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Media framing of terrorist attacks

– An insight on how *Le Monde* and *Al-Jazeera* framed the perpetrators and the victims in the Charlie Hebdo attack.


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Abstract

Media plays a significant role in people's daily life, as it is the first lens through which people see events and phenomena happening worldwide. This research aims to investigate how *Al-Jazeera (AJ)* and *Le Monde (LM)* portray and frame the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack on the 7th of January 2015. The process of framing and representation are investigated as to whether there are similarities and/or differences in the identities of victims and perpetrators between *AJ* and *LM*. Adopting a social constructivist perspective and by using Entman's framing theory, along with both social representation theory and social identity theory. A qualitative content analysis is conducted. The findings indicate certain similarities in how these two media outlets frame the victims and the perpetrators of the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo such as arguing that the perpetrators' action does not represent Islam. Both medias also try to create a certain level of proximity with the victims. When it comes to the framing of the perpetrators, more differences appear: while *AJ* frames them as heroes avenging the prophet, *LM* framed them as stupid people making unprofessional mistakes.

Keywords: Charlie Hebdo attack, media framing, *Le Monde*, *Al-Jazeera*, victims, perpetrators, social identity

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1. Introduction

On the 7th of January 2015, the two Kouachi brothers entered the editorial office of Charlie Hebdo in Paris and started shooting. They killed twelve people and injured eleven. The brothers were not captured immediately, so there was a succession of other terrorist attacks between January 7th and January 9th, 2015, all in Île de France (region around Paris). The terrorist attack was covered in different international news channels, such as *Al-Jazeera (AJ)* and *Le Monde (LM)*. Terrorism is one of the most dangerous criminal phenomena known to human societies because of its threat to the ideology, belief, and political entities of states and peoples. Terrorism is also one of the most prominent security threats because of its far-reaching effects on humanity. Since 9/11, terrorism is linked to Islam; therefore, this research will be crucial in studying the framing of two media outlets for the Charlie Hebdo attack. The relevance of the topic is high in our society, since there is a lot of Islamophobia going on in the world. Islamophobia is the fear and hatred towards Muslims and Islam. Since 9/11, Islamophobia has increased in the western world and it is still present in the society today, this research is thus very relevant to the current society.

Media is *AJ* which broadcasts from the Middle East to Arab speakers around the world who are mainly Muslim, and *LM*, which broadcasts to French speakers worldwide. The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo is important for the Islamic world and the Middle East because the satirical magazine mocked the Prophet Muhammad, by representing the Prophet on several occasions in caricatures. It is also important for the French society because of the proximity of the events and because the attack is against freedom of expression, a core value of the French society.

Media is the lens that transmits the news to people and influences the construction of reality. Perspectives on the reality of events and phenomena differ between societies due to different framing strategies among the media when communicating with the public, which varies from media to media (Hughey and Daniels, 2013). As for countries that include various authorities, such as the legislative, judicial, and executive powers, in which the decision-making processes are divided, the media is seen as a fourth authority in the state because it has tremendous influence on people's convictions (Srömbäck, 2009; Olsson, 2006).

Globalisation led to the spread of media companies worldwide, increasing the possibilities for influence over more readers. This allows the readers to get the same news from different news channels (Bashri, Greiner and Netzley, 2012). There are several huge international media like

LM and *AJ* (Lynch, 2005; Stock, 1985), *LM* is analysed because of the proximity of the attack and *AJ* because of the Arabic background of the perpetrators. Both media are analysed in their original language, French for *LM* and Arabic for *AJ*. The research will focus on these media channels since they have different global exposure, *AJ* reaches a different audience than *LM* due to the language and due to their cultural differences (Lynch, 2005; Stock, 1985).

There are previous studies on how the media frame terrorist attacks worldwide and how the perpetrators or victims of these attacks are framed. Media framing and the narratives shown by media play a huge role in how the general public perceives news. This research wants to see if there are differences and/or similarities in how these two media frame the identity of the actors, thus, the perpetrators and the victims were chosen. The research looks if these media framed the actors as individuals or as part of an identity group.

This research is important because of the two different identities that the perpetrators had, firstly been Muslims and secondly being French. Thus, this research looks at how both media frame the victims and the perpetrators of the terrorist attack as part of a social identity group. A group identity may not only reflect on individual people, but on all members of that social identity group. This means that if one person of a group commits a crime, the whole group may be perceived negatively and as being dangerous. A common perception about the group might become that the possibility of one member its members committing a crime is high. There is a high reflection of individual actions on the group, this negative influence is negative for all members of the social identity group. An example to make the theory clearer is that an individual Muslim person committing a terrorist attack, has a high chance being framed as a member of a terrorist organisation. This image may then reflect to several people being in the same social identity group. This however is not the case for each group. As seen in the literature review, when a local person commits a terrorist attack, media focusses on the individual difficulties and problems of the person (for example being mentally ill).

However, despite the existence of studies related to the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack, there is an existing gap in media framing of the actors that took part in this terrorist attack. This will be analysed from the perspective of two different media: *LM* and *AJ*. Therefore, this study will bridge the gap of previous studies through Entman's framing, social representation, and identity theory.

The research consists of various chapters, starting with the literature review, showing the existing literature and the gap this research will try to fill in the field of political science. The following chapter is about the theories this research will apply in the analysis to explain how media have diverse ways of framing the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack.

Chapter five will explain how this research comes together and which research design and methods are applied. The analysis of the data will come after and is followed by the conclusion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

2. Literature review

Since the 9-11/2001 terrorist attacks, media interest in covering terrorist attacks has increased because of the interest that emerges among people, where people have always wanted to know more news related to terrorist attacks. The way media reports on these terrorist attacks may exhibit differences across different sources because of factors affected by the country to which a media outlet operates or strategic reasons which may lead to the framing of the same event differently (Yang and Chen, 2019). The first part of this literature review will focus on the media framing of terrorist attacks in general. The second part will focus on the media framing of Islamic terrorist attacks, the third part will be on the literature on the Charlie Hebdo attack, and the last part will be the research gap.

2.1 Media framing of 'non-Islamist' (local perpetrator) terrorist attacks

The increase in media coverage of terrorist attacks in recent decades occurred due to increased demand from the public's interest in them (Gadarian, 2008). Many media outlets have chosen to use holistic framing in covering these terrorist attacks because it helps media to answer questions quickly, such as who the perpetrator is, what happened, and why in line with public demand. This increase in media coverage along with increased holistic framing went along with a rise in initial suspicions regarding the identity of the perpetrator and his terrorist motives (Falkheimer and Olsson, 2014).

Accordingly, in her study on media and terrorist attacks, Powell argues that the 9/11 attack initiated a qualitative shift in how media frames terrorist attacks, as through the framing of the 'war on terror' adopted by the Bush administration, a relationship was built between terrorism and Islam and terrorists with Muslims. The majority of media coverage of terrorist acts relies on shedding light on the perpetrators of the terrorist act and trying to describe them and their backgrounds to understand why the perpetrators did it. White, local¹ American citizens committing a terrorist attack, for example, are not always classified as terrorists, even if most of the attacks conducted by white Americans fit the definition of terrorism. In incidents and

¹ The term "local" is used in the article as such, and it refers to the terrorists from the country where they commit the terrorist attack, and that belongs to the dominant ethnic group (ex: a white American citizen).

attacks by local American citizens without connection to other countries, such as the shootings at Los Angeles Airport, the Overland Park Jewish Centre, Las Vegas, Austin, and others, they were not classified as terrorists at first. Instead, the media described and framed them as isolated and hateful acts of mentally ill people. The attacks were framed in such a way as to give the perpetrator a justification, such as a disease, rather than political motivations (Powell, 2018).

According to Powell, the media's framing of terrorist attacks differs in describing the actors of terrorist attacks, especially between Muslim and non-Muslim (local) actors (Powell, 2018). One way of explaining terrorist attacks is to focus on the perpetrator's mental state rather than looking at their political activity, culture, ethnicity, or religion. This way of framing a terrorist is usually used in terrorist attacks committed by local, non-Muslim perpetrators (Falkheimer and Olsson, 2014). The other way to frame terrorists is by explaining their background, culture, and religion. This type of media framing is usually done when the terrorist has a Muslim background (Powell, 2018).

In their study of the 22 July 2011 attack in Norway, for example, Falkheimer and Olsson found that the media and the government framed the perpetrator similarly: an insane person with mental problems instead of giving Anders Breivik the status of a right-wing extremist and terrorist. Norway and NATO had a military operation in Afghanistan at the time, where they bombed different parts of Afghanistan. Thus, when the terrorist attack happened in Norway, the media directly connected this joint military operation with the attack, thus linking it with Islamic terrorist affiliations. A Swedish terrorism expert said in an interview in *Aftenposten* that there is a terrorist organisation behind the attacks, Al-Qaeda. Falkheimer and Olsson argue that the result of framing terrorist attacks as such is to create a bilateral opposition that generates a discourse (us and them). Media frames the local terrorists as someone with mental issues to save the country's image and explain that it is a single case that stands out from the rest due to his individual mental issues. Local media prefers to shed light on the individual, mental illness, and disorders of the individual perpetrators rather than associating them with political causes and explaining the political motivations behind their actions. Conversely, international extremist terrorists are portrayed as vicious, with links to large terrorist networks motivated by hate, and not as individuals with individual issues such as mental illness (Falkheimer and Olsson, 2014).

Especially after 9/11, along with the association of Islam with terrorism, these kinds of media emphasis became common leading to particular forms of framing of terrorist attacks which the next section addresses.

In his study about Arab Media coverage of “terrorism” or “so-called terrorism”, el-Nawawy, writes about how Arab media covered Al-Qaeda, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the war in Iraq, after the US launched their “global war on terror”. He looks at how different Arabic media gets access to their sources, such as members of Al-Qaeda, and how the reporters cover ground in the region’s wars. These acts have increased the popularity of Arab speaking media all over the world. The reporters in the Middle East have certain challenges to deal with, such as the freedom of expression, trying to stay alive in a dangerous war environment, finding good sources and how to sort the truth from propaganda (el-Nawawy, 2004).

2.2 Media framing of Islamist terrorist attacks

In the past decades, along with an increase in media coverage of the Muslim and Islamic world in relation to a number of terrorist attacks committed by Islamic terrorist groups, the representations of Muslims and the Islamic world have received copious scholarly attention (Husseini de Araújo, 2020; Ferreira, 2015). Society perceives this increase in representation and the ways in which people are represented affects the overall image of the other (Said, 1979). A study from Saifuddin and Matthes (2017), for example, focused on the fact that the increased representation of the Muslim and Islamic world in North American, West European, and Australian media is mainly present in certain events, i.e., in relation to wars, terror attacks and migration and that there is an overall negative representation of Muslims with their connotation being terrorism, brutality and the “other” (Saifuddin and Matthes, 2017; Bleich, et al., 2015).

In his study on how the Danish conservative media DR1 framed the perpetrator of the Copenhagen attacks in 2015, Jørndrup argues that the media was relatively cautious in initial presentation of the terrorist attack. While explaining the weapon of the crime, they started to explain further who might have been the aggressor. The media tried to associate the attack with an open-air meeting with the Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who drew cartoons of the prophet Muhammad; DR1 thought that his presence was the reason for the attack. Jørndrup explains

that after the Danish media discovered the perpetrator's name, the media's focus was clearly on the religion, origin, and past of Omar El-Hussein emphasising on several occasions that the problems were his background, religion, and that the perpetrator belonged to a foreign terrorist organisation. Jørndrup argues that the Danish media associated the terrorist attack directly with a group Muslim perpetrator in relation to Lars Vilks's presence there rather than the perpetrator's problems as an individual (Jørndrup, 2016).

Similarly, in his study on how the media framed the terrorist attack in London, Shaw argues that the media immediately framed the London bombings as an Islamic terrorist attack since Al-Qaeda claimed the attacks. The media framed the terrorists as Islamic extremists and focussed on the brutality of the acts and the perpetrators, reinforcing the negative stereotypes and images that the local, national and non-Islamic citizens of England have about the other (Muslims) as uncivilised, enemy, and foreign (Shaw, 2012). Furthermore, 'Roy and Ross (2011) argue that this 'us/them' binary consistently frames' others' as 'radical, oppressive, fanatical, irrational' enemies of 'civilised' Western values and beliefs, which are often presented as normal and devoid of any politics or ideology' (Roy and Ross, 2011; Shaw, 2012, p. 510).

Shaw argues that distrust and dissociation with the 'uncivilised' Muslim world started after 9/11. Since then, the Western media started to partially use hate words, stereotypes and use their words recklessly, such as in the media coverage of the London terrorist attacks. The article even argues that news media discursive stereotypes and cliches portraying Muslims as 'inferior', 'uncivilised', 'violent' and 'destructive' constitute 'fighting' and 'hate' words of cultural miscommunication which may incite hostility towards Islam and provoke Islamic radicalism or extremism (Shaw, 2012).

Shaw's study mentions that it is relatively common that a sense of alienation towards a specific group is created through media, which in this case, is an alienation towards Muslims. Media giving a negative image of a group of people due to their ethnic background creates alienation and a feeling for non-members of this ethnic group to keep a distance from this group. This is a form of reinforced stereotypes and negative media influence which may become the source of unfounded accusations towards innocent people due to their race, religion, or skin colour. This is done for the local British people to dissociate from the cruel and barbaric terrorists who represent Islam in this case. The intention is to dissociate the 'good' local Brits from the 'bad' foreigners. After the London bombings, there was increased media attention on Muslim society and negative and demeaning comments about Islam as a religion (Shaw, 2012).

Another research from Ruigrok and van Atteveldt has found similar results: the British local media focuses on rallying around the flag and trying to unite the people of Great Britain against the evil perpetrators. They argue that there are tendencies for people to associate the attacks that just occurred, in this case, the London bombings, with terrorist attacks that happened in the past, here, they mention the 9/11 attack. The association between these attacks due to the same group of perpetrators, the same ethnicity, or the same religion leads to more media coverage. Even though each media portrays the news differently, one thing that news channels have in common is characterising this as a “war on terrorism” but then explaining the event individually, reasoning behind this is the difference in audience, proximity, political stance of the news channel and others (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007).

In their study on how Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya frame terrorism, Abdullah and Elareshi focussed on the differences between both medias’ coverage of terrorism and identities that might influence the news selection and framing of the story. Both Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya are state media, but Al-Jazeera used to have more freedom to report news from different points of view. Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya both indicate a strong and significant regional focus as their coverage takes place most of the time in the Middle East. In this research it was described that the image of the Muslims being the terrorist is prevailed and kept in the media coverages. The largest percentage of the identity of the victims is unknown, however both media emphasise that there were also Muslim victims. The human suffering from terrorism is rarely brought to public attention by the Arab media. They did not provide contextual and accurate descriptions of terrorism and its consequences (Abdullah and Elareshi, 2015).

2.3 Charlie Hebdo attack

The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo shocked the French society and the ensuing media response reflected this reaction. In this research about how media, after terrorist attacks, frames immigration policy options, Solheim argues that European media framed the aftermaths of the Charlie Hebdo attack as an increase in unity/solidarity between French citizens. An ordinary French national identity feeling was awoken after the attack, the French society was united like their motto: liberty, equality and fraternity. After the Charlie Hebdo attack, there was increased

media coverage of terrorist attacks, and the media created a feeling of fear towards others. Media represented terrorist attacks as coming from Muslim foreigners, that resulted in the creation of fear against immigration. Terrorism is perceived as a threat to national culture and security, directly related to immigration policies (Solheim, 2021).

In his study of French, British and American media, Dawes found that the media framed the event as an attack on freedom of expression and the press. According to Dawes, the French media's coverage of the Charlie Hebdo attack was remarkable, as the media did not republish the Charlie Hebdo caricatures in order to declare their solidarity with the magazine only but to brag about defending the freedom of expression and the press, which are among the foundations of liberal and democratic states. Furthermore, the French media was careful during its coverage of the event due to the presence of many Muslims in France, being the second largest religion in the country, and being close to the event, and in order to avoid attacks similar to the Charlie Hebdo attack (Dawes, 2015).

Demonstrating the role that proximity plays on media framing, Wolska- Zogata compares the framing of the Charlie Hebdo attack in the United States and Europe. She argues that there are different frames that come back, for example, the proximity of the events where the European media (especially from countries surrounding France) have published more articles about the terrorist attack and framing the Muslim migration to Europe, and this new culture as a threat to the European identity. She also found that European media criticised the Muslim community by claiming that only Muslims reacted to the caricatures of Charlie Hebdo (Wolska- Zogata, 2015). In contrast, the American news channels aimed not to offend their Muslim audience and thus avoided publishing offensive quotations from survivors or avoided posting caricatures from Charlie Hebdo (Wolska- Zogata, 2015).

In their study about terrorism discourse in France 24 and the case of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, Połńska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie found that that France 24 (F24) uses a limited definition of terrorism. This general assumption is backed up by explaining that the news channel directly defined the attack on the Charlie Hebdo headquarters as a terrorist attack before the police defined it and that authorities took their first actions. After releasing the video where the perpetrator claims that they avenged the Prophet Muhammad, F24 focused on the connections between the terrorist attack and Muslims by for example emphasising on the perpetrator's origin, which is Algerian. The articles barely mentioned that they were born and raised in Paris. Połńska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie argue that their connection to the Jihad and their being professional terrorists is mentioned several times. F24 constructed an image of the terrorists which only focussed on their criminal activities and not on their origin, friends, and

family. The only background that F24 showed of the perpetrators is their terrorist activities. F24 also linked terrorism with Islam by associating the perpetrators as Muslims and members of terrorist organisations and operations in the past. According to Połowska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie, this emphasises one of the biggest fears of the Western world: Islamist radicalists fighting and learning abroad and coming back to their home country and making a terrorist attack (Połowska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie, 2016).

The research concluded that the French Muslim community gets even more segregated when some Muslims commit terrorist attacks in France. Due to the French media representing Muslims as terrorists and dangerous, this creates a negative reflection of Muslim society in France, they are seen as the other (Połowska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie, 2016).

The segregation in the society is also one of the findings of Lawrie, where after the Charlie Hebdo attack, British newspapers focused on using Orientalist discourse with three frameworks (Islamic victim identity, blaming the political elite, and opposing the enlightened West's conversion to Islamic barbarism). All three frames used by British newspapers in their coverage of the Charlie Hebdo attack contribute to creating the "other" when they represent Muslims. Where the UK newspapers worked to employ the national identity due to the representation of the United Kingdom as the "original" in the face of the "other" Muslims, for example, Allison Pearson, cited in Lawrie (2019), focused on creating a binary opposition between the "enlightened West" and the "barbaric" and "childish" Muslims. This framing summarises the framing of Muslims against the ideals of liberalism, freedom of expression, and democracy pursued by the West and the United States when the British media covered the Charlie Hebdo Attack (Lawrie, 2019).

Similarly, it is found that Danish media used the discourse of the clash of civilisations when covering the Charlie Hebdo attack, with sub-discourses such as fear of Muslims and that the general community of Muslims is suspicious. They also use a binary opposition between angry Muslims, as opposed to freedom of expression, and democracy. The use of the texts of the discourse of the clash of civilisations and fear can be seen in the Danish texts when describing Muslims and that they pose a danger to the enlightened West, that they are angry and do not belong to the Western identity, and when "Naser Khader, a Conservative Danish MP is quoted as saying that Muslims need to be vocal about denouncing terrorism. He states there is: a need for a complete fundamental cultural war inside the Muslim house" (Lawrie, 2019, p. 34). All texts analysed from the British and Danish newspapers used right-wing populist discourse, regardless of political leanings, to cover the Charlie Hebdo attack (Lawrie, 2019).

Furthermore, Khan, Wu, Pratt and Akhtar conducted a comparative study of how two western media, the New York Times (NYT) and BBC News (BBC), and two Islamic medias, *Al-Jazeera* (AJE) and *Al-Arabiya* (AAE) (both English versions), framed into different categories: freedom is absolute, freedom is limited, anti-Islamic sentiments and anti-West sentiments in the aftermaths of the Charlie Hebdo attack. The attack on Charlie Hebdo was seen from both sides differently, Western media defended the freedom of expression, free speech and also the French ideology. French society defends the freedom of speech which is protected by the French civil society (for example with the “Je suis Charlie” movement, defending their right to free speech). NYT and BBC defended Charlie Hebdo’s right to and the Western values of the freedom of speech, even if this means offending sensitive religious topics. AJE and AAE viewed the Western perspective as anti-Islam and anti-Muslim, the media portrayed movements like “Je ne suis pas Charlie” and “I am Muslim”, saying that freedom of expression does not come together with offending others. There should be a limit, that the Western media crossed the line of good manners (Khan, Wu, Pratt, & Akhtar, 2021).

In her qualitative discourse analysis, van Goethem does a media analysis of two newspapers, *De Standaard* (Belgian, Flemish newspaper) and *Al-Arabiya* (Saudi-Arabic news channel). These media channels were chosen to see a Western and an Arabic perspective of the events, the research also compared the similarities and the differences from both. The analysis was based on a series of nine questions: 5 descriptive questions (date, author, length, audience, and context) and four analytical questions (text types, themes, similarities, and evolution). The outcome of the research showed that there were similarities in the themes, but there were differences in the targeted audience, which probably led to different emphasises in the articles and the way how *Al-Arabiya* and *De Standaard* framed the events. The conclusion of the analysis shows that even if both media broadcast about the same event, a different side of the same coin is showed, where *Al-Arabiya* more concerns about the difficulties that Arabs have to face and the conflicts in that time, and with the general politics behind the topic. *De Standaard* on the other hand was more focussed on the radicalisation aspect and how this impacts Belgium (van Goethem, 2015).

2.4 Gap

Existing literature provides a good insight into how media is framing terrorist attacks in different parts of the world and different ways how media is framing Islamic terrorist attacks. Much research is on how framing affects the opinions and reactions of people and nation-states, et cetera. However, there is little scholarly research on how perpetrators and victims are framed between two media outlets with different languages and different audience's identities around specific terrorist attacks such as Charlie Hebdo. There is some existing literature on how Arabic media framed terrorist attacks, however there is none comparing *Le Monde* with *Al-Jazeera* in their respective languages, Arabic and French. Even though there is some literature about the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack, there is none regarding the framing of the victims and the perpetrators of this attack. Thus, this research fills the gap in comparing an Arabic media and a French media. This research will also cover the gap in how both media framed the victims and the perpetrators.

This research will fill the gap in the existing literature by using Entman's framing theory, and the identity theory is used in the analysis to see if identity affected the media when they framed the actors. By using these theories, the research tries to analyse how *AJ* and *LM* frame the victims and the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack to explore the extent to which identity plays into the framing.

3. Theoretical approach

3.1 Social constructivism

Social constructivism is an ontological approach that states that reality does not exist independently of us (humans), but the reality is built through the actions of the actors, i.e., through social activity. Social constructivists claim that human interactions bring knowledge, as knowledge cannot exist without human interactions in society. Individuals create meaning and information through interactions because knowledge is social and cultural. Humans' interaction with the environment constitutes society, resulting in political, social, and cultural phenomena through human interaction (Bacchi and Eveline, 2010; Klotz and Lynch, 2014). According to social constructivism, media significantly affects society and individuals' thinking and thus participates in constructing reality. Therefore, social constructivists defend the importance of studying the media agenda to understand how it affects society. (Marsh and Stoker, 2010; Bryman, 2012; Bacchi and Eveline, 2010; van Dijk, 2000; Hughey and Daniels, 2013).

This research uses a social constructivist approach to analyse how *AJ* and *LM* framed the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo. Furthermore, this research will use Entman's framing theory, social representation and identity theories derived from social constructivism.

3.1.1 Entman's framing theory

Framing theory is a theory that has multiple definitions according to its use in various research fields, especially political science (Strömbäck, 2004; Druckman, 2001; Entman, 1993). In the early 1990s, Entman's definition of framing became more prominent and widely used, and his work had a stimulating influence on the framing field (Yang and Chen, 2019). Entman defines *framing* as the selection of "some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item

described” (Entman, 1993, p. 51). The media frames events based on the media’s strategy in framing reality (Entman, 2003). The degree of importance given to a specific topic in news coverage is referred to as salience. This means that the salience of a text is achieved if a particular part of the story is favoured and another is neglected, which might be equally important. While the media is highlighting some parts, it is also deemphasising the importance of the neglected parts of the actual news (Rodelo and Muñiz, 2019). These are the issues with salience: the media deliberately chooses to deemphasise certain aspects and emphasise others (Entman, 1993).

Media follows a strategy that suits its position and audience as it develops a knowledge scheme that suits the caller and his interpretations. “Framing that shapes the receiver’s perception and statements can mirror the communicator’s intention with framing” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Therefore, the media is considered to have a significant influence on society, as the agenda chosen to highlight what is essential from the media is the one that attracts the public’s attention and builds the reality chosen by the media according to its agenda, which becomes the reality of the audience (McCombs, 2003; D’Angelo and Kuypers, 2010).

Framing theory is used in many fields. One such area in which framing theory can be used is investigating how the media frame a group of people within a particular event (McQuail, 2010). With all the above, our study in this thesis does not examine whether there is a bias from the Arab and French media in their coverage of the Charlie Hebdo attack because this goes beyond the scope of our study. Instead, our study aims to determine how an Arab and French news channel framed the people who conducted the Charlie Hebdo attack and the people who have fallen victims to the attack.

Entman’s theoretical approach, related to framing theory, is the basis of the thesis to understand how *AJ* and *LM* framed the victims and perpetrators in terms of highlighting or deemphasising the individual characteristics or histories of these people or their social identity. The research aims to see whether this is the case for *AJ* and *LM* and analyse how these media framed the identity of the perpetrators and victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack. Did *AJ* and *LM* use the same framing strategy? Thus, Entman’s framing theory gives the theoretical tools to create the analytical framework.

Social representation theory and identity theory will be used to derive the frames used in the analytical framework. Therefore, Entman’s framing theory will be the main theory in the analysis, which will lead the thesis to its goal: how did both news outlets *AJ* and *LM* frame the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack?

3.1.2 Social Representation theory

Social representation theory is used for media research to see how media represent political and social issues and can be used as a conceptual analytical tool in empirical analysis. The approach aims to study how the media construct and represent social and political issues (Höijer, 2010; Olausson, 2010). Höijer argues that “[...], social representations are about processes of collective meaning-making resulting in common cognitions which produce social bonds uniting societies, organisations and groups. It sets focus on phenomena that becomes subjected to debate, strong feelings, conflicts and ideological struggle, and changes the collective thinking in society” (Höijer, 2011, p. 3).

According to Rateau et al., the ideological affiliation that the media adopts affects how the media represents the event, this ideological affiliation may come from a political affiliation or the government. Moreover, since ideological affiliation affects how media represents the event, what is excluded during coverage of the event may be just as important as what is included, which may affect the change of angle of the event (Rateau, et al., 2012).

“The reality of social representations is such that their definition can vary according to the researcher’s perspective. We can therefore study them in their emergence and in their role as regulator of social interaction and communications, from the angle of their internal structure or even from that of their links with social relations.” (Rateau, et al., 2012, p. 482).

There are different expectations for both media outlets, the French media will probably frame the events in accordance with their ideological orientation and social relations. This ideological orientation and social relation are not the same for the Arabic media, thus *AJ* will frame the actors of the attack differently. Therefore, analysing how the Arabic and French channels represent the Charlie Hebdo attack will help to understand the ideas and ideology adopted by each of the two channels in representing the Charlie Hebdo attack. French and Arabic media was chosen because of the proximity of the events for the French media and *AJ* because it is an Arabic media. The perpetrators are of Moroccan origin, and since *AJ* is one of the biggest Arabic-speaking news channels with an extensive reach, it is like a suitable choice for this research.

Social representation theory and identity theory are linked together since the representation of the actors in the Charlie Hebdo attack in relation to their identity will be analysed.

3.2 Social Identity theory

In order to conduct a deeper analysis of the data collected in both media, *AJ* and *LM*, this research will use social identity theory to create a framework for the analysis. The analysis will be done by looking at the articles to observe if there are certain patterns in how the media frames the perpetrators and the victims of the attacks as individuals or part of an identity group. National identity is one of the identities that may emerge as a factor to refer to the actors of a terrorist attack. Identity theory is based on the feeling of belonging to a group, culture, national society, and/or national consciousness. This identity revolves around belonging to a group of people with at least one attribute and/or belief in common (Bronchal Rueda, 2021; Huddy, 2001).

Social identity theory provides a framework to understand how stereotypes are formed and used. Stereotypes are done through a succession of steps, starting with the easy identifiable aspects of people (gender or ethnic background), after, the creation of a group whose members have these aspects, different aspects are associated with this identity group, without taking regards to the individual members (Bresnahan and Lee, 2011). Tajfel's social identity theory says, "that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1982, p.63). To have this positive social identity, individuals categorise people into groups, through the before mentioned process, to compare. People who are not considered to be in that social identity group, are conceptualised negatively. Thus, people with the same traits are valued and people with different traits are seen as different and usually are devaluated (Bresnahan and Lee, 2011).

Mastro (2009) reinforced Tajfel's theory by saying that stereotypes are beliefs and expectations that one has over (a group of) people (these expectations are not necessarily a representation of reality), influencing how one behaves towards an individual or a group. Stereotypes are an inherent feature present in human cognitive processing for various reasons, one of them being the influence of the media in the process of stereotyping (Mastro, 2009).

The representation of stereotypes is an evaluation and understanding of different groups based on present common features. These representations, such as physical or psychological features, attributes or inconveniences, beliefs or disbeliefs, traits, values, emotional evaluations, and more, are present in the memories and influence decisions. These attributions emerge from media and are a bias for social judgement. The influence of media is great since it can shape reality according to its beliefs, and at the same time, it influences people since they get

information through media. The more different people from several backgrounds live in a place, the more people have a relationship with different cultures and the less influence the media should have. Thus, media can be more effective if people have limited experience with the target group, and thus racial stereotypes are reinforced (Hilton and von Hippel, 1996).

Thus, as seen before in Tajfel’s theory, portraying someone as an individual means seeing them as unique, with individual characteristics, qualities, and weaknesses. While doing so, one does not consider their identity, gender, religion, origin, and others. On the other hand, portraying someone as part of a social identity group means focusing on traits of a group based on ethnicity, religion, and other group affiliations. These assumptions are usually based on cultural assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices that do not represent the individuals and lead to wrong generalisations (Hilton and von Hippel, 1996; Brigham, 1971; Tajfel, 1982). The analysis looks at how both media used the social identity theory to frame the perpetrators and the victims as members of a group or as individuals.

Media is partially responsible for building stereotypes, mainly based on racial prejudices and stereotypes, and maintaining them.

3.3 Analytical framework

| | Individuals | Members of a cultural/identity a group |
|---------|---|---|
| Victims | Examples: Policemen Journalist / Cartoonists linguistic checker | Examples: Muslim French/ Algerian Dead / Killed Freedom fighters |

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|---|
| Perpetrators | Examples: Terrorist | Examples: Muslim |
| | Stupid person | Moroccan/ French origin |
| | Beginners/ Unprofessional | Member of Islamic terrorist group, Al-Qaeda |
| | Kouachi brother | |
| | Barbarians | Islamic terrorist |

The analytical framework will be divided into how the media frames the perpetrators and the victims, and if they frame them as members of a cultural/ identity group (whether Muslim, French, Moroccan, member of an Islamic terrorist group, etc.) or if they are framed as individuals (whether terrorists, crazy people, or journalists). The analytical framework is built upon the social identity theory, looking at whether the perpetrators or the victims are perceived as being members of a social identity group, or as individuals. The research is coding by looking at the words. These codes are the most used and the most repeated throughout the articles in both media outlets. If the words belong to the group membership or to individual characteristics. An example for this is Muslim terrorist which is member of a group, Muslim is a religious group attachment. In contrast, when the data says terrorist, it is seen as individual, because there is no group affiliation through stereotypes of a certain group.

The social constructivist theory will explain how the media constructs reality because framing, social representation, and identity theories are derivatives of a constructivist approach. As for both the theory of social representation and the theory of identity, these theories will help the thesis in the analytical framework to consider how each of *AJ* and *LM* represents and depicts the perpetrators and the victims and look at the derived frameworks and the characteristics that were given to them during the framing.

4. Specified aim and research questions

This thesis studies one case, as it is based on a comparison between *AJ* and *LM* and contributes to deeper understanding of their respective framing of victims and perpetrators. The chosen news channels are *AJ* and *LM* because of the proximity to the event for the French media and its international reach and the Arabic speaking media was chosen due to its reach and because of its proximity to the Arab-speaking-Islamic world since the whole controversy started with the publication of cartoons of the prophet of Muslims. The research wants to see to what extent the negative actions of a single person, reflects to the stereotypes in the way that the media frames the social identity group to which this person belongs to. Robert Entman's framing theory will be used to explain and understand the essential framing elements to answer the research question. Social representation theory and identity theory are used as tools of analysis to derive the frameworks that have been used to describe victims and perpetrators. Three sub-questions were chosen for this thesis to narrow the scope of the leading research question of the research in order to clarify what the thesis is looking for through its objective.

Research question:

How did the news outlets *AJ* and *LM* frame the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack?

Sub-questions:

- How did *AJ* represent the victims and perpetrators in relation to their social identity?
- How did *LM* represent the victims and perpetrators in relation to their social identity?
- What are the similarities and the differences between *LM* and *AJ*'s framing of these actors?

5. Research design and methodology

This thesis aims to provide insight into how *AJ* and *LM* framed the victims and perpetrators involved in the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack. It is a small-n case study of the media framing of the actors in the attack. The analysis will restrict the research since only two news channels will be used. To get a deeper understanding and more accurate results, it would be wise to do a deeper analysis of media framing of terrorist attacks, with more news channels from various places.

This chapter will include the choice of research design, data collection, and analysis methods that will be identified to answer the main research question of the thesis. The first part will include the presentation of the research design, and in the second part, the case selection will be identified to study this thesis. In the third part, data selection and sampling will be discussed. Finally, the last part of this chapter will include a discussion of the method for analysis of the data.

5.1 Research design

This thesis uses a qualitative approach to study how *AJ* and *LM* framed, represented, and portrayed the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack. The qualitative approach is used in many types of research related to political science, as it is used when investigating comparative patterns, attitudes, and behaviours in research related to influencers in the political arena, such as people, groups, individuals, and actors in general (Bryman, 2012). In addition, the qualitative approach helps explain and discover phenomena related to meanings and questions such as how and why (Halperin and Heath, 2012).

This thesis uses qualitative research to search for keywords, attitudes, and expressions in texts to explore how the media frames perpetrators and victims of a terrorist attack. The quantitative research design is not appropriate for this thesis because quantitative research is used in research related to statistics and numbers to provide numerical results (Halperin and Heath, 2012). Since this research aims at meanings and representations in the process of framing, portraying, and representing perpetrators and victims, the qualitative approach is more appropriate, as the thesis does not aim to study quantities, numbers, or statistics related to the media.

Furthermore, this thesis is a small-n study based on a single case. Therefore, the qualitative approach will serve this thesis by providing more descriptive details and more profound knowledge regarding the thesis topic. However, one case study can lead to the loss of many contexts surrounding the topic in the field of research (Halperin and Heath, 2020).

The inductive approach is not used in this research since theory building is not the purpose, instead predominantly a deductive approach that engages with qualitative research, where analytical tools are driven from existing theories to form a specific analytical framework with indicators to analyse the data is adopted (Bryman, 2012). However, the analysis led to observations that led to changes in the analytical categories, and an inductive approach is adopted back and forth, leading to abduction (Halperin and Heath, 2020).

Case studies help to inquire and investigate on a large-scale contemporary phenomena and events as case studies enable access to results related to phenomena and events that may not appear clear before the research but begin to appear at the end of the research (Yin, 2009). “The great advantage of the case study is that by focusing on a single case, that case can be intensively examined. For this reason, case studies remain one of the main forms of research in Comparative politics” (Halperin and Heath, 2012, p.205).

This research uses a single case study by applying existing theory to a new context. By doing so, it will be possible for the case study to see how media frames news (Halperin and Heath, 2012). The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo is the case and the Western and Arab media’s framing of the attack are the comparative elements used to understand the similarities and differences in the portrayal of the victims and the perpetrators.

This case study looks at two characteristics which create the validity of this research. The internal validity refers to the findings of a descriptive study to what happened in a specific situation, without being influenced by the researcher’s perspective. Internal validity also refers to the accuracy of the results of this study (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Towns and Wängnerud, 2017). The emergence of the study reflects how *AJ* and *LM* framed the perpetrators and victims of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in relation the representation as being members of a social identity group or as individuals.

External validity refers to if the findings of a study can be generalised and used in other cases or not (Halperin and Heath, 2012). Hence, this research uses the media framing of the perpetrators and the victims of *AJ* and *LM*, and how these media framed the identity of the actors differently, this research can be used to expand on other topics. This research can be extended on different cases in a comparative context, but the results cannot be generalised on to similar cases. Thus, external validity is low since it is a case study.

5.2 Case Selection

The case study of how two media with two different perspectives framed the Charlie Hebdo attack helps to shed light on the difference in media framing in the Middle East and the Western world in order to contribute to the existing literature in the field of media framing of terrorist attacks, with a focus on the identity of the victims and the perpetrator. *AJ* is relevant because it is the view of the Middle East, the perpetrators come from Morocco, thus they are Muslim and since *AJ* is an Arabic, Muslim media and has a large reach, this media was chosen. *LM* was chosen because of the proximity of the events, because it has a huge reach and because it represents the perspective of the West. As seen in the literature review, there is an existing gap that exists in this research field between the Western and Arabic media, on how they framed a terrorist attack in their original language. These two media are important to answer the research question on how they framed the victims and the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in relation to their social identity. Due to the media selection, it is possible to see that both media frame the social identity of the actors in the terrorist attack differently, they use stereotypes of group membership in a different way to show the group membership of the victims and the perpetrators of the terrorist attack.

This different framing of the social identity and stereotypes of the actors of the attack and the different perspective of both media is why this research was conducted and how the research question was formulated: How did the news outlets *AJ* and *LM* frame the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack?

5.3 Selection of Data

The data was taken from the official web page of *AJ* and *LM*, making them primary sources (Currie, 2005). The primary sources also make the research repeatable by another researcher because the data was taken from the source (Halperin and Heath, 2020), the home pages of *AJ* and *LM*.

The choice of news channels in this research is to look for the different potential perspectives of the media identity framing. *AJ* is a news channel with an Arabic reach, with its influence being in the Middle East (Lynch, 2005), whereas *LM* has a reach in the Western world and

most French-speaking countries (Stock, 1985). *LM* is originally a media from France but has developed as an international media that is held in the French language. The same can be said about *AJ*, an Arabic media from Qatar and expanding its reach in Arabic-speaking countries, in the Middle East. Its reach goes beyond the Middle East, and Arabic speakers worldwide use this medium to be informed.

The reason this research will analyse articles from these two different media is because of the proximity of the event for the French media, *LM*, as well as its widespread impact over the French-speaking community in the world (Stock, 1985). *AJ* is also a similar choice since it is also one of the biggest Arabic news channels in the world and is commonly used by Arab speakers as a source of information (Lynch, 2005). We chose *AJ* because the attack was made due to a cartoon of Prophet Muhammad by Charlie Hebdo which connects the attack to the Islamic world. The time frame used for data selection is from the date of the attack, the 7th of January 2015, until approximately six months later. This time frame is chosen in order to get more important data, since the most relevant data is published right after the terrorist attack and the news gradually gets old and forgotten.

The data which is directly taken from both news channels' archives on their website, is full-text data/articles. Sampling we chose is stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is when the data is divided into different subcategories based on certain characteristics (in our case: the publishing date). After being divided into these groups, the data was then selected randomly. This method allows the data to represent the population adequately, this means that the sample will represent an equal distribution of population. By doing a stratified sampling, the research ensures that the selected data sample is a good representation of the population. The selected data consists of only primary data coming directly from both news channels to increase the reliability, secondary data is excluded from the research (Halperin and Heath, 2020). The population of articles is high for *LM*, with around four hundred articles in the given time frame. In comparison, the population in the case of *AJ* is around twenty-three articles. For the articles in *LM*, we used more keywords in order to find more accurate articles for this research. Since we are looking at the actors of the attack, we looked at key words such as "Charlie Hebdo attack", "perpetrators", "victims", and "Kouachi (brothers)". After using these keywords, a far smaller number of articles appeared, and we used most of them, until data saturation was reached. All available articles are used from *AJ* until data saturation is reached.

Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack are the keywords used for the search in the *LM* and *AJ* archives.

5.4 Method for Analysis

Content analysis is a research method to describe the content of texts. It can be quantitative or qualitative. It aims to collect information about a specific phenomenon or problem by referring to research sources such as books, audio and video recordings, documents, and written records to conduct an in-depth analysis of the research phenomenon or problem (Halperin and Heath, 2012; Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The results from the analysis can be biased, thus, this research follows a strict analytical framework to analyse the primary data from *AJ* and *LM*. By doing so, the research's analysis and conclusion ensure accuracy and validity. All the articles are analysed by using the same coding from the analytical framework (Saldaña, 2013). This framework consists of the identity to which the media frames the perpetrators and the victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack.

The quantitative content analysis is less appropriate than the qualitative content analysis for this thesis. Quantitative content analysis leads to an understanding of the data in a numerical way, such as by looking at frequent words in articles such as Islam, identity, or Charlie Hebdo. According to the repetition of words in the articles, quantitative content analysis cannot lead to an in-depth understanding of the data, for which the thesis does not aim. The thesis seeks to dive into the meanings and sentences for a deep understanding of the data, therefore, a qualitative content analysis is more appropriate. The qualitative content analysis is based on discovering the meanings, vocabulary, motives, and purposes contained in the text articles of *AJ* and *LM* (Halperin and Heath, 2012; Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The coding happens in three stages; first stage is labelling different codes with a short definition to know what the codes mean, and secondly, by marking the passages in the articles that match the description of one of the codes. Finally, ensure that no passage has been skipped and/or that the codes are applied constantly in the same way throughout the process (Halperin and Heath, 2020). In this research, the first stage of coding is done through the analytical framework, the second stage is done by marking different passages in the data that match the different codes from the analytical framework. The final stage is done by repeating the second stage and making sure no passage is skipped and all passages are marked correctly.

The data coding is done by identifying certain words, sentences, or passages of an article from the data while applying a label to it. These labels are whether the perpetrators or the victims are perceived as being members of an identity group or whether they are perceived as individuals. The coding is essential to regroup the actors' different identities. The research uses open coding and closed coding. Open coding refers to the fact that the research is not based on

presuppositions and previous knowledge (inductive method). Closed coding uses a predetermined analytical framework to find how the two media frame the actors of the attack (deductive). Since this research uses both methods, the method used is abductive reasoning. This is because the discoveries we made and the hypothesis we had in the beginning changed throughout the process of writing this thesis. The research started out with a deductive approach, looking at the theory and seeing if the data follows this theory, but when getting to analysis it became clear that certain observations made lead to generalisations that we used to compare both media.

After coding the data, the research proceeds by connecting the data with the research question and gathering the findings in qualitative content analysis. After the generalisation and the data comparison, the results are presented in conclusion, and the research question is answered.

6. Analysis and results

6.1 *Al-Jazeera*

6.1.1 *Framing of victims*

Overall, *AJ* framed the victims of the attack in two different ways. These two main themes are that the victims are portrayed as individuals deserving what they got because of their actions and them belonging to Charlie Hebdo. The second theme is being a hero in relation to group identity (Muslims being more victimized). These two themes will be discussed about the victims, starting with the theme of victims whom *AJ* frames as deserving of what they got through the attack.

6.1.1.1 *Deserving to die*

AJ framed the victims as some of the most prominent cartoonists working for *Charlie Hebdo*. It framed the victims as belonging to the magazine, except for the two policemen who died in the attack.

Where *AJ* repeatedly spoke that the victims are among the most prominent cartoonists in the magazine, it is talking about them as individuals, *AJ* mentioned their jobs within the magazine in one of its articles. Some examples for this are the “economist Bernard Marie and the cartoonists Jean Capo, Stéphane Charbonnier, Bernard Verlac, Philippe Honoré, and George Volynsky”²(*AJ*, 2015B). In the rest of the articles, they are referred to as prominent cartoonists who worked for Charlie Hebdo magazine, so as a guilty bunch of individual humans that died, not as French or part of a social identity group, but as individuals.

The workers, who died in the attack, were not described as victims, they were referred to as killed or dead, unlike Muslims, who were described as victims. The word choice in Arabic is interesting: *AJ* used the word “قتيلا,” which means killed or dead in Arabic when talking about non-Muslim victims, in contrast to the Muslim victims, who are described as “ضحايا,” which means victims in Arabic (*AJ*, 2015A; *AJ*, 2015B; *AJ*, 2015C; *AJ*, 2015D; *AJ*, 2015E; *AJ*, 2015G; *AJ*, 2015I; *AJ*, 2015J; *AJ*, 2015K; *AJ*, 2015L; *AJ*, 2015N; *AJ*, 2015O; *AJ*, 2015P; *AJ*, 2015Q; *AJ*, 2015R; *AJ*, 2015H). In most of *AJ*'s articles, when talking about the attack, it was

² In Arabic (كان من ضمن القتلى، ثمانية أشخاص في قاعة التحرير، كالاقتصادي برنار ماري، والمدقق مصطفى أوراد، والرسامين جان كابو،) ستيفان شاربونيه، برنار فيرالك، فيليب أونوريه وجورج فولينسكي، بالإضافة إلى شرطين أحدهما فرنسي مسلم (أحمد مرابط).

mentioned that *Charlie Hebdo* magazine is a satirical magazine, that insulted the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims by drawing satirical pictures of the Prophet, and this was repeated time and again (AJ, 2015B; AJ, 2015D; AJ, 2015E; AJ, 2015F; AJ, 2015I; AJ, 2015L; AJ, 2015N; AJ, 2015P; AJ, 2015W; AJ, 2015V; AJ, 2015Q). AJ also shared an article from the Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda, which describes the attack as a “revenge for the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims”³(AJ, 2015L). Furthermore, one of AJ’s articles is titled “Did *Charlie Hebdo* pay the price of its audacity?”⁴ (AJ, 2015W). The title is referring to the mocking of Prophet Muhammad, which was seen as an insult to the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims and Islam (AJ, 2015F).

By calling them “dead/killed” and by quoting ISIS and Al-Qaeda to emphasise their mocking of the prophet, AJ tried to insinuate that the victims of the attack working for *Charlie Hebdo* deserved what they got as individuals and cartoonists as a result of their mockery. This conclusion came from analysing the articles, since they always mentioned that the victims are among the most prominent cartoonists in *Charlie Hebdo*, which mocked the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic nation. There is a tendency to find a justification for the attack to argue that Muslims do not carry out attacks without a justification.

These insinuations about the victims who were cartoonists are in clear contrast with the framing of the other victims who were Muslims.

6.1.1.2 Being a hero in relation to group identity

When it comes to some of the victims, identity played a prominent role in the coverage. AJ created an entire article on 9-1/2015 to discuss the two Muslim victims, which AJ did not do regarding non-Muslim victims. The article began by attacking the media when writing, “If the whole world knows that the two people suspected of carrying out the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris are members of the local Muslim community, then there is another fact that seems less discussed in the media, which is that two French Muslims died among the 12 victims of the attack”⁵(AJ,2015H).

فإن من وصفوا بالجهاديين الأبطال قتلوا اثنا عشر صحفياً وجرحوا أكثر من عشرة آخرين يعملون في صحيفة شارلي إيبدو الفرنسية وذلك نصرة³ للنبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم

⁴ "هل دفعت شارلي إيبدو ثمن خطها التحريري" المستفز

⁵ إذا كان العالم أجمع بات يعرف أن الشخصين المشتبه في تنفيذهما عملية شارلي

After taking this offensive approach, *AJ* began to talk about the Muslim policeman, Ahmed Merabet and framing him as hero, and the linguistic checker Mustafa Awrad. It talked about them in the article in a way that made the audience sympathize with them; talking about the policeman Ahmed Merabet, it mentioned his age (42) as a way to win the audience's sympathy that he died young. In contrast, the ages of the non-Muslim victims were not mentioned. It is also mentioned that he "just succeeded in the competition for promotion to the police officer corps" and during the attack he was killed while trying to stop the shooters. The qualities that the policeman, Ahmed Merabet, possessed, are described such as being known for his "integrity and dedication to work, as he was based on devoting his spare time to take care of his wife and two children"⁶ (*AJ*, 2015H). Dozens of people flocked to the police station with flowers in their hands when they learned about the killing of the policeman, Ahmed Merabet, as he was described by one of the people who knew Ahmed in the article as "a kind and friendly man who always had a smile on his face". The person added, "He used to feel humiliated when he heard the accusations levelled at the policemen, especially since he was an Arab". Criticizing the media, this person described media articles as "only talking about criminals when it should inform people about Ahmed's sacrifice"⁷(*AJ*,2015H).

AJ also gave extensive coverage to the linguistic checker Mustafa Awrad. He was positively described, as "the owner of an encyclopaedic culture" and that he possesses a linguistic talent and "a believer in human and optimism characterized him and that he is not interested in being in the limelight"⁸ (*AJ*,2015H). It also talked about how he passed away without saying goodbye to his two sons. Throughout the article, the identity of the two Muslim victims was mentioned: both were Muslims of Algerian Arab origin, they loved Algeria, and the perpetrators prevented them from returning to their beloved home (*AJ*,2015H). The article attempts to show the

إبيدو بباريس من أبناء الجالية الإسلامية المحلية، فإن هناك حقيقة أخرى تبدو أقل تداولاً في وسائل الإعلام، ألا وهي أن اثنين من مسلمي فرنسا لقيتا حتفهما ضمن ضحايا الهجوم الـ12

كان الضحية معروفاً بالاستقامة والتفاني في العمل، ودأب على تكريس أوقات فراغه للاهتمام بزوجته وطفليه⁶

إيزابيل، هي سيدة تدبر مقهى بالقرب من مركز الشرطة، حرصت على تأبينه قائلة⁷ حفاء، كان أحمد رجلاً طيباً ودوداً لا تغادر البسمة محياه"، وأضافت أنه "كان يشعر بالإهانة حينما يسمع الاتهامات التي تُتكال لرجال الشرطة لا سيما أنه كان عربياً" وانتقدت إيزابيل وسائل الإعلام التي "لا تتحدث إلا عن المجرمين، بينما يتعين عليها أن تُعرف الناس بتضحية أحمد

صاحب ثقافة موسوعية" وأنه كان "مؤمناً بالإنسان" ووظل التفاؤل سمته⁸ الأساسية حتى نهايته المأساوية وأنه كان ينفر من الأضواء والصخب.

identity of the victims as belonging to the Arab-Algerian identity through the emphasis on the two victims' love for their country of origin and the extent of their attachment to their Algerian identity and to show that they are Muslims and heroes. In addition to what was mentioned, *AJ* did not talk about all the victims in the same way but only spoke about the two Muslim victims in detail. Through scrutiny of the meanings of the vocabulary used, in describing the two Muslim victims, we see the attempt to make the audience sympathize with the two Muslim victims by mentioning the age of one of them and mentioning that they have children and positively talking about them. This differs when *AJ* talks about non-Muslim victims and those of non-Arab origins. In addition, we see the role that identity played in the coverage of the victims, as the articles focused on choosing to frame one aspect of the event about the victims, their Muslim identity of Arab-Algerian origin (*AJ*,2015H).

6.1.2 Framing of perpetrators

Similar to how *AJ* has certain patterns/tendencies to portray the victims, the news outlet also has traits on how they framed the perpetrators. There are two main ways how they are portrayed. Firstly, Group membership as Muslim or jihadists is emphasized by framing the perpetrators as Muslims, but in a way to frame them as heroes avenging Charlie Hebdo for all Muslims. Secondly, *AJ* also tries to distance the Muslims from this act which is interpreted as evil by the rest of the world, for that, they use both individual framing (as terrorists) and as part of a social identity group, based framing (French, Moroccan) to defend the Prophet.

6.1.2.1 Heroes avenging the Prophet for all Muslims

Regarding *AJ*'s framing of the perpetrators who attacked Charlie Hebdo, its articles emphasize the group's membership as Muslims or jihadists by framing the perpetrators as Muslims, but in a way that they are heroes avenging Charlie Hebdo for all Muslims.

One way of highlighting that the perpetrators were "Muslims" and "jihadists" was to describe them as chanting the phrase "we avenged the Prophet" and "God is great" when they made the attack (*AJ*, 2015P; *AJ*, 2015L; *AJ*, 2015I; *AJ*, 2015N).

Furthermore, the articles talked about the feelings of rebellious emotion when it comes to a nation when its sanctities are targeted, which in this case is the insult on its prophet. “How about the position of the greatest messenger and guide to mankind, Muhammad?”⁹ (AJ, 2015F) is the description from when the article, for instance, tried to show the greatness of Prophet Muhammad to the Muslims and that no one can offend him because that would naturally anger all Muslims.

While it is constantly repeated that *Charlie Hebdo* insulted the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (AJ, 2015B; AJ, 2015D; AJ, 2015E; AJ, 2015F; AJ, 2015I; AJ, 2015L; AJ, 2015N; AJ, 2015P; AJ, 2015W; AJ, 2015V; AJ, 2015Q). *Charlie Hebdo* was described as still unable to differentiate between freedom of opinion and expression and insulting the Prophet Muhammad, such as in one article titled “Charlie Hebdo, are you pouring oil on the fire?”¹⁰(AJ, 2015E).

AJ also chose in one of its articles to talk about the point of view of the terrorist Islamic State organization, which described the perpetrators as “heroic mujahideen” who carried out the terrorist attack to avenge the Prophet Muhammad (AJ,2015L). By using the Islamic State, it described the perpetrators as “heroes” in an indirect way. AJ, as a media platform, cannot describe the terrorists as heroes, it chose to frame the event on the grounds that the Islamic State is the one who described them as heroes. It could have avoided the Islamic State’s view of the perpetrators or written about the European’s or Americans’ point of view so the choice of group salience to a particular perspective affects its framing which is also demonstrated by some other articles such as the one titled “Has Charlie Hebdo paid the price for its provocative editorial plans?”¹¹ The article discusses the religious abuse of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (AJ, 2015W). In addition to the mention, and by analysing the framing of AJ articles and looking at the meanings that hide behind the vocabulary and texts mentioned in the articles, we see how the perpetrators as Muslims and jihadists belonging to terrorist organizations were framed, in a manner that the readers portray them as heroes avenging *Charlie Hebdo* for all Muslims and creating a justification for the perpetrators’ actions. As evidenced by the process of AJ’s framing and its selection of specific tools and strategies, such as talking about the point of view of the terrorist Islamic State organization and its description

من الطبيعي أن تكون مشاعر العاطفة جياشة ثائرة حين تُستهدف أي أمة في مقام هو من أخص مقدساتها وهو مقام النبوة، فكيف بمكانة الرسول 9
الأعظم الهادي للبشرية محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم؟

¹⁰ شارلي إيبدو... هل تصب الزيت على النار؟

¹¹ هل دفعت شارلي إيبدو ثمن خطها التحريري "المستفز"؟¹¹

of the perpetrators as heroic mujahideen¹² and that they did so to avenge the Prophet, and the title that it presented with “Charlie Hebdo paid the price for its provocative editorial line”. Moreover, they talk about the rebellious feelings when it comes to insulting a people and its Prophet and mentioning that the Mujahideen repeated the phrase “We avenged for Prophet”. *AJ*'s framing of the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack are geared toward creating an image among the Arab Islamic public that the perpetrators are heroes.

At the same time, however, while *AJ* is trying to frame the perpetrators as heroes, it does not want to attribute this act to Arabs and Muslims. So, it also tried to frame the perpetrators as not belonging to Muslim principles, but rather belonging to another social identity group.

6.1.2.2 *Distancing from Islam*

AJ tries through its articles to distance Islam and Muslims from this attack which the rest of the world interprets as evil. Therefore, the articles use both individual framing (as terrorists and barbarians) and group (as French citizens of Moroccan origin, and members of Al-Qaeda).

It is also mentioned in two articles that the perpetrators were of Moroccan origin (*AJ*, 2015D; *AJ*, 2015P). According to the articles, it was possible to note that the perpetrators are Muslims because they were repeating, “We avenged the Prophet, and God is great” (*AJ*, 2015P; *AJ*, 2015L; *AJ*, 2015I; *AJ*, 2015N). However, at the same time, *AJ* tries to strip them of Islam in its articles by saying that what the perpetrators did is not the behaviour of Islam and distance Muslims and Islam from this terrorist behaviour. For example, it was not directly mentioned that the perpetrators were Muslims, except once when it wanted to attack the media and talk about the Muslim victims (*AJ*, 2015H). Rather talking about the perpetrators as individuals, *AJ* emphasized that they are terrorists and barbarians and described them as the Kouachi brothers in most articles as an indication that they are individuals who do not belong to any religion or state. It did not give them any other characteristics in the majority of the reporting (*AJ*, 2015K; *AJ*, 2015Q; *AJ*, 2015C; *AJ*, 2015G; *AJ*, 2015A; *AJ*, 2015N; *AJ*, 2015P; *AJ*, 2015T; *AJ*, 2015L).

As for a group, *AJ* talks about them in three forms, the first is that they are French citizens, the second is that they are of Moroccan origin, and the third belonging to Al-Qaeda (*AJ*, 2015R; *AJ*, 2015S; *AJ*, 2015T; *AJ*, 2015U; *AJ*, 2015V; *AJ*, 2015P; *AJ*, 2015D). Moreover, in some

¹² Mujahideen are fighters for jihad who fight in the name of God or religion.

articles, the discourses, developed in the Western world, associated terrorism with Islam by stating that “this terrorist attack should not be combined with the Islamic religion”¹³ (*AJ*, 2015A) and that this behaviour of the terrorists has nothing to do with Islam. *AJ* even described the attack as offensive to Islam, “this heinous act offends Islam and Muslims, and its repercussions will be disastrous for Arabs and Muslims in Europe”¹⁴ (*AJ*, 2015V).

Through this framing of the perpetrators, *AJ* shows that Islamic principles are not commensurate with their acts. Several articles show this by for example saying that “the attack is not consistent with the tolerant teachings of Islam” and “Islam rejects any act of violence” (*AJ*, 2015V; *AJ*, 2015A; *AJ*, 2015C).

It was possible to make two major observations about *AJ*'s framing of the perpetrators: firstly, it mainly framed them as individuals, even though they are terrorists and barbarians. Secondly, it is framing them as members of social identity groups, they are Frenchmen of Moroccan origin who belong to terrorist organizations trying to avenge the Prophet. *AJ* however makes sure to distance the actions of the perpetrators from Islam and Muslims, since their actions are interpreted as evil by the religion.

الى تفادي الخلط بين الهجوم على صحيفة "شارلي إيبدو" والدين الإسلامي¹³

هذه الفعلة الشنيعة التي تسيء للإسلام والمسلمين ستكون انعكاساتها وخيمة على العرب¹⁴ والمسلمين في أوروبا.

6.2 Le Monde

6.2.1 Framing of victims

There are certain traits of how *LM* has portrayed the victims that repeat themselves. There are two main themes that have repeatedly been used. First that the victims were not deserving to die, and that the fight between weapons and pens is not fair. The second theme that is repeated throughout, is that stereotypes against the Muslim community should not be built. These are the two themes that will be discussed about the victims, starting with the victims of the attack not deserving to die.

6.2.1.1 Not deserving to die: unfair fight and proximity

This chapter will look at how the victims are portrayed by *LM* and how they are framed as not deserving to die from the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack. In several of the analysed articles, the victims are humanised by *LM*, trying to make it possible for the readers to identify with the victims and feel closer/ related to them. They are described individually throughout the articles and are shown as individuals, humans, members of a society, integrated, and members of family, being the Charlie Hebdo family, and defenders of freedom of speech. *LM* described each victim individually:

“Among the dead are many journalists, including cartoonists Charb, Cabu, Wolinski, Tignous, Honoré (corrector, killed at 60), Elsa Cayat, Moustapha Ourrad and Bernard Maris, columnist for Charlie Hebdo and France Inter. A maintenance worker at the building, Frédéric Boisseau, 42, a Sodexo employee, and a guest editor, Michel Renaud, also died in the attack. [...] One, Brigadier Franck Brinsolaro, of the protection service (SDLP, ex-SPHP) was in charge of Charb’s security, according to police union sources. The other, Ahmed Merabet, was killed outside as the perpetrators fled.”¹⁵ (LM, 2015C).

¹⁵ « L’attaque a décimé la rédaction de Charlie Hebdo. Parmi les morts figurent de nombreux journalistes, dont des dessinateurs Charb, Cabu, Wolinski, Tignous, Honoré (correcteur, tué à 60 ans), Elsa Cayat, Moustapha Ourrad ainsi que Bernard Maris, chroniqueur pour Charlie Hebdo et France Inter. Un agent d’entretien de l’immeuble, Frédéric Boisseau, 42 ans, collaborateur de Sodexo, et un invité de la rédaction, Michel Renaud, ont également péri dans l’attaque. Selon le procureur, deux policiers s’ajoutent à ce macabre bilan. L’un, le brigadier

LM is trying to create a certain level of proximity between the readers of the newspaper and the victims for the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack by talking individually about the victims. This proximity is mentioned in several articles. In a few of these articles one can observe that *LM* is also pushing on the fact that the victims are ordinary people (LM, 2015K; LM, 2015Q; LM, 2015W). This is shown when *LM* explains the job of each individual that was killed, like the examples mentioned above. This proximity and the explanation that it could have happened to anyone is further emphasised when the news outlet repeats:

“At the entrance of 10, Nicolas-Appert Street, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi question maintenance agents about the location of the journal: they open fire and kill one of them, Frédéric Boisseau.”¹⁶ (LM, 2015T).

This level of proximity leads the readers to identify with the victims and feeling sorry for the victims’ families and disgust for the perpetrators of the attack. It also has the effect of creating fear in people, even if specific people were targeted during the attack, there were random people killed simply by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. By emphasising how a maintenance agent was killed in a terrorist attack, *LM* shows the reader that anyone could have died in the Charlie Hebdo attack (LM, 2015K; LM, 2015W). This is further emphasised with the other victims being police officers, journalists and cartoonists.

To this theme of not deserving to die, belongs that *LM* framed on several occasions the fight between freedom of speech and radical Islam. *LM* explains that the reason why the perpetrators committed this terrorist attack is due to the fact that the satirical newspaper, Charlie Hebdo, published a series of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. The cartoonists of Charlie Hebdo were defending their right to freedom of speech:

“An attack has been committed against a newspaper – namely against the freedom of expression – against journalists who thought that they could always act to defend their ideas, in France. There were policemen to protect them. They were cowardly murdered. Eleven

Franck Brinsolaro, du service de la protection (SDLP, ex-SPHP) était chargé de la sécurité de Charb, selon des sources des syndicales policières. L’autre, Ahmed Merabet, a été tué à l’extérieur, alors que les assaillants prenaient la fuite. »

¹⁶ « A l’accueil du 10, rue Nicolas-Appert, Saïd et Chérif Kouachi questionnent des agents de maintenance sur la localisation du journal : ils ouvrent le feu et tuent l’un d’eux, Frédéric Boisseau. »

people died, four between life and death. 40 people have been protected and saved.”¹⁷ (LM, 2015A)

Looking at the French law, it is stated that each individual has the right to the freedom of expression. Thus, the published caricatures are not a reason for a terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo and for what the terrorist attack has caused in the aftermath. *LM* argues that the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo was an unfair fight, where speech, a voice, freedom was attacked by extremists whose purpose was to revenge a religion, Islam, because of cartoons about their Prophet Muhammad (LM, 2015N; LM, 2015O; LM, 2015R). *LM* condemns these acts and says on several occasions that:

“Death is not the right answer. A pencil against a weapon, it is not fair.”¹⁸ (LM, 2015E).

This fight was not just and fair. Even if it was to be foreseen by Charlie Hebdo, that they will be attacked, they are not willing to give up their rights for accommodating other beliefs (LM, 2015E; LM, 2015Q).

“We are in a difficult moment, several attacks had been foiled, we knew that we were threatened, because we are a country of freedom”¹⁹ (LM, 2015A).

The latter are words from the French president’s (François Hollande) speech, who marks the gravity and the non-sense of the situation by saying that France knew it was in danger because it is a free country.

LM then tries to highlight how the victims did not deserve their fate, because some victims simply died since they were in the wrong place. Thus, due to this level of proximity to the events and the fact that the victims could have been anyone. The interviews with people who are Muslims and the repeated emphasis on preventing confusions or conflating of Muslims and terrorists are geared toward showing that the killings were unfair. An additional point they

¹⁷ « Une attaque vient d’être commise contre un journal – c’est-à-dire l’expression de la liberté – contre des journalistes qui avaient toujours voulu montrer qu’ils pouvaient agir en France, pour défendre leurs idées. Il y avait des policiers pour les protéger. Ils ont été lâchement assassinés. Onze personnes sont mortes, quatre en situation d’urgence absolue. Il y a 40 personnes qui sont protégées et sauvées. »

¹⁸ « La mort n’est pas la bonne réponse. Un crayon contre une arme, ce n’est pas équitable. »

¹⁹ « Nous sommes dans un moment difficile, plusieurs attentats avaient été déjoués, nous savions que nous étions menacés, car nous sommes un pays de liberté »

make in this regard is the emphasis on “pencil versus gun”, meaning how writing something cannot be a reason to be killed.

6.2.1.2 Attempt to prevent stereotypes

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, *LM* has created a level of proximity with the victims in order for the reader to realise that it could have been them. This might result in a fear of the ‘other’, and ‘unknown’. Therefore, *LM* has tried to persuade the readers that not all Muslims are terrorists. It also tries to avoid the stereotypes that all Muslims are terrorists and emphasises that the Muslim community is part of the French society. *LM* explains that Muslims do not support the acts of the Kouachi brothers, this is further emphasised when *LM* explains about the substantial Muslim attendance on the manifestations against this violent attack on Charlie Hebdo. The fact that the Muslim attendance on these manifestations was so high shows that French Muslims do not support the attacks against Charlie Hebdo, even if Charlie Hebdo did caricatures from prophet Muhammad. Even if the French Muslims do not agree with the publications of Charlie Hebdo about the attack and the Prophet, they respect the right of the satirical newspaper to showcase its freedom of expression (LM, 2015D; LM, 2015O). *LM* is trying to decrease the resulting hate against Muslim people by having interviews with a few Muslim people, who explain that connotations/mix-ups should not happen, that one should not associate Islam with terrorism.

For example, *LM* has interviewed Chérif Kouachi’s wife, who condemns his actions. During the interview she says that one should not mix the extremists with the Muslims, Amedy Coulibaly’s mother and sisters had the same reaction (LM, 2015G). Coulibaly is a terrorist (member of ISIS) who has connections with the Kouachi brothers and who allegedly has cooperated with them on the Charlie Hebdo attack. He has himself committed the Montrouge (synagogue) shootings and held hostages in the Hypercacher Kosher supermarket (LM, 2015I). The implication of interviewing the families of the attackers is that the attackers were violent extremist individuals whose actions are condemned even by their own families let alone other Muslims (LM, 2015F). So, there is an attempt on part of *LM* to paint them as individuals rather than as members of a social identity group.

Another interview, this time with the brother of Ahmed Merabet who is one of the policemen who died during the Charlie Hebdo attack, follows the same logic: “My brother was a Muslim,

he got executed by fake Muslims. (...) Islam is a religion of peace, love, we do not have anything to do with that. For the death of my brother, I feel a total waste.”²⁰ Ahmed Merabat’s brother condemns the acts and repeats that Islam is a peaceful religion, and not to compare it with the extremists who are not real Muslims. His family also asked for unity on the demonstrations and did not fail to launch an appeal against conflation/mix-ups:

“Stop making conflation/mix-ups, starting wars, burning down mosques or synagogues (...) I address myself to all racists, Islamophobes and anti-Semites: extremists and Muslims should not be mixed up.”²¹ (LM, 2015G)

In other articles, *LM* refers to the danger of creating conflation/mix-ups and to associate one culture only with the extremists. *LM* also repeats through these interviews that being a Muslim and a terrorist does not go together. Islamic terrorists are acting in the name of religion, but they are widely seen by the French Muslim society as people who are not following Islam, and do not belong in the same ideological group (LM, 2015L).

6.2.2 Framing of perpetrators

Similar to how *LM* has certain themes to portray the victims, the news outlet also has themes on how they framed the perpetrators. There are two main ways how they are portrayed: firstly, them belonging to a radical Islamic terrorist group and secondly, them being described as stupid and unprofessional individuals. Both themes are geared toward avoiding stereotyping and framing them as members of social identity groups, but in both cases, there are confusions that lead to slips resulting in “attackers as individuals” becoming representatives of identity groups.

6.2.2.1 Group membership to radical Islamic terrorist organisations

The first theme is how *LM* framed the Kouachi brothers and their membership in an Islamic terrorist organisation. The brothers are portrayed as having gone through a transformation from being simple Muslims to Islamists who have radicalised themselves over the years and through

²⁰ « Mon frère était musulman, il s’est fait abattre par des faux musulmans. (...) L’islam est une religion de paix, d’amour, on n’a rien à voir avec ça. Pour la mort de mon frère, je ressens un gâchis total. »

²¹ « Arrêtez de faire des amalgames, de déclencher des guerres, de brûler des mosquées ou des synagogues (...) Je m’adresse à tous les racistes, islamophobes et antisémites : il ne faut pas mélanger les extrémistes et les musulmans. »

the connections they have done in jail and in the mosque. *LM* has framed the perpetrators in several articles as having a connection with the terrorist group Al-Qaeda, and they have even dedicated a whole article about their transition from neighbourhood criminality to jihad and belonging to Al-Qaeda (LM, 2015W; LM, 2015T).

“Saïd and Chérif Kouachi formed a “family” network whose extend is not known yet. What is certain is that before being suspected of being one of the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack, Chérif, the youngest, belonged to a group that could today be considered as one of the “pioneers” of jihad abroad“ ²²(LM, 2015B).

It is mentioned in several articles that he was a member of this group and that he was known under the name “Abou Issen”. The terrorist organisation he was part of is often referred to as “Buttes-Chaumont”, which is a district in Paris. This organisation is known for sending people to the jihad mainly between 2004-2006 and started from a neighbourhood gang and developed into an international terrorist group fighting in Iraq and committing terrorist attacks in France (LM, 2015T; LM, 2015V; LM, 2015W).

When Chérif started to attend a mosque in Paris on multiple occasions, he started to meet the boss of an Iraqi terrorist network. From there they started to have more meetings after going to the mosque and Chérif continuously changed and started to cut his family off, stop smoking and stops his small traffics. Chérif and the other contenders were shown a lot of videos about the tortures committed by the Americans and British soldiers in Abou Ghraib and their brainwash continued further with them being sent to Iraq. Chérif initially was afraid and did not want to join them, but he did not want to appear weak in front of the others, so he joined. He actually never left France because he was arrested by the police in 2005. While being in prison he met his new mentor Djamel Beghal and became more radicalised (LM, 2015B). Saïd is the older brother, he is more discrete. Less is known about him, except that he went to Yemen in 2011 where he was seen with radical Islamists, and he joined a Salafist training camp (LM, 2015B; LM, 2015P; LM, 2015T; LM, 2015U; LM, 2015V, LM, 2015W).

²² « Saïd et Chérif Kouachi forment une cellule « familiale » dont on ne connaît pour l’instant pas les éventuelles ramifications. Ce qui est certain, c’est qu’avant d’être soupçonné d’être l’un des auteurs des assassinats de Charlie Hebdo, Chérif, le cadet, a appartenu à un groupe que l’on pourrait aujourd’hui considérer comme l’un des « pionniers » du djihad à l’étranger. »

“Nevertheless, nothing allows for the moment to precisely know the level of integration of Saïd Kouachi in the ranks of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQPA), nor even to know if this organization could have sponsored the attack against Charlie Hebdo”²³ (LM, 2015B).

This article was published on the 8th of January 2015 and updated the following day, now knowing that Al-Qaeda have claimed the attack on Charlie Hebdo, it is possible to confirm this statement, since the brothers said to the driver of the Clio that they stole, “When you talk to the media, you will say that it is Al-Qaeda from Yemen”²⁴ (LM, 2015T). *LM* clarifies to the reader that several people have been recruited by the brothers to join a radical Islamic cause. Since in other terrorist attacks novices have been used as suicide bombers, or for armed attacks, *LM* claimed that it came as a surprise that the Charlie Hebdo attack was done by “experienced” terrorists (LM, 2015T; LM, 2015V). While there is a clear attempt to frame these attackers as individuals who are radicalised terrorists, the way the story is told such as the details about the radicalisation happening in “mosques” in the immigrant neighbourhood slips the discourse into a group membership.

As it is possible to observe, *LM* framed the perpetrators on several occasions as being part of an Islamic terrorist group, but this is not the only way they framed the perpetrators this will be analysed in the following sub-chapter.

6.2.2.2 *Individuals as beginners/ amateur individuals*

On several occasions *LM* portrayed the perpetrators as beginners and not really knowing what they are doing. The first mistake the brothers did is that they entered the wrong building and later on they are on the wrong floor (LM, 2015T; LM, 2015W). Some other examples of these mistakes are when they repeat on several occasions that one of the brothers, Saïd Kouachi, forgot his identity card in the car with which they tried to flee. It is due to this identity card that the police could establish the brothers as main suspects and help to find their main hideouts (LM, 2015B; LM, 2015W). Other than the identity card, the police could find an empty

²³ « Néanmoins, rien ne permet pour l’instant de connaître avec précision le niveau d’intégration de Saïd Kouachi dans les rangs d Al-Qaïda dans la péninsule Arabique (AQPA), ni même de savoir si cette organisation peut avoir commandité l’attaque contre Charlie Hebdo. »

²⁴ “ Quand tu parles aux médias, tu diras que c’est Al-Qaïda au Yémen”

Kalashnikov, enough to make a dozen Molotov cocktails (LM, 2015C), a jihadist flag, handcuffs, a camera and a beacon (LM, 2015H). They have been recognised while stealing a car (after crashing their first vehicle) and filmed while stealing food at a gas station with a rocket launcher. By writing about this, *LM* is showing how irrational the Kouachi brothers are, when trying to avenge the Prophet, they use a Kalashnikov, but when they are stealing food from a gas station, they have a rocket launcher. This adds up to them crashing their car and leaving information in it that may subsequently lead to the police finding them. *LM* mentions the mistakes of the terrorists on several occasions, and this emphasises the fact that they are not prepared to commit a terrorist attack. After crashing their initial car, they steal someone else's car without covering their faces (LM, 2015N; LM, 2015T; LM, 2015W).

LM refers to "The common discourse, which values personal accomplishment and taking responsibility for their own failures is not possible, because they have neither the social connections, nor the material means, nor the intellectual capital to fit into this glorification of success. From then on, only the 'Kalashnikov way of life' becomes available"²⁵ (LM, 2015L). This refers to the two brothers and by this the French news outlet proves yet again that they, as trained as they may be, are not intelligent enough as shown by all the mistakes they have committed. This suggests that they are uncivilised people, who do not fit into the French society, with no possibilities for personal accomplishment. They are seen as misfits in the society as they cannot adopt the local traditions and way of living. The article also mentions that some individuals are willing to sacrifice everything to exist and be recognised, even dying, here the brothers do not live anymore, but will be recognised worldwide for venging the Prophet Muhammad who has been mocked (LM, 2015L).

"Humour is the mockery of stupidity. People who are civilized and endowed with common sense can laugh at their differences and make their enemies laugh by making jokes. On the other hand, morons cannot laugh. Cannot speak. Are unable to resolve their differences. They shoot bullets. Like real morons, they shoot a humourist, four cartoonists, twelve civilized people with common sense. The stupidity of the stupid is always funny, even if our eyes are overflowing with tears."²⁶ (LM, 2015D)

²⁵ « Le discours ambiant, qui valorise l'accomplissement personnel et se rendre responsable de ses propres échecs n'est pas possible, parce qu'ils ont ni les connexions sociales, ni les moyens matériels, ni le capital intellectuel pour s'insérer dans cette glorification de la réussite. Dès lors, seul le « mode de vie kalachnikov » devient accessible. »

²⁶ « L'humour est la ridiculisation de la stupidité. Les gens civilisés et dotés de bon sens peuvent rire de leurs différends et faire rire leurs ennemis en faisant des blagues. Les débilés par contre ne peuvent pas rire. Ne

Even when *LM* is trying to frame the terrorists as individuals and dissociate them from other Muslims, at times identity-based language appears, such as when they use the colonial language of “civilisation”. The French personified by the Charlie Hebdo victims are called “civilized” because of their defence of free speech and use of humour, whereas the Islamic terrorists are the uncivilized ones with no sense of humour, with lack of intelligence, and an overall disrespect for free speech that may reflect upon the whole identity group who may valorise these actions as revenge for their prophet.

By explaining this, *LM* is making fun of the stupidity of the perpetrators. This can be seen throughout the selected data in various passages, starting with the repetition of the perpetrators forgetting their identity card in the car.

6.3 Comparative perspectives

When it comes to the framing of the victims, *AJ* differentiated among the victims of the attack according to their cultural background i.e., belonging to certain social identity groups. Victims working for Charlie Hebdo were perceived as deserving to die because they insulted the Prophet Muhammad, since that the death of the victims came as a result of their work in the magazine. *AJ* is an Arab-speaking news channel with predominantly Muslims audiences, and most of its audience is from the Arab Islamic world, thus they portrayed the Muslim victims in another way. There was a larger coverage about the individual qualities, which encourages the audience to empathise with these victims as victims of an attack. But the victims are also represented as Muslims who tried to stop the attack, this attack is framed by both media as being not related to Muslims and *AJ* attaches heroism to the French-Muslim policeman. This second framing indicates the role played by the Muslim group identity during the framing of the attack, the identity of heroes fighting for the French society, defending the nation where they live in.

In contrast to this, *LM* frames all the victims of the terrorist attack individually and does not separate them based on their cultural background. *LM* frames the victims as undeserving. The

peuvent pas parler. Sont incapables de régler leurs différends. Ils tirent des balles. Comme des vrais débiles, ils tirent sur un humoriste, sur quatre dessinateurs, sur douze personnes civilisées et dotés de bon sens. La stupidité des stupides est toujours marrante, même si nos yeux sont débordés de larmes. »

proximity of the attack is emphasised to make it possible for the readers of *LM* to identify themselves with the victims, since it could have been anyone. *LM* also framed the victims as fighters for freedom of expression.

Both media have in common that they use the Muslim victims and their families to detach all Muslims from the attack. Both media do not want a bad image to be portrayed on Islam, the difference is that *LM* is portraying this through the families of the victims and the perpetrator. *AJ* frames the victims as members of a Muslim identity group. However, *AJ* is also framing the perpetrators as heroes fighting to avenge Islam of the cartoons that Charlie Hebdo published about prophet Muhammed, which contradicts their initial goal.

Secondly, the framing of the perpetrators was very different, where *AJ* framed the perpetrators as heroes who avenged the Prophet, by describing the victims as one of the most prominent cartoonists of Charlie Hebdo. *AJ* chose to publish an article from ISIS, in which the perpetrators were described as the “heroic Mujahideen” who avenged the Prophet. This is based on a group identity of people who are Muslim, members of jihad, and fight in the name of God and their religion. In a contradicting way, *AJ* at the same time avoided to mention that the perpetrators were Muslims, in an attempt to show that the acts of the perpetrators have nothing to do with Islam and that it is contrary to the principles of Islam. They described them as Frenchmen of Moroccan origin belonging to terrorist organizations. Thus, *AJ* is framing the perpetrators in a contradictory way, depending on the article.

LM had different ways of framing the perpetrators: first they describe them as novices who did not have much experience by showing their numerous mistakes during the attack on Charlie Hebdo magazine. *LM* continues to explain the different mistakes that were committed which are omitted from *AJ*'s articles. *LM* is also contradicting itself in the framing of the perpetrators when they say that they are highly trained professionals who trained and took part in international crime and terrorist activities. At the same time, *LM* frames them as beginners doing easy mistakes, like forgetting their ID in their stolen, crashed vehicle.

Furthermore, *LM* also framed them as belonging to Islamic terrorist organizations. Being a member of a terrorist group means, that one is not part of the society, does not fit in the usual frame. The Kouachi brothers being terrorists is one of the main focusses of *LM*, when talking about the perpetrators, they mainly explain how they shifted from small felonies to becoming

members of international Islamic terrorist organisations. This was also mentioned by *AJ*, but they also considered them as heroes for venging the Prophet.

During the analysis, it became obvious to see that both medias tried to make the reader associate themselves to the victims and dissociate themselves from the perpetrators. The ideological cultural clouding of the media led to a clear dissociation in both cases. Both media tried to make the reader associate themselves to the victims by creating a certain type of proximity. *AJ* created a proximity only with the two Muslim victims from the terrorist attacks, whereas *LM* showed support to the Muslim community by sharing interviews of the families of the Muslim actors in the attack. By doing so, *LM* shows support towards the Muslim community and focussed not to make any mix ups between Muslims and terrorists. Both media also create a distance with the perpetrators, *LM* did this by portraying them as members of an Islamic terrorist organisation rather than French Muslims, whereas *AJ* represented them as French and not belonging to the “real” Muslim community.

This ideological cultural clouding was blurring at times, when for example *AJ* framed the perpetrators as French jihadists, i.e., members of identity groups but belonging to both “them” as French and “us” as jihadists²⁷ in some way.

7. Conclusion

This thesis analysed the differences and similarities between the two news outlets, *AJ* and *LM*, and how they framed the victims and perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack. The four theories mentioned in the theory chapter were used to analyse the articles of *AJ* and *LM*. The social identity theory has been the main theory used to analyse how news outlets framed the perpetrators and victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack, i.e., in relation to their social identity as part of these identity groups or as individuals regardless of their identities.

The similarities between *AJ* and *LM* are the framing of the perpetrators and, to some extent, how they framed the victims. The perpetrators are framed as being wrong, fake Muslims who do not follow Islam’s principles and cannot be identified as Muslims.

²⁷ In the Islamic context, jihadist is not used as a pejorative term, but as somebody who defends Islam and struggles for justice.

Both media frame the perpetrators in this way to distance the identity of Muslims from this terrorist attack, which is interpreted as evil. By doing so, both media avoid a vicious circle where Muslims are framed as terrorists.

Both, *AJ* and *LM* also frame the victims by creating a certain level of proximity between the victims and the audience. So even though both media do it differently, proximity can be found in both.

The differences between *AJ* and *LM* are that *LM* creates proximity by identifying the victims as individuals who are people like everyone else. *AJ* framed the victims in two different categories: firstly, the Muslim victims that are framed as victims of the attack, the main focus here is on the proximity between the reader and the victims through their Muslim identity. The second category of victims are the non-Muslim victims, they are framed as people who died and who deserved to die because of their insults towards Islam (by doing caricatures of Prophet Muhammad). Although they are framed as individuals guilty of a wrongdoing, there is an underlying assumption that them not being Muslims is relevant to their wrongdoing, i.e., mocking the Prophet of Islam.

In *LM*, the perpetrators are framed as stupid beginners who make mistakes and act unprofessionally. *AJ* on the other hand, justified the perpetrators' actions by repeating in its articles that Charlie Hebdo offended the prophet and that the perpetrators did so in retaliation for the prophet and Islam in a way that made the audience see them as heroes.

Both media outlets framed the identity of the perpetrators in contradicting ways. In *AJ*, the perpetrators were framed as members of a group of French citizens originally from Morocco and members of a terrorist organisation: Al-Qaeda. The perpetrators were also framed as individuals, being barbarians, terrorists and Kouachi brothers. *LM* framed them mainly as members of a terrorist organisation, Al-Qaeda. The group identity was further emphasised by saying they do not fit in French society²⁸ due to their background and not following the French ideal. The perpetrators were, however, also framed individually as Kouachi brothers, as individual terrorists, and as fake Muslims. In group and individual framing, there are similarities and differences in how both media framed the perpetrators.

When it comes to the victims, there are differences in the framing of *AJ* and *LM*. *AJ* framed the victims who worked at Charlie Hebdo as deserving to die because they insulted the prophet, using the words "dead" or "killed" and not "victims" to describe them. *AJ* framed the Muslim victims as heroes and members of a group (Muslims and policemen), they were described as

²⁸ Cf. « discours ambiant »

victims. *LM* talks about the victims as a group of French citizens who can be anyone. This is their main way of framing victims; however, they also frame some of the victims as part of a Muslim identity group.

As it is possible to observe, *AJ* mainly focuses on the Muslim identity of the victims and the heroines of the perpetrator. *LM* represents the perpetrators as terrorists and the victims as unlucky since it could have been anyone. This framing of the events is mainly due to their location and the audience. The location is important because of the culture and the identity that is represented by the media, the audience of the news outlet depends on this. Since nowadays, the way of being informed is through online media, the language and the way media represents events increases the media's influence. For instance, *AJ* mainly reports the news from a Middle Eastern perspective, focusing more on the Muslim victims and creating a justification for the perpetrators since they repeated that Charlie Hebdo offended the prophet of Islam. *LM*, on the other hand, mainly frames the events factually. They are referring back to how the different actors were involved in the terrorist attacks. This is a trait that repeats itself since *LM* did the same analysis when talking about other terrorist attacks as well, like, for example, London or Copenhagen attacks.

Media coverage of terrorist attacks significantly affects politics because it affects the reality construction for the public. As it was possible to observe in the analysis and the comparison, *AJ* and *LM* differentiate between Muslim and terrorism. They emphasise on this point so that the readers to not mix them up. Even if both media have a certain view on how they frame the actors of the terrorist attack, both media have some slips, like for example when *AJ* frames the perpetrators as French jihadists or when *LM* frames the perpetrators as stupid, but also says that they cannot live up to the French requirement and will never be part of the French society. These examples just show that even if both media have an overall tendency of how they frame the actors of the attack, both media slips away from their initial frame.

This research has a high internal validity because of the followed structure, the analysis not being influenced by our perspectives and because the results of this study are accurate for this case study. However, the external validity of this research is low, since it is a case study, no generalisations can be taken from the research to look at other cases.

Previous literature has mainly discovered that if the terrorist attack was committed by a Muslim, the Western media will mainly frame the perpetrator as Muslim terrorists. The focus of the social identity group will be on their religion, and them being Muslims. This research found similar results, as *LM* framed the perpetrators as being members of the Muslim the social identity and as being members of Al-Qaeda. However, this research also discovered that the

Western media was blurry sometimes in their framing of the actors in the terrorist attack, on several occasions *LM* explicitly says that there should not be any mix-ups between Muslims and terrorists. One should not confuse both since they are not related one to another.

On the other hand, some findings from our research disagree from the existing literature about the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack, for example that the perpetrators are framed as stupid by the Western media, and that the mistakes made by them are pinpointed on several occasions. Additionally, this research also found that the Arabic-speaking media, *AJ*, framed the perpetrators as heroes, by reposting articles from ISIS and Al-Qaeda, for their actions that are defending Islam and avenging the Prophet. While representing the perpetrators as heroes, *AJ*, also distances them from the religion by saying that they do not represent its values.

Hopefully, this thesis provided an academic insight into how *LM* and *AJ* framed the perpetrators and the victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack. Further research can be conducted in this field by looking at a broader range of news outlets and different terrorist attacks.

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