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**Legitimacy During Coup Attempts: A comparative study  
about the US media framing of coup attempts in Venezuela  
(2002) and Turkey (2016)**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to describe and compare the differences and similarities for US mainstream media's representation of two different coup attempts by using Robert Entman's Framing theory in terms of legitimacy. The chosen cases are the coup attempt in Turkey (2016) which is an US ally, having a right-wing government and the coup attempt in Venezuela (2002) which has a strained relationship with the US and having left-wing government. The research applies qualitative approach to conduct a small-n case study for comparing and analyzing how the media framed the legitimacy of acts and actors during these two coup attempts. This is an attempt to describe the problematization of theory becoming practice for the US mainstream media regarding the presentation of what is legitimate and what is not. The definition of legitimacy is very clear, but the US mainstream media have issues to reflect this definition to the reality.

Keywords: US media, Chavez-Venezuela, Erdogan-Turkey, coup attempts, Legitimacy, Framing.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Literature Review.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Media framing of foreign affairs.....	7
2.2 Media framing of the foreign coup attempts.....	8
2.3 Media framing of the coup attempt in Turkey.....	8
2.4 Media framing of the coup attempt in Venezuela.....	9
<b>3. Theoretical Approach.....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Social constructivism.....	11
3.2 Framing Theory.....	12
3.3 Agenda-Setting Theory.....	13
3.4 Media Legitimacy.....	13
3.5 Subcategories of legitimacy.....	15
3.6 Analytical Framework.....	16
3.7 Definition of coup d'état.....	17
3.8 How the theories are used.....	17
<b>4. Specified Aim and Research Question.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Method and Research Design.....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 Comparative Small-n Case Study.....	19
5.2 Case Selection.....	20
5.3 Qualitative Approach.....	20
5.4 Data Selection.....	21
5.5 Content Analysis.....	22
<b>6. Analysis.....</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1 Venezuela.....	23
6.1.1 Legitimacy of Existing Government.....	23
6.1.2 Legitimacy of Putschists.....	29
6.2 Turkey.....	33
6.2.1 Legitimacy of Existing Government.....	33
6.2.2 Legitimacy of Putschists.....	38
6.3 Results.....	42
<b>7. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>8. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>45</b>

# 1. Introduction

Media covers, frames and provides information and news about events such as wars, revolutions, coup d'états and other political and economic events around the world. The ways in which media presents these events, affects our opinion about different aspects, since media is an important actor when it comes to the construction of reality. The news is our source for information when it comes to our opinions about international relations, other countries around the world and different conflicts there (Saleem, 2007).

Sean Aday focuses on the relations between news and US foreign policy, especially with war coverage. Aday's conclusion is that the US media coverage of other countries tends to be ethnocentric, employing racial stereotypes of enemies, uncritical and episodic which proves that the US foreign policy is parallel with US media coverage (Aday 2014, p 316). The US media has one of the greatest reach within the western world. The connection between the US media and politics is very important when pointing out the construction of the news served to millions of people in the world.

Such as political elections, conflicts and terror attacks the coup attempts are one of several international events which is discussible and coverable widely. The discussions and debates about the coup attempts are still current and maintaining questions by pointing out which side is democratic, and which is anti-democratic. For instance, by considering that an existed regime is an elected and legitimated regime, the putschists become anti-democratic. Coup attempts are zero-sum games regarding the presentation of who has right to rule. A coup means to take power with illegitimate means, but there are different ways of framing coups, just like the other political events, which may assume legitimacy to different actors or sides (Varol, 2012).

Legitimacy is an important political concept providing a government the basis of its authority, both domestically and internationally. Therefore, in covering a coup d'état, how legitimacy is a tribute to different actors and events becomes important in terms of gaining a governmental legitimacy in the eyes of international community.

Coup attempts in history started in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They were described as insurgency and insurrection against the power. Contemporary meaning of a coup attempt as a movement of a group to takeover power in a state (Bartelson, 1997; pp. 323-346).

History, and especially the modern era, has witnessed several coup-attempts (some successful other unsuccessful) in different nations. This study will focus on two cases where the structure of the coup attempts is similar, in terms of both being attempts to topple democratically elected governments, but the relations with the US are different. It will include discussions and comparison for describing the similarities and differences between the US media's representation of two coup attempts.

In 2016, a coup attempt took place in Turkey which was led by several leaders in the Turkish army and officers in different military sections. Fethullah Gulen, a cleric who lives in USA, managing businesses and religious affairs has been accused for supporting the attempted coup (*CNN* 'Failed coup in Turkey: What you need to know' July 18, 2016). The putschists took over several key places in Istanbul, such as a domestic media station. However, this coup attempt failed by the reactions of the Turkish people and government. Turkey is a US ally led by a right-wing authoritarian and the reaction of US to the events has been commitment to silence and inaction (Zanotti, 2016).

Another older case, a coup attempt in Venezuela in 2002 occurred, led by Venezuelan military leaders and resulted in democratically elected president Hugo Chavez leaving the presidential palace and being arrested in a military base in the capital, Caracas, which created violent protests and bloody clashes that lasted three days. An interim transitional government was formed immediately, headed by Labour Minister Pedro Carmona. The army has taken full control of the situation in Venezuela. However, the coup attempt failed, and Chavez arrived at the Miraflores presidential palace from the island of Orchella, he was exiled after being overthrown (*CNN* 'Venezuela's Chavez back in power, calls for unity' April 14, 2002). Venezuela which is considered a threat to the US, and Chavez who was well known with his socialism has had tense relations with the US. The reaction of Washington was accusing President Chavez of responsibility for the coup d'état and promises to help those who they described as democratic forces in the country to "restore the basic elements of democracy" (*NYT* 'Uprising in Venezuela: The Government; Venezuela's Chief Forced to Resign; Civilian Installed' April 13, 2002).

The US government reacted differently to these two coup attempts. When being silent about the putschists' acts and announcing the hope for a future democratization in the Venezuelan case, the government showed a defense of the democratically elected government against the coup attempt in Turkey. This is something that brings further questions about how the US media presented the acts. The aim of the study is to get a deeper understanding of the media representation and framing of the coup attempts in Venezuela (2002) and Turkey (2016) by looking how the US media has been challenged regarding the presentation of the coup attempt assigning legitimacy to different acts and actors giving the US government's relations with the governments' of these two countries. The questions about which side being legitimate during coup attempts is important for the political science, because the discussions about coup d'états involves several aspects regarding the foundations of democracy. These events are profitable regarding the analysis of the definition of democracy, legitimacy, and how the media's presentation connects with foreign policy of specific countries. The periods during coup attempts affords new discussions about who is democratic and who is not.

This thesis will explain the question how the US mainstream media framed the coup attempts in Venezuela (2002) and Turkey (2016) by conducting a qualitative/comparative small-n case study. After a brief review of the literatures on media framing of foreign affairs and coup attempts, section 3 will introduce the theories of framing, agenda setting and media legitimacy that will be used in this study. In sections 5 and 6, research design, data selection and qualitative content analysis as the method of our analysis will be introduced. Last section will be our analysis where we analyze *CNN* and *NYT* reports and our conclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Media framing of foreign affairs

Most people's scope of foreign experiences and knowledge is limited so their opinions about social processes in foreign countries are affected by mass media. This situation creates a risk and threat of manipulation regarding the coverages. Michael Kunczik writes that there is no doubt about mass media influencing the way a country's people form their images of governments and of other countries (Kunczik, 1997 pp. 85-96).

The mass media has a huge role regarding how we are defining different people, cultures, languages and for opinions about political events. Noshina Saleem writes that the US media has a culture of promoting the government which affects the coverages of other countries regarding it is a "friendly country" or not. Saleem points out especially the cases where the US media has represented the Muslim countries in a very negative way because of seeing Islam as new threat after the fall of communism (Saleem, 2007). Saleem's argument about people not traveling and their thoughts about other countries being totally affected by how the media presents those countries is strengthening Michael Kunczik's argument.

Robert Entman's work is considered to be a great contribution to the studies of framing in general and framing of foreign events in particular. Entman writes about defining the significant elements of framing and what that could be supportive for US positions to the international issues and events. He develops a model of the framing process in news about foreign policy, especially the model of "cascading network activation" which will be explained more in the theoretical approach section. His model is about how activation spreads, and how particular frames get names or attributes in the media discourse. He argues that the governmental and presidential control over media framing is powerful in concentration on both culturally identical or culturally non-identical events, while the dubious events probably can create and open the argument which spread the counter frames. He does not focus continuously on the frames built around the events or on the essential characteristics of the event itself which formed by journalists and politicians (Entman 2004 pp. 123 - 155).

## **2.2 Media framing of the foreign coup attempts**

Media has always played a huge role when it comes to the American intervention of internal affairs of Latin American countries. According to John Kyle Day, the coup in 1954 in Guatemala showcased this argument where the US media presented the leader Arbenz as a communist who is dangerous for the rest of the Latin America. The US media continued the propaganda during the revolution and affected the public opinion in terms of making them believe that an American intervention was needed (Day, 2000). The author gives clear examples of the case in Guatemala, where the US media presented the event in discussible way.

A good example which showcased the other way around in comparison to the case of Guatemala was the coup attempt in Soviet Union, in 1991. Abbas Malek and Anandam P. Kavoori compared the American, Chinese and Taiwanese news frames about the coup attempt in the Soviet Union (SU) 1991. The coup was against president Michail Gorbachev who took the first steps regarding the democratization within the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was one of the more important actors regarding the end of the cold war which created an opposition within the SU. The authors explain the differentiations regarding the framing of the coup when it comes to American/Taiwanese point of view and the Chinese point of view. The US media covered the event as a coup and had very negative and emotional standpoint unlike the Chinese and Taiwanese news. The authors mention how the US media covered the event as an illegitimate and immoral act which shows the US media's ideologic interpretation of the coup attempt (Malek & Kavoori, 2000 pp.65-77). This case gives a good example of US media framing a coup attempt as an illegitimate way of gaining power which is completely different from their standpoint during the coup attempt in Guatemala as John Kyle Day represented.

## **2.3 Media framing of the coup attempt in Turkey**

The coverage of the Turkish coup attempt in 2016 in western media was quite ambiguous. The coverages during the same year were contradictory. According to Enes Bayrakli's report 'Orientalism Reloaded: How Western Media Covered the Coup Attempt in Turkey', the general idea that laid behind the coverages was western prejudice against the Turkish government and a continuation of the old-fashioned orientalism. Bayrakli means that western media focused more on the reaction of the Turkish government which was the captivation of different Gulenists and the people's violence against

the military on the streets rather than the coup attempt itself which killed 240 people. The author gives examples from *Fox News* covering the coup with the title “Friday night's failed coup was Turkey's last hope to stop the Islamization of its government and the degradation of its society.” He interprets these types of coverages as one-sided and connects it with orientalist frames of Muslim societies where the west sees the east as “the other” (SETA Report, 2016). The base of Bayrakli’s arguments is his thoughts about western media implementing neo-orientalism when presenting the coup attempt in Turkey. But his thoughts are more like a critic about the partiality within the western mass-media and does not involve any further explanations. The author does not discuss Turkey being an US ally or the earlier coverages before the events.

M. Hakan Yavuz and Rasim Koc also discuss US media coverage and tweets from well-known American reporters. The authors give example from the Fox News analyst Ralph Peter’s comments "If the coup succeeds, Islamists lose, and we win" and a report from *New York Post* where the author headlined "The Coup in Turkey Could Mean Hope". The authors mean that this kind of reports shows how the American mainstream media worked like “cheerleaders” for the coup attempt in Turkey (Yavuz & Koc, 2016). The arguments of the authors do showcase different examples where the US media and media representors framed the coup attempt in Turkey as something that was needed in terms of “re-democratization” of Turkey. The authors are criticizing the media’s act just like Bayrakli.

#### **2.4 Media framing of the coup attempt in Venezuela**

In his study of US media’s framing of Venezuelan coup attempt, Jules Boykoff argues that the agenda setting, priming and framing of the media are by-products of the networks of norms and values. Boykoff means that “First-order norms” of coverages include dramatization, personalization and novelty which we could clearly see in the US media during the coup attempt in Venezuela. The US media framed Hugo Chavez with the Dictator frame, the Castro disciple frame, the declining economy frame and the Meddler-in-the-region frame and with this way tried to affect the public opinion regarding the situation in Venezuela. The dramatizations were about how Chavez disrespected the democratic institutions, other leaders and the Venezuelan people. The author mentions that the US media showcased Hugo Chavez as a demagogic dictator reminiscent of Fidel Castro who is incompetent in political-economic arena and cannot keep his hands out of other people’s businesses. Boykoff means that many of these frames were unclear and unfounded regarding the reality (Boykoff, 2009).

The view on the Venezuelan coup attempt in 2002 has changed during different periods. Juliet Gill, Jesus Arroyave and Gonzalo Soruco write in their research 'Covering Chavez in U. S. media: How elite newspaper reports a controversial international figure' that the view on Chavez and the coup attempt was affected by the sources of information. The authors find that before and during the coup the sources of American media were the opposition of Chavez which gave them the "right" of framing Chavez as illegitimate and the opposition as legitimate. After the coup, different voices were arising against the coup attempt because of the "illegitimate way of taking the control". These voices changed the US government's attitude toward the coup and automatically the coverages in the USA changed their view and started to take the Chavez supporters as sources. But this time, the media used the agenda-setting and did not covered the situation in Venezuela as much as before which made the public forget about the illegitimate coup attempt. The authors mean that this case shows the relation between the US government and the US media (Gill, Arroyave & Soruco, 2006). The authors have done a longitudinal study and explains the changes for the reports. The presentations of Chavez and the opposition show some very interesting changes, but the research does not answer our research question where we compare the presentation of the coup attempt in Venezuela with the Turkish case.

Different scholars have studied western media framing of foreign affairs in different cases including coup attempts. But the interesting thing to point out is that we can rarely see a comparative study where we can get clearer and nuanced ideas about how the mass media of a specific country use particular frames in different cases depending on the foreign relations of the country. The comparison of two very different countries in terms of their relations with US, will give us a clearer knowledge whether there are any differentiations regarding the media framing of what happens in these countries. We have chosen the US media because the US is one of the bigger powers within the west. Another important point which makes us choose the case of US is that the foreign affairs of US tends to be on the front page and always discussed which makes the confrontation of the media's frames US media always current. By comparing the coverage of similar political events i.e. coup attempts in an US ally and a socialist Latin American country with bad relations with the US, we think that our results will be interesting in terms of understanding the connection between foreign policy and the mainstream media presentation in terms of framing legitimacy. The earlier literatures do not include an answer to our research question, but they involve some very useful aspects and theoretical approaches which will be used in this study.

### **3.Theoretical Approach**

The media has a huge role when it comes to how we as individuals see the world and reality. Choosing a case where the mass media is huge regarding the reach and a state which has the power to influence rest of the west-world will make it easier for us to see the media and foreign policy relation. The important question for us regarding the analysis is how the US media frames the coup attempts. How did the US media define president Chavez and president Erdogan, how did they define the putschists and their actions? are other important questions for our analysis. From these questions, we will analyze how the US media covered a coup attempt in a south American anti-US country with socialist ideological orientation and a coup attempt in a country which is ideologically right-wing and a US ally. Framing and agenda setting will be our tools providing the theoretical bases for our study. The frames will be driven from the theory of media legitimacy in order to explore the ways in which mainstream US media assigns legitimacy to particular actors and actions during coup attempts.

#### **3.1 Social Constructivism**

The influence of the media on the opinion of people about several social events and the coup attempts being one of them, are pegged in the theory of social constructivism which also will be the ontological theory of this research. This theory requires that the representation and language of social actor's constructs reality. As such, people have a tendency of presenting different phenomena and concepts through language (Spencer, 2017). The ontological position of the theory indicates that the meanings and definitions of words are not specific results to inference that those who control the words and language are very powerful. And in this way, the media plays a significant role in constructing the reality in the societies, where it has the ability to control the words and meanings in its reporting for a coup attempt. Additionally, according to Norris, Kern, & Just (2003), they have massive influence and thus alter the perceptions of people reading events. For instance, representing the events as a coup attempt or revolution, the actors as putschists, oppositions or rebels has been one of the ways in which the media has structured the reality. In specific, the media reports of the coup attempts have been linked to the legitimacy against dictatorship which has resulted in people recognizing and interpreting that putschists are related to democracy. Social constructivism

has two subcategories named as thick constructivism and thin constructivism. The thick constructivism standpoint presupposes that there cannot be an external reality which is not affected by our knowledge as well as perceptions. While thin constructivism, on the other hand, is linked to the idea that reality is a product of the language. Such theories attribute the media a critical role of altering perceptions and creating a new reality about the human relations (Hay, 2002 pp. 199)

### **3.2 Framing Theory**

The concept of framing systematically offers a way to explain the power of communicating text. People's awareness is constantly affected by the transfer of information from one location such as news report, novel or speech to that awareness. Basically, framing includes salience and selection. To frame is to select some definitions understanding reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to develop a significant problem definition, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation or causal interpretation for the aspect that is described. Frames focus on some information about an aspect that is the subject of a communication, thereby inspiring them in salience. The word salience means making a piece of information more memorable and noticeable to audiences. Text can make information more salient by linking them with culturally familiar symbols. However, even a single unillustrated attendance of a notion in ambiguous part of the text can be extremely salient, if it fits in an actual plan in a reader's belief systems (Entman 1993; pp. 51-58)

Entman's cascading activation model asserts that the current media forums have changed over time. Entman states that the media operates in a more complicated period that is still evolving and quite unpredictable. The framing theory and cascading activation model are linked together based on developing a clear conceptual framework (Entman 2004; pp.358). The framework is defined by the selection of some aspects of an event and further making connections that promote how they are interpreted and evaluated. However, the framing theory in illustrating the coup attempts to provide information based on what was evident in the disagreements rather than developing the conceptual framework. The government has a direct responsibility to ensure that they can maintain international relationships and alliances with other nations. Entman's model is a top-down approach that stipulates the government and state agencies' ability to influence how the journalists report about the world regarding

foreign policy (Entman 2004; p.359). Framing theory utilizes variables such as strategy, power, cultural affiliations and motivations in the spread of White House's desired frame to news outlets and the public (Schiller 2009; p.480). Foreign affairs coverage is under the presidential control when dealing with the flow of information through the media. According to Entman (2004; p.361), journalists have a professional obligation to ensure that they can incorporate foreign policy readings in their coverage. A column written in the *New York Times*, "A New Power in the Streets" describes the importance of the internet in conveying information. Foreign affairs coverage can benefit from minimal coverage; nonetheless data is currently more accessible via the internet. As a result, this might further encourage counter framing by the media.

### **3.3 Agenda-Setting Theory**

The media continues to use the set if agenda as a means of getting the attention of the public regarding pertinent issues. Agenda setting aims to focus on issues that have received constant media coverage since it is what attracts the attention of the public and the rest of the world (Littlejohn, and Foss 2009; p.31). The original foundation of agenda-setting theory is heuristics and speculative ideas rather than a theoretical approach. Recently, Wea, McCombs and Shaw suggested that framing and priming should be viewed as natural extensions of agenda-setting. Priming is more like an impact that the agenda-setting can have on the way individual citizens appraise public officials by affecting the thematic areas. Framing can be understood as an extension of agenda-setting where it is the selection of a number of thematically related features for involvement on the media agenda when a significant aspect or event is discussed. Agenda-setting theory explains the capability of influencing the importance located on the topics of the public agenda. The theory also attempts for making predictions, such as; if an issue is covered constantly and prominently, the readers will get the impression that the topic is more important (Scheufele, 2000).

### **3.4 Media Legitimacy**

The aspect of media legitimacy is about the media projection of judgements of legitimacy regarding certain organizations and actors. Media coverage tends to reach out to more people and have a greater meaning regarding the impact on public opinion compared with the

average opinion of the stakeholder. Media coverage is also an important source when it comes to forming certain observations of organizations which are the subject of the news amongst citizens. Media tends to act as a social transmitter which is able to shape the thoughts of the public, generate support and develop explanations which will make the readers use it to pass judgement. Carlos Rodriguez Perez argues that the media is a persuasive element of the society and considers media to propagate legitimacy by choosing the topics of coverage and affecting the public attention (Perez 2017, p. 171-172).

The concept and idea of legitimacy has been discussed differently among different scholars. Within the field of Political science is the legitimacy of an organization directly interconnected with authority and power borne of the electoral process. The winners of an electoral process obtain power over the people who voted for them, and the people feels a certain commitment and obligation to them. The legitimacy of public organizations within a democratic country is a critical aspect of life, because only with the help of legitimate organizations can one maintain the support from the citizens. A democratic structure gives an international and domestic legitimacy to a government. For instance, any democratic governments survival, depends on whether it provides sufficient legitimacy to the citizens or not (Lipset 1959, p. 69-105).

Democracy helps prevent a rule by vicious and harsh dictators, ensures a broader way of personal freedoms, guarantee citizens of a set of essential rights and provide the most opportunities for self-determination (McFaul 2004; p. 148-152).

Perez defines media legitimacy as an invisible abstraction, like freedom or justice. In this sense, the legitimacy within the field of organizational communication is connected to the public perceptions of an institution (Perez 2017, p. 172-173). He also argues that media tends to act as gatekeepers by selecting different cases and giving it a frame, it is plausible to draw relationships between the practice of framing the news by journalists and the intangible asset of media legitimacy. The news tends to incorporate political values that emerge with time, from the routines of gathering information to the recruitment of journalists and ideological assumptions shared by the public in general. Most of what people talks in the street about politics is directly connected to what they read and see in the news which makes the mass media more important regarding bringing knowledge and information to our households (Perez 2017, p. 173).

### 3.5 Subcategories of legitimacy

We divide our search for frames about the legitimacy. Our analysis focuses on three different aspects of legitimacy which will be the foundation of our analytical framework. The first subcategory of legitimacy is the *consequential* legitimacy. Perez relates the consequential legitimacy to what an organization has accomplished regarding the criteria which is specific for that organization. An example is whether the government is good for the people or not, or if the possible successors better for the people. Thereafter, the second subcategory that we focus on is the *procedural/structural* legitimacy. Perez explains that this form of legitimacy is obtained by an organization by observing to socially formalized and accepted procedures (e.g. regulatory oversight). This can also be about the actions of an organization being legitimate or not. If the case is about a government, the most important mean that gives it legitimacy is the democratic elections and whether it promises a relevant legitimacy for the people or not. The third category is the *personal* legitimacy. Perez relates this aspect to the legitimacy that is derived by the status or charisma of specific leaders and actors. The status of the leading actors is provided by their actions. If their actions are legitimate and presented in this way, then they are automatically being personally legitimate (Perez 2017, p. 175-176).

We use this structure as Carlos Dominguez Perez used when he was studying the legitimacy of the EU and relate them to our research about the media framing of legitimacy during coup attempts. The consequential legitimacy helps us focus more on the government's work regarding how the coup escalated and what the underlying reasons are. Procedural/structural legitimacy helps us with the studying how the public management processes of the states have been covered and how the governments have followed the socially accepted values. And thirdly, the personal legitimacy gives us deeper knowledges about the leaders and the coverage of their personality and decisions. By studying these different subcategories of media legitimacy, we will be able to answer our research question which is 'How did the US media frame the coup attempts in Venezuela (2002) and Turkey (2016)?' The subcategories will help us to demonstrate the frames in a more precise way and explain what they mean regarding painting a picture of the government or the putschists being legitimate or illegitimate.

### 3.6 Analytical Framework

	<b>Consequential legitimacy</b>	<b>Procedural/Structural legitimacy</b>	<b>Personal legitimacy</b>
Political system of the state. Degree of democracy and leader	Is the government good for the people?	Existing government legitimately elected, behaving properly or deserves to be undemocratically changed	Are the current leaders legitimate?
Coup act and putschists	Would the coup be legitimate in terms of the coup's effects on the people, will the coup be good for the people?	Coup/putschists actions are legitimate or illegitimate?	Are the putschist legitimate?

### **3.7 Definition of Coup d'état**

Coup d'état means dropping, overthrowing or deafening an existing government by violence from putschists. The main objective for a coup is to take control of all or a part of the army, police and other military elements, where these keys manage the government. The word d'état comes from French and this phrase refers to the blow against the state. The use of this concept started in the 17th century, but the modern and developed definition came in 1930.

In the article *The Democratic Coup d'Etat*, Ozan O. Varol writes an analytical study to defining the coup d'état as all the coups have features as anti-democratic. The main goal of a coup is to bring down a new regime or leadership, so the putschists (coup plotters) place the military power or the apex of a state by threat of force (Varol, 2012). He also argues that some of the coups can include some democratic features, an example can be to bring democracy to a dictatorship. But this does not reduce the reality of a coup attempt being illegitimate according to Varol. Up to this time, the discussions and debates about the coup attempts are continuing by pointing out which side is democratic, and which is anti-democratic. For instance, by considering that an existed regime is an elected and legitimated regime, the putschists become anti-democratic.

### **3.8 How the theories are used**

Combining framing theory with the concept of media legitimacy we will interpret the meaning of the US media frames. We use framing theory, agenda-setting theory and the media legitimacy for creating a basis for our analytical framework. We will search for specific features within the news reports and interpret them from a social constructivist standpoint. The principle aim is to apply the theories for making a descriptive analysis about the "created reality". We are comparing two different coup attempts and by applying the concept of media legitimacy we explore how the US media have framed these two events regarding the legitimacy, it attributed to different actors and actions in the coup attempts. Consequential, procedural/structural and personal legitimacy will help us to find the resulting picture in terms of rating certain actors, actions and also coup attempts as legitimate or illegitimate. The subcategories will help us to compare the two cases more specifically and getting reliable results.

## **4. Specified Aim and Research Questions**

Our aim with this thesis is to compare two coup attempts, the one in Turkey in 2016 and in Venezuela in 2002. The fact that Turkey is led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a right-wing authoritarian leader who is also pro-US, and Venezuela by Hugo Chavez, a left-wing authoritarian and an anti-US leader, makes the two cases very different not only in the sense of political ideology but also in terms of foreign policy. This makes the study providing a valuable knowledge in terms of the legitimacy attributed the coup attempts which are similar in terms of being against democratically elected governments.

### **Research question**

How did the mainstream US media frame the coup attempts in Venezuela (2002) and Turkey (2016)?

### **Sub-questions**

How did the mainstream US media frame the consequential legitimacy of the coup/failure?

How did the mainstream US media frame the structural/procedural legitimacy of the two states as the cause of coup?

How did the mainstream US media frame the personal legitimacy of the actors?

## **5. Method and Research Design**

In order to answer our descriptive research questions and carry out our deductive approach we will use the different theories as a ground for gathering data and analyzing our results.

Our research is about the media framing of two coup attempts which makes a qualitative, small N approach obvious for us. The methods that we're going to use will be deeply affected of the qualitative approach which is very suitable for analyzing the US media deeply regarding the cases that we have chosen. We will distribute the concept of legitimacy on 3 subcategories, consequential legitimacy, procedural/structural legitimacy and personal legitimacy for analyzing our sources properly and get more specific results.

A qualitative small N approach involves small opportunities for making a generalization of the results. It is a small number of cases which will be studied in a qualitative manner, which means that the external validity is not the focus point regarding this study. Instead, the internal validity is the main focus point, because we are targeting a significant issue and making an in-deep analysis about the issue which makes the researcher to constantly focusing and attaching on the significant problematization (Silverman, 2011 p. 414-417).

The reliability in qualitative studies is mostly about being thorough, honest and careful when carrying out the research (Robson 2002, p. 176). The use of the chosen theories and the concept of media legitimacy will help us to stick to our plan and make the study reliable in sense of getting the same results in several trials. Another aspect which will help us is the demarcation of the period. We will analyze news articles from the coup day until after one year which delimits the number of articles that will be covered in our analysis. The time difference between the two incidents (14 years) did not have any negative effects on the content of the media framing. The time difference played a role, which is how the news spread and its speed to reach the public opinion. This has played a key role in increasing the glow of any news and making it salient or hide the salient of news and reduce the noise around it. This could mean some changes regarding the results (Ohlsson 2018, p. 8-36).

### **5.1 Comparative Small-n Case Study**

A small-n case study provides an in-depth study of a particular rather than a comprehensive statistical survey or a sweeping comparative inquiry. It is more likely to be used to narrow

down a broad field of studies into one or a few researchable aspects or examples (Halperin & Heath, 2012: 208). This type of research is also useful for testing the applicability of different theories in the real world. It is specifically suitable when not much is known about a specific phenomenon or case. The small-n case study provides an understanding about a complex issue through definite contextual analyses of a limited amount of conditions and different relationships. This design will help us apply several methodologies and rely on a variety of sources when investigating our research problem. We will strengthen and develop what is already known by the previous researches by comparing two different cases. Small-n case study involves a design which is not capable of bringing reliable results for generalizing the data, but our focus is not on generalizing, rather to describe how the US media frames the two coup attempts (Halperin & Heath, 2012: 208).

## **5.2 Case Selection**

The case selection is an important aspect when it comes to comparing two different cases. Our study involves discussion and comparison for describing the similarities and differences between how the US mainstream media presented two coup attempts. For making the study more interesting, we have decided to analyze two different countries with leaders/governments that are ideologically different and have varied relations with the US. We choose to analyze Turkey and Venezuela where the coup attempts had a similar structure in terms of the attempt to topple democratically elected governments, but the relations with the US are different. Turkey being a US ally (in NATO), having a right-wing government as opposed to Venezuela having a strained relationship with the US and having left-wing government (Armbruster, 2019) and (Kozloff, 2007).

## **5.3 Qualitative Approach**

A qualitative research is an exploratory research which is used to gain understanding of underlying reasons, motivations and opinions in different cases. It provides insights to the problematizations or helps regarding the development of new hypothesis which can be counted quantitatively. Our research is very specific and a topic for itself, which means that we need firstly understand it deeply and search for different meanings that gives an overall picture about the integrity (Merriam, 1995).

Our standpoint is social constructivism which makes us believe that the reality is socially constructed, which we also think is the case regarding how the US media interprets different events. We think that our method of making a qualitative research and focusing on how the legitimacy has been presented in the coverages of the coup attempts is the correct way for getting results regarding the validity and reliability. By specifying our research with the question of legitimacy and using the theory of media legitimacy with different subcategories when analyzing the frames, we will get results that answers our problematizations. The advantages of using a qualitative approach is that subjects and issues can be evaluated in detail and in depth. The findings are gathered from few cases which means that the outcomes cannot be generalized which also means the external validity is low, but the findings can be transferred to another setting. Another advantage is that the framework of our research can be revised quickly if new information and findings emerges which makes it easier for us. The qualitative approach has good qualities regarding the internal validity because we are targeting an issue and make in-deep analysis about this issue which makes us follow the problematization and not jump over to other fields of issues. Interpretations may involve differentiations since the thoughts of the researcher can bring different results. The presence of the researcher during the data gathering is unavoidable which can create problems regarding the reliability (Silverman, 2011 p. 414-417). An important point regarding the reliability is the choice of the sources. As mentioned, before we have chosen to focus on the mainstream media where the reports reach out to more people compared to lower ranked news sources.

#### **5.4 Data Selection**

Regarding our results, we would like to debate however the representations will have an effect of general public sense and consider on reality concerning the employment of discussable ideas. The two coup attempts have been represented internationally with several perspectives where each serves the state or the interests that the media platform belong to. For our research, we chose to use two different news sources to analyze the representation of the events which are *New York Times* and *CNN*. *New York Times* is a newspaper while *CNN* is cable news (channel), and both are considered to be one of the primary sources for news in the US (Baker, Aldrich & Nina 2006, p. 224) and (Morris 2007, p. 711).

By choosing the mainstream media, and both cable news and newspaper, our research will involve different sources. Mainstream media refers to television, conventional newspapers and other news sources that most people know about and respect as reliable sources. The mainstream media does influence a lot of people, and both shapes and reflects currents of thought (Chomsky, 1997). We read 40 articles, 20 from *NYT* and 20 from *CNN* describing the coup attempts in Turkey in 2016 and in Venezuela in 2002. By comparing what these sources have written about the two cases will conclude and answer our research question. The articles that we choose are from the “coup day” until after one year. This will give us a more general view of the American mainstream media, where we can interpret the frames which influence a lot of people. *NYT* and *CNN* are also called the elite media or the agenda-setting media (Chomsky, 1997). This means that they have a lot of resources and they set the network which everyone else operates. This makes the *NYT* and *CNN* media more important regarding to get a general view of the totality of the American media.

## **5.5 Content Analysis**

Content analysis is the technique of research used for making valid and replicable inferences by coding and interpreting textual materials (Bhattacharjee 2012; p. 115-116). By structurally evaluating texts, qualitative data can be converted to the quantitative data. Content analysis is valuable when it comes to examining organizational behavior and social trends. The technique of content analysis is very suitable for our research because it fulfils the requirements of the research aim and questions. It gives us the opportunity to make a research that is valid, because we are analyzing the data in-deep and are making our assumptions regarding our specific research question. A problem that may create a risk regarding the reliability is that the interpretations can differ and create different outcomes. But by combining our theories with our demarcated aim and questions our results will be reliable (Duriau, Reger & Pfarrer, 2007). The trustworthiness of content analysis depends on how rich, appropriate and well-saturated the data is. Therefore, the process of data collection, analysis and the reporting of results are interconnected. The improvement of the validity, reliability and trustworthiness begins with preparation prior to the research which requires good qualities when it comes to gathering the data. The results of qualitative content analyses are often reported as monograph-reports and there is a need of further study (Elo, Kääräinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utrainen & Kyngäs, 2014).

## 6. Analysis

Our analysis covers different examples from different articles from newspapers and cable news (channel). We have chosen *CNN* as cable news and *New York Times* as newspaper. We read 20 articles from *CNN* and 20 articles from *New York Times* for the coup attempt in Turkey and the coup attempt in Venezuela. The articles that we will chose will be posted in the section of the coup day and 1 year ahead and we will interpret these articles by focusing on the framing of different aspects of the coup attempts by using different concepts of legitimacy *consequential*, *procedural/structural* and *personal*. Consequential legitimacy refers to whether the government is good for the people or not and would the putschist be good for the people. Procedural/structural legitimacy is about the existing government being legitimately elected or deserves to be undemocratically changed, and whether the putschists actions are legitimate or not. Personal legitimacy is focusing on the framing of the legitimacy of individual actors like leaders and putschists. We will use these subcategories of media legitimacy in order to find the answers for our questions.

### 6.1 Venezuela

#### 6.1.1 Legitimacy of existing government

##### Consequential legitimacy

*CNN* and *NYT* which presented the coup attempt in Venezuela in 2002, have pointed out Hugo Chavez for being responsible for the domestic crisis. The articles are united regarding the presentation of the government's acts with the issues of corruption, autocracy and politicizing the military. The statements are giving examples and blaming the government for not being legitimate and not being good leaders for the Venezuelan people.

*CNN.com* posted the article 'Venezuela's Chavez back in power, calls for unity' in 14<sup>th</sup> April 2002, summarizing the 48 hour long domestic crisis and coup attempt in Venezuela. We can clearly recognize some comments that are discussible regarding how the acts have been presented. Very important statements regarding the consequential legitimacy could be found within the comments of the National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice:

*Sunday, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said she hoped Chavez would listen to his countrymen now that he has been restored to power. "I hope that ... he understands this is the time for him to reflect on how Venezuela got to where it is. He needs to respect constitutional processes. This is no time for a witch hunt. This is time for national reconciliation in Venezuela," Rice told NBC's "Meet the Press." She added, "We do hope that Chavez recognizes that the whole world is watching and that he takes advantage of this opportunity to right his own ship, which has been moving, frankly, in the wrong direction for quite a long time" (CNN 'Venezuela's Chavez back in power, calls for unity' April 14, 2002).*

The comments of Condoleezza Rice constitute a bigger part of the article and gives us a lot of material regarding the discussions about the presentations and framing of the actors. Rice blames Chavez and his government for not doing a good job when she mentions that "the ship has been moving, frankly, in the wrong direction for quite a long time". This statement gives us the idea that Chavez has not been a great leader and the crisis in Venezuela is a result of his and his ministers' bad decisions.

*The military officers have accused Chavez' government of corruption and charged that poverty rates tripled under his rule. They also decried the government's practice of raiding opposition members' homes (CNN 'Venezuela takes over Caracas police' November 16, 2002).*

By focusing on the opposition's arguments about the government being corrupt, increasing poverty and politicization of the military, the article paints a picture of the government not being good for the people and being illegitimate in terms of consequential legitimacy.

An article was posted in the *New York Times* on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2002 with the title "Hugo Chavez Departs". At this time, the Venezuelan president Chavez had been forced out of power by the armed forces.

*This week's crisis began with a general strike against replacing professional managers at the state oil company with political cronies. It took a grave turn Thursday when the armed Chavez supporters fired on peaceful strikers, killing at least 14 and injuring hundreds. Mr. Chavez's response was characteristic. He forced five private television stations off the air for showing pictures of the massacre (NYT 'Hugo Chavez departs' April 13, 2002)*

The leadership of President Chavez is presented as illegitimate due to the effects that are faced by the citizens. Firstly, the fact that there were demonstrations shows that the people of the country were not satisfied with his rule. The demonstrations mean that there was a need to amend some of the issues that the citizens demanded. Additionally, the killings of the demonstrators who are argued to have been peaceful shows how the leadership had negative effects on the public. Moreover, by forcing television stations to end the telecast also portray his autocratic leadership which means that his rule is bad for the people.

The article 'Uprising in Venezuela: The Government; Venezuela's Chief Forced to Resign; Civilian Installed' from *New York Times*, presented the situation in the country after the resignation of president Chavez.

*On the streets of this sprawling capital, opponents of the government took to the streets in the early morning hours, honking horns and waving the gold, blue and red of the Venezuelan flag. El Universal, a leading newspaper here, hailed the end with these words, "It's over!" (NYT 'Uprising in Venezuela: The Government; Venezuela's Chief Forced To Resign; Civilian Installed' April 13, 2002)*

Even though Chavez and his government were elected democratically, this statement gives the assumption that the government deserves to be changed, whether it is elected or not. People cheering and domestic newspapers being happy with the resignation of Chavez shows that the people were unhappy with the rule. Mentioning the topic "It's over!" is a dramatization of the situation, telling the readers that the rule was so harsh that the people cheered the resignation of Chavez which also means that the government was bad for the people.

### **Procedural/Structural legitimacy**

Very few articles have mentioned that the existing government has been legitimately elected through democratic elections. We could instead find statements which blames the government for the deaths of the protestors. The former examples about the autocratic rule and corruption are valid for this section too. The government's actions have been presented as undemocratic and illegitimate, which gives the readers the conclusion that the government can only be changed with undemocratic means.

CNN.com posted the article 'Venezuela's Chavez back in power, calls for unity' in 14<sup>th</sup> April 2002, summarizing the 48 hour long domestic crisis and coup attempt in Venezuela. We can

clearly recognize some comments that are interesting regarding how the acts have been presented, such as the illegitimate actions of government to stay in power.

*Chavez was forced from office by military leaders after he ordered the army to quell anti-government protests, killing 12 demonstrators, opposition leaders and the U.S. State Department said (CNN 'Venezuela's Chavez back in power, calls for unity' April 14, 2002).*

This paragraph tells us the opposition's view on the events during the coup attempt, but we cannot find comments about the view of Chavez supporters or a general background information to what really happened in Caracas, 11<sup>th</sup> April. Francisco Toro wrote in *New York Times* in 2012 that the events in 11<sup>th</sup> April was a chaos where the pro and anti-Chavez protestors fought each other. The military did get involved and the result was 19 deaths involving both Chavez supporter and anti-Chavez protestors. It is still uncertain if it was Chavez that was behind the shooting or not (Toro, 2012). But the assumption and the overall picture that we get from this paragraph is that Chavez and his government used the military to kill 12 protestors, which gives us the conclusion that the government is using illegitimate and undemocratic actions for silencing the protestors. This can be clearly connected to procedural/structural legitimacy where Chavez and his government deserves to be forced out of office by the military leaders because they gave the order for the shootings.

The article 'Chavez supporter protests coup ruling' also offered some statements that can be discussed in connection to procedural/structural legitimacy, accusing Chavez and his supporters for the deaths in April 11.

*Accusations emerged that government supporters, under orders from the Chavez government, had fired on the demonstrators. That set off more street protests (CNN 'Chavez supporter protests coup ruling' August 14, 2002)*

It is possible to recognize that this time the report does not accuse the military but define it like "government supporters". This statement is also accusing the government ordering to fire on the demonstrators which is connected to procedural/structural legitimacy in sense of the government rule via illegitimate means, which means it deserves to be toppled. A government that lays behind 12 deaths of protestors is an illegitimate government that cannot be changed through legitimate means and can only be changed in an undemocratic way.

Additionally, another article posted in the *New York Times* on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2002 titled "Ex-Leader of Venezuela Predicts Coup against Chavez" also has some statements which can be related to procedural/structural legitimacy.

*Mr. Perez said he had no hope of a negotiated solution, saying that the situation in Venezuela had reached an extreme allowing no way out except for "the presence of the military in power" (NYT 'Ex-Leader of Venezuela Predicts Coup against Chavez' August 11, 2002).*

Perez was the former president before Chavez came into power. However, Perez is not happy with the leadership portrayed by Chavez and, therefore, he mentions that nothing could solve the extreme problems Venezuela is facing, except the presence of the military in power. By presenting Perez's thoughts about the putschist military being better for Venezuela than the rule of Chavez, the article gives a picture of Chavez and his government deserving to be undemocratically changed for the Venezuelan people.

### **Personal Legitimacy**

The framing of Chavez being an illegitimate leader can be identified throughout every article and almost every time the articles mention his name, but the most certain example can be found in the article 'White House says it didn't support Venezuela coup'.

*The United States has frequently been at odds with Chavez, a left-wing populist friendly to the regimes of Fidel Castro in Cuba and Saddam Hussein in Iraq (CNN 'White House says it didn't support Venezuela coup' April 17, 2002).*

By associating Hugo Chavez with Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein who already are hated in the US, the report is portraying president Chavez as illegitimate and cogitable regarding the aspects of democracy. Explaining his left-wing orientation is also a clear delegitimizing frame regarding the personal legitimacy, since "left-wing" is a pejorative word in the US in and of itself (Eisinger, Veenstra & Koehn 2007).

*Since taking office in 1998, Chavez had faced growing protests from many in Venezuela who opposed his autocratic rule (CNN 'Chavez supporter protests coup ruling' August 14, 2002)*

Defining Chavez as an autocrat leads to several legitimacy questions and also means that he is an illegitimate leader as enlightened by CNN's article 'Chavez supporter protests coup ruling'. Chavez being autocratic means that he is an illegitimate leader. The word autocratic also damages the status of Chavez being democratically elected. The growing protests from many also defines Chavez being a bad leader regarding the personal legitimacy.

*They blamed Chavez for politicizing the country's military and said the president wanted to replace the armed forces with his own paramilitary forces (CNN 'Venezuela takes over Caracas police' November 16, 2002).*

This statement is also a good example of the framing of the personal legitimacy of president Chavez. Accusing Chavez and his government for politicizing the military is directly telling the readers that Chavez is a dictator and using means that are connected to corruption. A dictator does not deserve to have the rule and could be undemocratically changed, because he is himself undemocratic.

*Mr. Chávez, 47, a firebrand populist who had said he would remake Venezuela to benefit the poor, was obligated to resign in a meeting with three military officers about 3 a.m. today after large street protests on Thursday in which at least 14 people were killed by gunmen identified as his supporters (NYT, 'Uprising in Venezuela: The government; Venezuela's chief forced to resign; civilian installed' April 13, 2002)*

This was another example from another article from NYT which questions the leadership of Hugo Chavez. The statement 'a firebrand populist' is giving an impression of Chavez not being a legitimate leader. By accusing his supporters for the deaths during the domestic crisis it is also giving a bad picture of his rule and his status as a leader.

The *New York Times* article "Hugo Chavez Departs" portrays Chavez in a similar way which can be commented regarding the personal legitimacy.

*Mr. Chavez, a ruinous demagogue, stepped down after the military intervened and handed power to a respected business leader, Pedro Carmona (NYT 'Hugo Chavez departs' April 13, 2002).*

Portraying Chavez as a ruinous demagogue and Pedro Carmona as a respected business leader in the same sentence gives a picture of Pedro Carmona being better for the Venezuelan people

than president Hugo Chavez hence, he is more legitimate as a leader. Demagogue means to use irrelevant arguments for gaining power during propagandas and political elections. A demagogic leader does this by targeting the emotions of the people within the rhetoric and in that way gain their trust whether he is good for the people or not (Bormann, 2009).

Framing Chavez as a demagogue means that he is a good speaker, but not a good leader for his people in reality.

### **6.1.2 Legitimacy of Putschists**

#### **Consequential legitimacy**

The presentation of the putschists for the Venezuelan coup attempt has been weak compared to the presentation of government, since the articles are generally explaining and presenting the government's role in the domestic crisis. The reports do not use the word putschists and chose to define it with words like 'rebellious military' or only 'opposition' which means a lot regarding the framing of all three subcategories of the legitimacy. By not using the word putschists or coup attempters and by not mentioning the opposition's role in the deaths of protestors, the articles showed that the coup attempt would be legitimate in terms of consequential legitimacy, because the government was not good for the people, not changeable through democratic means due to the killings of the opposition, and deserves to be changed by the 'opposition'

The article 'Provisional Venezuelan President Resigns' mentions the first goal of the interim president Pedro Carmona.

*Flanked by the nation's top military commanders, Carmona pledged in a television address Friday to hold elections and rehire state oil company employees fired by Chavez (CNN 'Provisional Venezuelan President Resigns' April 13, 2002).*

Rehiring the state oil company's employees fired by Chavez clearly states the consequential legitimacy of the new government. This presentation can be understood as a clear separation of the new government and the old government where the new being better for the people than the old. Rehiring the employees fired by Chavez, is an act which shows that the new government will be better for the people. By mentioning this, the statement paints a consequentially legitimate picture of the putschists. Another article 'US: Chavez provoked the

crisis that led to ouster' similarly emphasized the new government's intentions to hold elections.

*The new government announced Friday that it would hold elections within a year (CNN 'US: Chavez provoked crisis that led to ouster' April 12, 2002)*

This statement clearly reflects that the new government (which took the power in an illegitimate way) is defending democratic means because they will hold elections within a year. Democracy is one of the foundations for the government being consequentially legitimate and the elections is one of the most important aspects for a democracy. By mentioning the willingness of the new government to hold elections the report shows the putschists as consequentially legitimate, since the coup will ultimately be good for the people and it will open the way for more democracy.

*Mr. Carmona was tapped by military officers and leaders of the anti-Chávez movement to take the helm after he had been leading the opposition. Since last summer, Mr. Carmona has headed Fedecámaras, an association of leading businesses. Mr. Chávez's left-leaning economic policies and autocratic style antagonized much of the business class (NYT 'Uprising in Venezuela: Man in the news; Manager and Concilator—Pedro Carmona Estanga' April 13, 2002)*

The statement from *NYT* mentions Pedro Carmona being the leader for an association of leading businesses and president Chavez's autocratic style and left-leaning economic policies antagonizing of the business class in Venezuela. The picture that we get is Pedro Carmona being a better contender of leading the economy of Venezuela, in comparison to Hugo Chavez. The resulting assumption is that Pedro Carmona and his government who are putschists are better for the Venezuelan people than Hugo Chavez and his government.

### **Procedural/Structural legitimacy**

The general presentation of the putschists and their acts is questionable. The articles have not used words like putschist or plotters when describing the putschist and they blame Chavez, his government and his supporters for the deaths of the protestors which means that the readers get the impression that the putschists have procedural/structural legitimacy.

In the article 'White House says it didn't support Venezuela coup' *CNN* presents the failed coup attempt as an opposition movement:

*The New York Times reported Tuesday that senior members of the Bush administration met several times in recent months with leaders of the coalition that briefly toppled Chavez from power (CNN 'White House says it didn't support Venezuela coup' April 17, 2002)*

This was one of the very few mentions of the opposition. It is not possible to find any mention of "putschists", or "coup attempters". The statement calls the putschists 'leaders of the coalition' and defines the coup attempt as the coalition leaders 'briefly toppled Chavez from power'. We can connect this to procedural/structural legitimacy in sense of the acts of the opposition being legitimate. The putschists being only leaders of coalition and their act just briefly toppling Chavez from power tells us that the putschists acts and the coup not involving any stronger illegitimate means. Their meeting with the Bush administration also gives the putschists legitimacy as being accepted as the representators of Venezuela by the US government.

The earlier example for the consequential legitimacy from the article 'US: Chavez provoked crisis that led to ouster' can also be discussed when it comes to the procedural/structural legitimacy. By mentioning the idea of holding elections within a year the report tries to give a picture of what really is illegitimate:

*The new government announced Friday that it would hold elections within a year (CNN 'US: Chavez provoked crisis that led to ouster' April 12, 2002)*

The elections mean that the acts of the putschists are legitimate because they are giving the power of choosing the government to the Venezuelan people which also works as a veil for the coup attempt.

*A transitional government headed by a leading businessman replaced President Hugo Chávez today, hours after military officers forced him to resign. It was a sudden end to the turbulent three-year reign of a mercurial strongman elected on promises to distance his country from the United States while uprooting Venezuela's old social order (NYT 'Uprising in Venezuela: The government; Venezuela's chief forced to resign; Civilian installed' April 13, 2002).*

This statement from *NYT* explains the plot as military officers forcing Chavez to resign. We can again not find the word “putschists” or “plotters”. The government of Pedro Carmona is defined as a transitional government and the rule of Chavez being turbulent. The article also mentions Chavez as a strong man who promises to distance his country from the US. These statements indicate and defines the coup attempt in a lenient way by not calling the actors putschists and by mentioning Chavez’s promises for holding distance with the US, the readers get the idea that the new government headed by the businessman Pedro Carmona could be more legitimate.

### **Personal Legitimacy**

The article ‘US: Chavez provoked crisis that led to ouster’ gave a picture of the interim president Pedro Carmona which clearly is showing the putschists as legitimate.

*Pedro Carmona Estanga, the head of Venezuela's largest business association, has been named the leader of an interim government. The president of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Carmona was one of the most visible leaders of the opposition movement to Chavez (CNN ‘US: Chavez provoked crisis that led to ouster’ April 12, 2002).*

Being the head of Venezuela’s largest business association, president of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the most visible leader of the opposition movement sounds nothing else than positive in sense of the personal legitimacy of one of the leading actors regarding the opposition side. This paints a liberal picture of Pedro Carmona, which is positive compared to Chavez being associated with the left-wing. The statement is over again not calling the putschists as putschists but as ‘opposition’. By combining this with the presentation of Pedro Carmona we can clarify that the article has presented one of the leaders of the coup attempt as personally legitimate.

*New York Times* has presented the leaders similarly.

*Mr. Carmona was tapped by military officers and leaders of the anti-Chávez movement to take the helm after he had been leading the opposition. Since last summer, Mr. Carmona has headed Fedecámaras, an association of leading businesses. Mr. Chávez's left-leaning economic policies and autocratic style antagonized much of the business class (NYT ‘Uprising in Venezuela: Man in the news; Manager and Conciliator—Pedro Carmona Estanga’ April 13, 2002).*

The article compares the two leaders and mentions Pedro Carmona being the leader of Fedecarmas, and Chavez having left-leaning economic policies and an autocratic style. This context refers to Pedro Carmona being a more legitimate actor and better for the people compared to Chavez who is autocratic and has left-leaning economic policies.

## **6.2 Turkey**

### **6.2.1 Legitimacy of existing government**

#### **Consequential legitimacy**

Regarding the legitimacy discussion for the Turkish coup attempt, we can see a change within the reports over time. We have recognized that the date of the reports is important because the articles do not have the same clarity in the later reports compared to the early reports. The earlier articles have dramatized the coup attempt by mentioning the tanks, jets and the deaths of civilians while the later articles have focused on the arrests of the people which the government blames for being involved in the coup. Therefore, the government was firstly framed as consequentially legitimate, but the later articles painted another picture which gives the impression of illegitimacy. The article ‘The tragedy of Turkey’s attempted coup’, for instance, which is one of the earlier articles, summarizes the events and means that this coup attempt could mean a destabilization of a stable and a partly democratic country.

*The military action, the results of which are still unclear, took Turkey out of Europe and placed it squarely in the Middle East. It tore away the country's stability, replacing polarization with what could end up being outright civil war, whether the coup succeeds or not (CNN ‘The tragedy of Turkey’s attempted coup’ July 16, 2016).*

The main statement to focus on in this example is the ‘country’s stability’. If a country is stable, it means that the government does a relatively good job, which also means that the government is consequentially legitimate. Turkey being in Europe and being placed in the Middle East after the coup is also a statement which explains Turkey as a European country with some certain democratic features which further means that the government is good for the people. The statement also mentions that the coup attempt could result in civil war, which means that it can bring the most unwanted scenario for the Turkish people. This is another

good example of, why the coup and the putschists are bad and the government good for the future of the Turkish citizens.

One of *New York Time's* earlier articles explained the situation similarly.

*The attempted coup, as it unfolded, suggested an alarming unraveling for a country that is seen in the West as a crucial partner in the fight against terrorism and an anchor of stability in a region full of trouble (NYT 'As Turkey Coup Unfolded, 'the Whole Night Felt Like Doomsday' July 16, 2016).*

This statement also mentions Turkey's stability in an unstable region. It shows the legitimacy of the existing government in the sense of serving the people in a right way in difficult circumstances because of the regional problems. Being an anchor of stability in the middle-east is not an easy job, which also means that the government is doing a good job.

The article 'Failed coup in Turkey: What you need to know' which is one of the earlier articles, presented president Erdogan and his government in a positive way, giving the appearance of relative legitimacy:

*Erdogan is loved and worshiped by a good half of the country. The other half detests him passionately. (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: What you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

*But coups have gone out of fashion in Turkey, which previously had a record of 10-year coup cycles and poor economic performance that may have swayed even those who aren't really fond of Erdogan to support him against the would-be junta (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: What you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

These statements describe the support to the president from a good half of the country, which also showcases that he is relatively consequentially legitimate because he has the majority behind him and is democratically elected. A democratically elected government which appears as relatively legitimate should not be undemocratically changed. Even the other half that detests him passionately, supported Erdogan because of the illegitimacy of the coup attempt. A legitimately elected president leading the country is better than a coup regime referring to the earlier example from 'The tragedy of Turkey's attempted coup' which mention the possibility of a "civil war".

But the articles which were posted later after the coup attempt brings up a new dimension to

the discussion. The articles are now discussing the arrests and gives a consequentially illegitimate picture of the government.

*Almost 9,000 police officers fired. Like firing every police officer in Philadelphia, Dallas, Detroit, Boston and Baltimore (NYT 'The Scale of Turkey's Purge Is Nearly Unprecedented' August 2, 2016).*

*21,000 private school teachers suspended. Like revoking the licenses of every third teacher in private elementary and high schools across the United States (NYT 'The Scale of Turkey's Purge Is Nearly Unprecedented' August 2, 2016).*

*The reassertion of power has been swift with mass arrests, detentions and dismissals of suspected coup plotters (CNN 'This is how many people Turkey has arrested since the failed coup' August 13, 2016).*

*Nine months on from the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, authorities continue to detain and arrest people who, they say, are linked to the attempted uprising. According to Turkish state media, the failed bid claimed the lives of 249 people, including 36 alleged coup plotters (CNN '47,155 arrests: Turkey's post-coup crackdown by the numbers' April 15, 2017).*

These articles discuss the detentions and arrests of people 'who, they say, are linked to the attempted uprising'. Comparing these to the first articles we can clearly see a change when it comes to the presentation of the government. The first articles discuss and present the stability and the support for the government which gave more legitimate picture regarding the consequential legitimacy, because this clarifies that the government is democratically elected and doing a good job regarding the stability. But this time the focus lays on the arrests and mentioning 'who, they say, are linked to the coup' gives a more unclear picture of the government being legitimate, because the readers are expected to assume that the arrests of a huge amount of people cannot be good for the people. By also mentioning the swift reassertion of power the article puts forward an idea about the government using the coup attempt as an excuse for arresting the opposition and gaining more power which also means that the government staying in power has not been good for the people.

### **Procedural/Structural legitimacy**

When it comes to the procedural/structural legitimacy, we have recognized some very clear

differences comparing *NYT* articles with *CNN* articles. *CNN* have chosen to focus on the support of Erdogan and his government, which means a legitimacy in the sense of being democratically elected, while *NYT* have focused more on the growing Islamism with Erdogan being the leader against secularism.

*Until Friday afternoon, Turkey remained a competent and stable, if problematic, country that served as a buffer between Europe and the imploding Middle East and a partner for the United States. It suffered from terrorist attacks like European countries and shared a world where solidarity could be demonstrated by Facebook posts and projecting the Turkish flags on national monuments (CNN 'The tragedy of Turkey's attempted coup' July 16, 2016).*

*In a rare display of cross-regional reach, Erdogan supporters straddle the entirety of Turkey. While opposition leaders and parties tend to be regionally restricted, Erdogan has supporters in large and small cities as well as across rural parts of Turkey (CNN 'Failed Coup in Turkey: What you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

These examples give a clear idea about the government doing a good job in terms of securing legitimacy and does not deserve to be undemocratically changed. The results of the coup are nothing else than bad for a country which is partly European, stable and competent. The second statement explains the popularity of president Erdogan and his government, which also means that he and his government are democratically elected which gives them procedural/structural legitimacy. Comparing these statements with examples from *NYT*, we can clearly see the differences.

*Members of the military, once the guardians of the country's secular traditions who successfully pulled off three coups last century, were being rounded up and tossed in jail, and other perceived enemies were being purged from the state bureaucracy. The Islamists, meanwhile, were dancing in the streets (NYT 'Erdogan Triumphs After Coup Attempt, but Turkey's Fate Is Unclear' July 17, 2016).*

Blaming president Erdogan with arresting secularist members of military which have pulled off three coups and meaning that his supporter are Islamists gives a bad picture of him and his government. Using Islamism when defining the Erdogan side and mentioning his hostility against secularism frames his government as illegitimate. The readers get the thought that the leading actors are undemocratic and therefore could be changed with undemocratic means.

## **Personal legitimacy**

The articles have shown different perceptions of president Erdogan and have discussed his way of ruling in different ways. But generally, within the *CNN* articles, the popularity of the president has been involved in every article but also in some articles, we could find statements about his autocratic rule and using the coup attempt as argument for arresting opposition actor for gaining more power. *NYT* on the other hand, has continued to frame Erdogan as an offender of secularism. Summarizing the examples, we can over again say that *CNN* has presented Erdogan more leniently than *NYT*.

The article 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' is a very good example of presenting the president in two different ways.

*Erdogan is loved and worshiped by a good half of the country. The other half detests him passionately (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

*The United States has already expressed displeasure with Erdogan's anti-Western and authoritarian tendencies (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

These statements are from the same article. To summarize these two statements the idea is that President Erdogan has a lot of support from half of the people but he is also anti-western and authoritarian which means that he is personally illegitimate to a certain extent in democratic terms but his popularity gives him and his government a degree of legitimacy due to the electoral success.

*CNN's presentation is more lenient compared to the NYT's presentation of president Erdogan.*

*For years, Mr. Erdogan, an Islamist, has celebrated great moments of the Ottoman past when Istanbul was the seat of the Islamic caliphate, and played down Turkey's secular history established by Ataturk. With last month's failed coup, he now has his own story, and he has wasted little time propagating his own set of events and symbols to cement the narrative in the national consciousness (NYT 'Erdogan Seizes Failed Coup in Turkey as a Chance to Supplant Ataturk' August 7, 2016). Until mid-afternoon Friday, American officials thought Mr. Erdogan had tightened his iron grip on his country. He had purged the judiciary; jailed insouciant senior military officers three years ago and*

*installed seemingly compliant successors; and cracked down on the opposition and the news media (NYT 'U.S. Finds Itself on Shakier Ground as Erdogan Confronts Mutiny' July 15, 2016)*

The first statement from *NYT* continues to frame Erdogan as an Islamist and an offender of secularism which does not give a picture of him being personally legitimate. The second statement explains his autocratic rule with the purging of judiciary, jailing senior military officers and cracking down on the news media. These examples are stating that Erdogan is an illegitimate actor and a bad leader for his people.

## **6.2.2 Legitimacy of putschists**

### **Consequential legitimacy**

We can recognize early on that the putschist are presented as plotters and their act as illegitimate, but the presentation of Fethullah Gulen who is a cleric and accused by the government for being behind the coup attempt, brings further discussions regarding the legitimacy of the coup.

*Late Friday, tanks rolled onto the streets of the capital, Ankara, and Istanbul. Uniformed soldiers blocked the famous Bosphorus Bridge connecting the European and Asian sides of Istanbul tendencies (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

*Within a few hours -- during which gunshots were heard at the presidential palace -- the Turkish National Intelligence unit claimed the coup was over. But not before 290 people were killed and more than 1,400 people were injured (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

These are two good examples of the coup attempt framed as being illegitimate in consequential terms. Blocking of the famous bridge, tanks rolling onto the stress, 290 deaths and more than 1400 injuries is a clear statement showing the illegitimacy of the putschists acts as they represented great harm to the people. This is also a clear dramatization of the event which shows the standpoint of the report.

*The military action, the results of which are still unclear, took Turkey out of Europe and placed it squarely in the Middle East. It tore away the country's stability, replacing polarization with what*

*could end up being outright civil war, whether the coup succeeds or not (CNN 'The tragedy of Turkey's attempted coup' July 16, 2002).*

This statement is important for the consequential legitimacy of the putschist because it is obviously accusing the putschist of breaking down the stability of the country and placing it in the Middle-East. But the later articles make some other statements that brings up new questions.

*The upheaval exposes deep discontent within the military ranks. But less than 24 hours after a night of violence, questions remained about who was behind it and why they decided to act now (CNN 'Turkish president wants U.S. to send rival cleric home' July 17, 2016).*

The deaths of 290 people and more than 1000 injuries is now replaced by only 'a night of violence'. Questioning who was behind the attempt and why they decided to act now shows some unclarity compared to the earlier examples.

### **Procedural/structural legitimacy**

The acts of the putschists were presented as illegitimate in all of the articles and did not involve any bigger changes over time compared to the section of consequential legitimacy.

*Gunshots crack the night at the presidential complex in Ankara and there are reports of helicopters opening fire at the national intelligence headquarters (CNN 'Turkey coup attempt: How a night of death and mayhem unfolded' July 17, 2016)*

Gunshots and helicopter shootings at the presidential complex in Ankara are clear examples of the illegitimate acts making the putschists procedurally/structurally illegitimate.

*Soldiers gathered in Taksim Square in Istanbul as people protested against the coup attempt. It was a long night in Istanbul and Ankara, full of intrigue and violence, as the crackle of gunfire and booms of explosions intermixed with muezzins and the call to prayer, making Turkey, for a night, feel like one of the war-torn cities in Iraq or Syria (NYT 'The arc of a coup attempt in Turkey' July 16, 2016).*

People protesting, a long night of intrigue and violence which makes Turkey to emerge as one of the war-torn cities in Iraq or Syria are clear examples which show that the actions of the

putschists are illegitimate. They are using violence and the people are protesting against them, which clearly shows that the putschist actions are bad for the people.

*People took cover as fighter jets flew near the Bosphorus Bridge. Later in the night, Turkish jets buzzed central Istanbul, emitting sonic booms that felt like airstrikes (NYT 'The arc of a coup attempt in Turkey' July 16, 2016).*

Another example from *NYT* which shows that the acts of the putschists are illegitimate. The military putschist are using jets to buzz and emitting sonic booms in central Istanbul which cannot be a legitimate act. By mentioning the use of jets and sonic booms against the people, the article clearly frames the actions of the putschists being illegitimate.

### **Personal legitimacy**

When it comes to the personal legitimacy, we need to distinguish two different categories, the military and Fethullah Gulen. The presentation of the military and their act is different from the presentation of Fethullah Gulen who is suspected for being behind the coup attempt according to the Turkish government. The majority of the articles are united that there is not enough evidence for blaming him for the coup attempt, but the frames that they use when presenting him are questionable and differentiated.

*Hizmet is a global initiative inspired by Gulen, who espouses what The New York Times has described as "a moderate, pro-Western brand of Sunni Islam that appeals to many well-educated and professional Turks." Nongovernmental organizations founded by the Hizmet movement, including hundreds of secular co-ed schools, free tutoring centers, hospitals and relief agencies, are credited with addressing many of Turkey's social problems (CNN 'Who is Fethullah Gulen, the man blamed for coup attempt in Turkey?' July 16, 2016)*

It is hard do make comments about the definitions of Fethullah Gulen, because according to the US media, it is not 100% evident that he is behind the coup attempt in Turkey. But this statement explains the nongovernmental organization Hizmet founded by Gulen, and its work for solving many social problems in Turkey, which gives a legitimate picture of him and his organization. *NYT* has explained Gulens power in detail compared to *CNN*'s presentation.

*Mr. Gulen's network controls billion-dollar business interests such as media companies, banks and construction firms. His operations have attracted a great deal of scrutiny by the United States*

*government, particularly related to his movement's charter schools, which have imported hundreds of Turkish teachers, many of them scientists with advanced degrees. Recently, Mr. Erdogan's government filed a complaint against Mr. Gulen's network of more than 30 schools in Texas (NYT 'An Exiled Cleric Denies Playing a Leading Role in Coup Attempt' July 16, 2016).*

*The leader of a Turkish Muslim sect, Mr. Gulen and his followers have built a global religious, social and nationalistic movement, and are also considered to be the driving force behind more than 100 charter schools in the United States (NYT 'An Exiled Cleric Denies Playing a Leading Role in Coup Attempt' July 16, 2016).*

We can recognize that *NYT* has given a clearer picture about Gulen's power, which can give the readers the assumption that he could be behind the coup comparing with *CNN*'s presentation. *CNN* gives a brief summary about Gulen being a cleric and the leader of the nongovernmental organization Hizmet which works for the good of the people. This presentation gives some legitimacy to an actor which could be behind the attempted coup which killed more than 200 civilians. The *NYT* on the other hand, has explained the power of Gulen and gave a picture of him being leader of a nationalistic Muslim sect. Thus, these statements give some illegitimate perception of Gulen, and the reader might think that it is dangerous that a leader of a nationalistic Muslim sect has so much power.

*Thousands of soldiers and officers purged from the military. A helicopter shot down over the capital. Hundreds of people lying dead on city streets (NYT 'As Turkey Coup Unfolded, 'the Whole Night Felt Like Doomsday' July 16, 2016).*

*Gunshots crack the night at the presidential complex in Ankara and there are reports of helicopters opening fire at the national intelligence headquarters (CNN 'Turkey coup attempt: How a night of death and mayhem unfolded' July 17, 2016)*

*Within a few hours -- during which gunshots were heard at the presidential palace -- the Turkish National Intelligence unit claimed the coup was over. But not before 290 people were killed and more than 1,400 people were injured (CNN 'Failed coup in Turkey: Here is what you need to know' July 18, 2016).*

These examples frame the putschist military as illegitimate in every aspect, their acts being illegitimate in terms of using violence against people and the overall situation being an insult of the democratic and legitimate means.

### 6.3 Results

The overall picture that we get from our analysis is that there are some significant differences regarding the presentation of these two events. Hugo Chavez and his government have largely been framed as illegitimate and blamed for the deaths during the coup attempt. The reports have created an image of Chavez being an autocrat and his government being corrupt. The general picture shows that the government and Hugo Chavez are illegitimate regarding consequential, procedural/structural and personal legitimacy. The putschists were framed as ‘opposition’ and not putschists. The frame of the interim government and Pedro Carmona included legitimate features, and the reports did not involve any negative presentation about their act during the coup attempt. This gave rise to the conclusion that the putschist were framed as legitimate compared to Chavez and his government. The discussion about the case of Turkey is more complex since there are some changes according to the dates of the articles and some differences between the presentation of *NYT* and *CNN*. The articles were clear with the government being the legitimate side during the conflict, but the later articles focused more on the illegitimate arrests of people who ‘the Turkish government’ blamed for being involved in the coup. We did not find any changes regarding the illegitimacy of the putschist. *NYT* added a further dimension by presenting Erdogan and his supporters as the enemy of secularism, which *CNN* did not mention. The conclusion is that the putschist and their acts has been framed as illegitimate in terms of consequential and procedural/structural legitimacy except the presentation of Fethullah Gulen. The government was framed as legitimate in terms of being elected through democratic elections within the earlier articles, but the later articles framed the government as being illegitimate in sense of consequential legitimacy and procedural/structural legitimacy. To conclude, the earlier articles gave a picture of the government being consequentially and procedural/structurally legitimate, but the later articles presented the government as illegitimate. President Erdogan has been framed as personally illegitimate throughout all the sequences.

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of this research is to compare the US media's presentation of two coup attempts with the help of Entman's framing theory. The reason to why we have chosen these cases is that they are significantly different regarding the relations with the US. Turkey is an US ally and led by a right-wing authoritarian while Venezuela is led by an anti-US leader and a left-wing authoritarian. Our expectations before we analyzed the data, were that there will be some significant differences regarding the two cases, because of the different relations with the US.

These differences made the research a fertile and interesting subject for discussion. Through analyzing the data which covered the events from the early hours of the coup attempts over the course of a year, we found that the US media and its framing of events is closely linked to the US foreign policy with the countries of the world. Presenting and framing events and news in the interests of the US foreign policy and the correlation with the US media in this way may shift the lines in the desired direction, making the cases open for discussions.

The main research question was: How did the mainstream US media framed the legitimacy of the coup attempts in Venezuela (2002) and Turkey (2016)? The overall result of analysis tells us that the mainstream US media has presented these two events differently. The Venezuelan case showed clear evidences of framing the government and the president as illegitimate actors. The putschists are framed as 'the opposition' and not putschists. The articles did not include the illegitimate actions of the putschists and blamed the Chavez government for the deaths of the people. The Turkish case is divided in earlier and later articles since we saw a change regarding the frames. Earlier articles framed the government as being legitimate and the putschist being illegitimate. The later articles framed the government as illegitimate due to the arrests, while the illegitimate actions of the putschists were not included in similar extent.

The putschists were framed as illegitimate except the presentation of Fethullah Gulen, and president Erdogan was generally framed as personally illegitimate. Comparing the two cases we can say that the US media was totally clear about the putschists being better for the people than Chavez's government in the Venezuelan case while on the Turkish case it was more ambivalent.

The results of this study are useful for further researches about the discussion within the media regarding the legitimacy of coup attempts. The problematization of the theory

becoming practice for the US media will continue, but we need to repeatedly bring up these problems for achieving solutions. The definition of what is legitimate and what is illegitimate is very clear, but the US media have issues to reflect this definition to the reality.

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