil, also known as Christianity versus Islam. The fact that only the Sri Lanka Easter Bombings targets were Christians illustrates the reason for this shift in framing.

The shift towards Christianity versus Islam illustrates that this was an important frame to the news outlets. This finding aligns with previous research because it explains that the news outlets choose this frame to make contrast between the terrorists and their victims even bigger (Powell, 2011, p. 103).

This research offers a new perspective in understanding how the description of the victims takes a central place in the framing of the terrorists. Even though there is no difference between Muslim and Caucasian terrorists when it comes to the description of their victims, it is still relevant to see how the news outlets try to counter the grief of the people after an attack by providing positive descriptions of the victims and stories of heroism. Besides that, it is also relevant that the news outlets presented the religious motive behind terrorist attacks. The fact that outlets shift their framing when the targets of Muslim terrorists are Christian indicates how a secular society still considers religion as a central aspect in the war against terrorism.

Further research into this topic can be done in multiple ways. First, it is possible to create a more extensive dataset to get more detailed results. Since this thesis only used 80 articles as part of the analysis, the differences between the codes were minimal, making it more difficult to identify dominant frames. Besides that, it becomes possible to compare the news outlets for each attack more in detail by increasing the dataset. Because this thesis only used five articles per news outlet about one attack, it was less likely that sharp contrasts could be found between the outlets.

Another possibility for further research is to add news outlets from other countries such as France and Germany. These countries would add another dimension to the research since France is often targeted by ISIS, which caused the topic of Muslim terrorism to play a significant role in the media. In addition, Dutch right-wing extremists are often linked to communities in Germany which shows that it is useful to study how news outlets portray Caucasian terrorists in that country.

Finally, it is also possible to add news outlets from Muslim countries to the research. Like news outlets from France and Germany, a news outlet such as Al Jazeera can also add another dimension. By studying news outlets from a Muslim country, it is possible to research the portrayal of Muslim terrorists from a different point of view. Since these outlets are not likely to be influenced by the Western image of Islam, they might focus less on framing the terrorists as Muslim and emphasize the homegrown aspect caused by the terrorist organizations.

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Appendix A – List of Analyzed Articles

AD-Chr-13 Hoe witte schutters elkaar aansteken - *AD*

AD-Chr-15 Dader is meer dan een zonderling die zichzelf verloor in waanzinnige complottheorieën - *AD*

AD-Chr-2 Schutter Christchurch aangeklaagd voor 50 moorden - *AD*

AD-Chr-4 Overlevende moskee-aanslag vergeeft terrorist: Ik wil geen hart dat kookt als vulkaan - *AD*

AD-Chr-9 Verdachte aanslagen Christchurch ontkent schuld - *AD*

AD-Nor-1 Aanklagers: Anders Breivik hoort in kliniek - *AD*

AD-Nor-13 Hoe gek is Anders Breivik nu eigenlijk? - *AD*

AD-Nor-5 Anders Breivik wenst de doodstraf óf vrijspraak - *AD*

AD-Nor-6 Breivik eist directe vrijlating - *AD*

AD-Nor-9 Breivik had premier willen onthoofden - *AD*

AD-Par-10 Massaslachting in Parijs - *AD*

AD-Par-13 Parijs weer onder vuur - *AD*

AD-Par-4 Een aanslag op de westerse waarden - *AD*

AD-Par-6 Helden van Parijs - *AD*

AD-Par-9 Klopjacht op nog levende terrorist - *AD*

AD-Sri-13 Wie zijn de slachtoffers van de aanslagen in Sri Lanka? - *AD*

AD-Sri-2 'Aanslagen Sri Lanka zijn daad van terreur' - *AD*

AD-Sri-3 'Radicaal-islamitische groep pleegde aanslagen met hulp uit buitenland' - *AD*

AD-Sri-6 IS eist aanslagen Sri Lanka op - *AD*

AD-Sri-8 Namen twee zelfmoordterroristen bekend - *AD*

Tele-Chr-10 Terreurschutter openlijk racistisch - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Chr-5 Extreemrechts onderschat - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Chr-9 Moskeeschutter Brenton Tarrant: 'Breivik een inspiratiebron' - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Chr-6 Grote aarzeling bij links na aanslag - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Chr-12 Woede na brief van terrorist - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Nor-1 Breivik oefende als kille moordmachine - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Nor-12 Noorwegen worstelt met erfenis Breivik - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Nor-15 Psychoot Breivik leidt aan grootheidswanen - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Nor-4 EENLING IN WAANZIN; Massamoordenaar gaf troetelnamen aan z'n geweren - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Nor-9 Nabestaanden teleurgesteld; OM acht Breivik ontoerekeningsvatbaar - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Par-13 Verdachte mocht door bij grens - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Par-15 'Ze schoten in de menigte'; Schokkende verklaringen van overlevenden Bataclan - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Par-1Aanslagplegers krijgen gezicht - *De Telegraaf*

Tele-Par-3 Een spoor van dood en verderf; 'Iedereen begreep dat zich iets verschrikkelijks aan het afspelen was' - *De Telegraaf*

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Appendix B – Codebook and Example of the analysis from Atlas.ti

Code	Comment	Code Group 1	Code Group 2	Code Group 3	Code Group 4	Code Group 5
1.4 Terrorist		1. Type of Terrorist				
2.1 Angry/ Vengeful			2. Assigned Descriptors			
2.2 Jihadist			2. Assigned Descriptors			
2.3 Mentally unstable/ Deranged			2. Assigned Descriptors			
2.4 Intelligent			2. Assigned Descriptors			
2.5 Barbaric/ Uneducated			2. Assigned Descriptors			
3.1 Avenge killing				3. Motive for the act		
3.2 Islamic radicalism				3. Motive for the act		
3.3 Desire to kill				3. Motive for the act		
3.4 Creating fear				3. Motive for the act		
3.5 Message of anti-government				3. Motive for the act		
3.6 Attention seeking				3. Motive for the act		
4.1 Lone wolf/ Lone actor					4. Future threat	
4.2 Online community connections					4. Future threat	
4.3 Terrorist organization					4. Future threat	
5.1 Heroism of victims						5. Victims
5.2 Positive descriptions (social or religious)						5. Victims
5.3 Christianity VS. Islam						5. Victims