

Presidential Popularity after Crises

An analysis of the variation in public popularity of President Hollande after Charlie Hebdo (2015) and Bastille Day (2016)

Master thesis

Demi van Klink

S1219545

Crisis & Security Management

First reader: W. Broekema, MSc

Second reader: Dr. S. Kuipers

January 9, 2018

No of words: 17379

‘When written in Chinese, the word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity’.

- Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2013, p.4

Presidential Popularity after Crises

An analysis of the variation in public popularity of President Hollande after Charlie Hebdo (2015) and Bastille Day (2016)

During the final stages of his presidential term, François Hollande had become the least popular president in French history, with an approval rate of only 13%. Nevertheless, after demonstrating his leadership skills during the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo (2015), his popularity increased significantly as his approval rates more than doubled. Puzzling enough, a similar boost did not occur after the terrorist attacks on Bastille Day (2016). This research helps explaining the variance in public popularity for President Hollande after handling these crises. By conducting document analysis through speeches and newspaper articles, this thesis examines the influence of several factors, such as pre-crisis media portrayal, proactive communication and the creation of dominant frames during crises.

Keywords: *crisis management; crisis exploitation; pre-crisis media portrayal; proactive communication; framing; President Hollande*

Table of Content

Abstract.....	3
1 Introduction.....	5
2 Theoretical framework.....	7
2.1 Public leadership after crises.....	7
2.2 Conceptualization.....	9
2.3 Crisis exploitation.....	10
2.4 Independent variables.....	13
3 Methodology.....	16
3.1 Case selection.....	16
3.2 Data collection and sources.....	17
3.3 Operationalization.....	18
4 Case description.....	21
5 Analysis.....	24
5.1 Pre-crisis media portrayal.....	24
5.2 Proactive communication during crisis.....	28
5.3 The creation of dominant frames during crisis.....	34
6 Conclusion	40
7 References.....	42

1. Introduction

The final term of François Hollande's presidency proved to be challenging, as his leadership abilities were put to trial after France was shocked by a series of terrorist attacks. Before the Charlie Hebdo events occurred in January 2015, President Hollande's approval rates were historically low: at one point, he enjoyed only 13% of the public support, making him the least popular president in French history. Interestingly, though, Hollande's popularity increased significantly amid the darkest hours after attacks. After rising to the occasion with the Charlie Hebdo attacks, his approval rates strongly recovered, going up to almost 30% (IFOP, 2016). A similar growth in Hollande's approval rates occurred after a series of terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015. Nevertheless, President Hollande did not always manage to boost his public popularity after handling a crisis: after the Nice terrorist attack during Bastille Day in 2016, his approval rates did not increase – by contrast, they even dropped to less than 16% (IFOP, 2016). It thus seems that President Hollande is not always successful in his attempts to benefit from crises.

Whenever society is confronted with disruptive events such as terrorist attacks, the public turns its attention to their government representatives, because as soon as the crisis is over, the public will be looking to hold someone accountable. However, a crisis does not only pose a serious threat to public leaders: it can also provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership skills and credibility, while simultaneously push for new policies (Olsson et al., 2015, p.158). A crisis thus presents an opportunity to be exploited (Keeler, 1993, p.441). As the puzzling variation in Hollande's public popularity in crises demonstrates, the aftermath of a crisis can produce both winners and losers (McConnell, 2011, p.65). It can either turn a public leader into a strong and respectable statesman, or into a scapegoat (Boin et al., 2003, p.544). The aftermath of a crisis could even be considered 'a crisis in and of itself', because it generates questions about performance, leadership and responsibility (Boin et al., 2005, p.102). The phenomenon of President Hollande's approval rates after terrorist attacks demonstrates that public leaders are not always able to receive positive appraisal from the public whenever a crisis occurs. This raises the question of *what explains the variation in public popularity of political leaders after crises?* This thesis aspires to address this question by focusing on the cases of President Hollande. Why did a leader who succeeded in increasing his popularity rates during his first major crisis fail to replicate it one year later?

The political aspect of crisis management during the meaning-making phase of a crisis has received relatively little scholarly attention ('t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.22). Although the

political dimensions of crisis management have become increasingly important, this trend does not translate into a rising number of articles with political leadership as their primary topic (Kuipers & Welsh, 2017, p.8). This research aims to contribute to this prompting trend. Moreover, crises challenge political actors to create persuasive narratives on the causes and consequences of crises. The performance of politicians as crisis managers is partly reflected in electoral outcomes. Addressing the politics behind crisis management thus helps understanding how society evaluates their public leaders in times of crises.

The aim of this study is to explore the relation between the public popularity of political leaders and their performance as a crisis manager by examining the cases of Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day. Moreover, it focuses on the aspect of crisis communication of the French government and their opposition, in particular the way in which these crises were framed. This research aims to assess whether the theory of crisis exploitation can account for the variation in President Hollande's public popularity, by combining elements such as pre-crisis media portrayal as well as proactive communication and the creation of dominant frames during crises through an in-depth comparative case study.

In what follows, an overview of the existing literature on leadership during crises and the theoretical framework is provided. It addresses the main principles that constitute the concept of framing, public popularity and crisis leadership. The theory of crisis exploitation is discussed to explain the variation in public support for President Hollande after Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day. Subsequently, the independent variables are presented, which include pre-crisis media portrayal, proactive communication during crisis and the creation of dominant frames during crisis. The next section outlines the methodology and operationalization by developing concrete empirical indicators, before providing a brief case description. Finally, the empirical analysis is presented, followed by a conclusion, which contains a reflection on the findings of this thesis, as well as suggestions for further academic research.

2. Theoretical framework

The role of public leaders during crises has gradually received attention in crisis literature (McConnell, 2011, p.67). During crises, the public expects that their political leaders will reduce uncertainty and provide an authoritative narrative of what is happening, why it has occurred and what needs to be done to address the crisis (Ansell et al., 2014, p.9). This section discusses the literature on public leadership during crises, by focusing on important existing concepts such as crisis leadership, meaning making and framing.

2.1 Public leadership after crises

2.1.1 Crisis and opportunities

First, it is important to understand what is understood by the word ‘crisis’, as they come in many shapes and forms. ‘t Hart and Tindall define crises as ‘events or developments widely perceived by members of relevant communities to constitute urgent threats to core community values and structures’ (2009, p.24). Boin et al. (2005) describe a crisis as an event ‘when policy-makers experience a serious threat to the basic structures of the fundamental values and norms of a system, which under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates making vital decisions’. According to Coombs, crises vary along three dimensions: the perceived importance (impact and likelihood of a crisis), immediacy and uncertainty (2007, p.107). Because of this feeling of urgency and uncertainty, the public feels that action must be taken. Crises affect the vulnerabilities of the existing socio-political order, such as the belief in the capacity of the government to protect the public from harm (Kuipers & ‘t Hart, 2014, p.2). Consequently, whenever a crisis occurs, citizens turn to their public leaders, expecting that they will minimize the damage of a crisis (Boin et al., 2005, p.1).

Hence, for public leaders, crises present an opportunity to be the center of attention. These leaders can include presidents, mayors, local politicians, elected administrators or civil servants. It is recognized that crises shape political agendas, reputations, careers and even electoral prospects (McConnell, 2011, p.67). Public leaders need to present a persuasive story on the causes and consequences of the crisis, and what can be done to minimize its damage (Boin et al., 2005, p.13). Furthermore, as crises create a sense of urgency, it allows for unusually fast acceptance of reform proposals (Keeler, 1993, p.441). Politicians aspire to take advantage of this window of opportunity (Birkland, 2006). Hence, crises do not only pose a threat to politicians: they also provide opportunities, because they enable public leaders to demonstrate their leadership skills and promote new policies (Olsson et al., 2015, p.158).

2.1.2 Crisis leadership

Crisis leadership is defined as a set of strategic tasks that encompasses all tasks related to the stages of crisis management: sense making, decision making, meaning making, terminating and learning (Boin et al., 2005, p.10). Sense making refers to the acute crisis phase, when public leaders must evaluate the nature and severity of the threat. During the next phase of decision making, leaders must prioritize and decide on actions that need to be taken in order to handle the crisis. Next, they must put ‘meaning’ to the unfolding crisis in such a way that their efforts to handle the crisis are enhanced (Boin et al., 2005, p.13). Then, the phase of crisis termination requires some form of downsizing crisis operations and leaders must regain the necessary legitimacy and account for their choice of action to address the crisis. Finally, the last task of strategic leadership in crisis management is related to political and organizational lesson drawing (Boin et al., 2005, p.15).

2.1.3 The phase of meaning making

As this thesis examines the attempt of public leaders to present a compelling frame during a crisis to enhance the chances of political survival in the post-crisis phase, it focuses mainly on the third task of crisis leadership: meaning making. This refers to efforts of political leaders to shape people’s understanding of crises and reduce the political uncertainty generated by a crisis (Boin et al., 2005, p.69). Leaders have to provide an account of what is happening and why, and what needs to be done to address the root of the crisis. Hargrove (1998) even argues that presidential leadership is primarily about ‘teaching reality’. If a leader does not succeed, his decisions will not be accepted. Nevertheless, crises are not just ‘bad news’ for politicians: major focusing events present opportunities that well-prepared politicians are ready to exploit (‘t Hart, Tindall & Brown, 2009, p.474). When incumbent office-holders and oppositional forces attempt to use the window of opportunity generated by crises to push for certain policy changes, they will engage with meaning making. As crises generate a widely felt need for strong leadership and a demonstration of decisional resolve, political leaders have to put meaning to a crisis in such a way that it enhances their reputation as crisis managers (Wolfenstein, 1967). Moreover, if leaders want to shape the public and political meanings attached to the crisis, they must be considered as credible and trustworthy (Boin et al., 2005, p.78).

2.1.4 Framing

Political leaders engage with meaning making by creating a narrative explaining what happened, what can be done to resolve the crisis and who is to blame for it (Boin et al., 2005, p.69). However, leaders are not the only actors who attempt to frame the crisis: they compete with other parties, who have other positions and interests and who promote an alternative narrative and definition of the crisis (Boin et al., 2005, p.13). All actors battle for their version of reality to be widely accepted, in order to channel public understandings and emotions in their desired directions. Consequently, the process of meaning making is characterized by strong ‘battle for credibility’, a competition between political actors, using crises as political weapons (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.22).

One of the strategies a political actor can use to influence public perceptions is framing (Boin et al., 2005, p.82). By using frames, political actors aspire to influence the public perception on who is to be held accountable (Coombs, 2007, p.5). The essential currency of political crisis management is persuasion, understood in terms of framing contests (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.23). This entails a battle between actors with competing understandings of a crisis, seeking to exploit the opportunity to push for policy change (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.23). Crises can generate four types of framing efforts, concerning 1) the nature and severity of a crisis; 2) its causes; 3) the responsibility for its occurrence or escalation and; 4) its policy implications (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.23). All actors involved in accountability processes use strategies to allocate blame during crises. This ‘blame game’ is often perceived as a set of interactions between elected politicians on the one hand and the general public on the other hand (Hood, 2002). Hood provides three strategies for politicians to manage blame: the first is through presentational strategies, by selecting arguments to minimize or avoid blame. Another is through policy strategies; selecting policy positions to minimize or avoid blame, for example by choosing between policies that support risk creators against policies that support risk victims. Finally, a third strategy involves the selection of institutional arrangements to minimize or avoid blame, such as choosing between direct control and delegation (Hood, 2002). Hence, crisis communication plays an important role in the blame game and is crucial for the survival and political fate of leaders.

2.2 Conceptualization

Before addressing the theory that provides the foundation for this research, it is important to discuss the concepts of crisis leadership and public popularity used in this thesis. As events

move through the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis stages, authorities must display crisis leadership to reestablish order and create a sense of trust and confidence (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007, p.30). Crisis leadership for example includes initiating a crisis response; mitigating the harm; acting as a spokesperson; expressing sympathy to the victims; remaining accessible and open; facilitating the flow of information; acting decisively; coordinating actions among the various response groups and agencies; reconnecting with stakeholders; prioritizing activities and resources; communicating core values; paying symbolic attention to the crisis and maintaining appropriate flexibility (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007, p.30).

Puzzling enough, there has been a lack of serious academic debate on what constitutes public leadership to be a success or a failure (McConnell, 2011, p.64). For politicians to be successful crisis leaders, they need to succeed in enhancing their reputation or electoral prospects; by contrast, they are considered to be a failure if their reputation is damaged or electoral prospects are worsened (McConnell, 2011, p.69). Bovens perceives the public as the final stage of the accountability chain, as they pass judgment on the conduct of the governmental leaders, who reveal their disapproval by voting for other political representatives (2010, p.955). With regard to their reputation, political leaders are confronted with the so-called ‘paradox of the democratic leader’; on the one hand, they need to appear ‘above us’, creating a statesman-like image in order for the population to trust them to govern; on the other hand, they need to appear ‘like us’ so they can claim to represent the people (Wood et al., 2016, p.581). As success or failure is linked to one’s reputation and electoral prospects, this thesis focuses on public popularity to assess the evaluation of crisis leadership. For that reason, it draws on the definition provided by MacKuen (1983, p.165), which describes public popularity as a ‘representation of a measure of the public’s judgment of the current political leader and may provide an indicator of coming electoral behavior’. Hence, in this paper popularity is considered in accordance with public support: the approval and positive evaluation of a president.

2.3 Crisis exploitation

The literature suggests that the theory of crisis exploitation, developed by Boin, ‘t Hart and McConnell (2009), can be helpful in explaining the variation of public popularity of political leaders after crises. Crisis exploitation is defined as ‘the purposeful utilization of crisis-type rhetoric to significantly alter levels of political support for public office-holders and public policies’ (Boin et al., 2009, p.83). This theory focuses on the nature and depth of changes in political support for key public office-holders; and the nature and degree of policy change in

the wake of the crisis. It argues that the outcomes of a crisis can best be perceived in terms of framing contests between actors that want to exploit the opportunities generated by a crisis (Boin et al., 2009, p.82). These actors seek to exploit a crisis, either to defend their position or push for new policies. The frames and counter-frames generated after events concern the nature and severity of the crisis, its causes, the responsibility for its occurrence and its future implications (Boin et al., 2009, p.82).

2.3.1 Framing contests

During crises, the stakes are high: politicians risk being blamed for its occurrence, whereas oppositional forces want to seize the opportunity to push for new policies. In order to generate a political crisis, a significant number of powerful actors are required to make a connection between crises and core values of the political systems (Brändström & Kuipers, 2003, p.291). Politicians are forced to take a stance, because questions about responsibility and accountability will occur once a crisis becomes politically (Brändström & Kuipers, 2003, p.291). Consequently, political leaders have to deal with a great number of forces: mass media, parliamentary inquiries, the political system, legislation, their political opposition and the political climate (Brändström, 2016, p.17). The public perception and interpretation determines the political impact of crises on political leaders and their policy (Boin et al., 2009, p.83).

To influence the public perception, two framing contests are at play during a crisis. The first framing contest concerns the significance of the event (Boin et al., 2009, p.85). This relates to the question of whether the issue at stake during the crisis is considered to be of great importance, or whether it can be ignored (Boin et al., 2009, p.85). The second framing contest concerns the causality of the events: who or what caused it? This can severely damage the political fate of incumbent office-holders and their current policies (Boin et al., 2009, p.87). Frames that endogenize accountability focus blame on identifiable individuals; frames that exogenize accountability avoid blame and leave existing policies intact (Boin et al., 2009, p.87). In order to frame the course of events to influence the dominant public perception of what happened, strategic rhetoric plays a crucial role. This includes referring to a set of recurrent defensive scripts, such as accusing the accusers, disqualifying critics and blaming the messenger (Kuipers & 't Hart, 2014).

Crisis exploitation centers around two games generated by a crisis. The first is the political game, involving the clash between governmental actors and the opposition (Boin et al., 2009, p.88). In the political game, anti-establishment actors have to decide if they can

hold the incumbent political leaders responsible for the crisis and if they want to undermine their authority by damaging their reputation (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.28). Office-holders have to decide whether they reject the blame or accept it. The preferred outcome for the opposition is blame acceptance, when they focus the blame on office-holders and, in turn, these office-holders accept all responsibility (Boin et al., 2009, p.89). By contrast, incumbents prefer to deny responsibility. The most likely outcome of the political game, however, is blame showdown, which occurs when critics focus the blame on the incumbents, whilst the incumbents deny responsibility. This is when elite damage, elite escape and elite rejuvenation all are possible outcomes (Boin et al., 2009, p.89). This scenario could result in a highly politicized process of crisis investigation, reinvestigation and spin.

Table 1.1: crisis exploitation: the political game (Boin et al., 2009, p.89)

Incumbents	Critics	Absolve blame	Focus blame
Accept responsibility		I. Blame minimization: elite escape likely	II. Blame acceptance: elite damage likely
Deny responsibility		III. Blame avoidance: elite escape likely	IV. Blame showdown: elite damage, escape, rejuvenation all possible

The second game involves the policy game, centered on the clash between actors that want to maintain the status quo and actors that want to promote policy change (Boin et al., 2009, p.88). This involves the battle on whether the status quo advocates and the opposition have the leverage to either resist or push for policy change (Boin et al., 2009, p.90).

Table 1.2: crisis exploitation: the policy game

Change advocates	Press for policy paradigm shift	Press for incremental reform
Status-quo players		
Resist policy change	I. Policy stalemate or politically imposed paradigm shift	II. Policy stalemate or politically imposed incremental adjustment
Contain policy change	III. Major and swift rhetorical/symbolic change; more incremental substantive change	IV. Negotiated incremental adjustment

2.3.2 Outcomes

The political and policy game can result in elite damage, elite escape and elite rejuvenation. Elite damage refers to the downfall of political careers and reputations, whether temporary or definite. Elite escape entails diffused blame and elite rejuvenation refers to office-holders that

manage to benefit from a crisis and are praised instead of blamed (Boin et al., 2009, p.94). A crisis can also generate policy change. If status-quo advocates resist policy change, while change advocates press for a policy paradigm shift, the result is either a policy stalemate or a politically imposed paradigm shift. However, if the status-quo advocate contains policy change, the result is likely a rhetorical, incremental change. If change-advocates press for incremental reform whilst status-quo players resist policy change, the likely result is either a policy stalemate or a politically imposed incremental adjustment (Boin et al., 2009, p.90). The final possible outcome occurs when change advocates press for incremental reform and status-quo players contain policy change; this results in a negotiated incremental adjustment (Boin et al., 2009, p.90). This thesis elaborates on the political game in the theory of crisis exploitation by examining new cases, in order to contribute to this field of knowledge and strengthen the existing theory.

2.4 Independent variables

Drawing on the theory of Boin, 't Hart and McConnell (2009), this thesis focuses on a combination of variables to explain why Hollande received a boost in popularity after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo (2015), whereas he did not after Bastille Day (2016). Elements such as pre-crisis media portrayal, proactive communication and the creation of dominant frames during crisis are examined.

Pre-crisis media portrayal

A group of scholars agree that mass media play an important role in the reputation of political leaders, as the media function as an arena in which crisis performers operate and promote their understanding of the crisis (Edelman, 1977). Consequently, media coverage plays a crucial role in shaping politicians' reputation. Experts in crisis management claim that a favorable reputation prior to the crisis is an important resource during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2006, p.123). A politician with a more favorable prior reputation will still have a stronger post-crisis reputation because it has more reputation capital to spend than a politician with an unfavorable or neutral prior reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2006, p.124). This favorable reputation may generate a so-called 'halo effect' that protects a politician from any reputation loss (Coombs & Holladay, 2006, p.125). Although Coombs and Holladay relate this halo effect merely to organizational reputations, it can be linked to political reputations as well: Boin, 't Hart and McConnell (2009) claim that a relation exists between media reporting

of an actor's behavior in relation to a crisis and its pre-crisis reporting about that actor, regardless of that actor's crisis communication behavior. This results in the following hypothesis:

H1: Political leaders are more likely to gain public popularity during the crisis if they receive positive media portrayal prior to the crisis

Proactive communication during crisis

Secondly, Boin, 't Hart and McConnell (2009) suggest that proactive communication contributes to increased public popularity for political leaders. Incumbent officeholders can for example proactively take blame in a timely, non-coerced way (Boin et al., 2009, p.94). Scholars argue that proactive communication during crises is crucial, because 'if an actor does not disclose incriminating information, its opponents will, with twice as much impact' (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012, p.84). Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2013) stress that visibility and accessibility following a crisis is important, as proactive communication helps to increase the impression that the crisis is being actively managed and reduces the impression that the political leader is hiding something (Ulmer et al., 2013, p.65). Sometimes, leaders might feel the urge to withdraw during crisis, particularly when they feel that they might be blamed for its occurrence, but Ulmer et al. (2013) suggest that this might make the crisis worse, as they will cut themselves off from important information and increase uncertainty that they might have something to hide. For that reason, perhaps the most commonly offered prescription for actors involved in crises is 'tell it all and tell it fast' (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005, p.425). Advocates of proactive, professional media performance suggest that it offers the opportunity to frame the message and the crisis situation, while also contributing to a politician's credibility (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005, p.426). By contrast, acting reactive and communicating in a disorganized fashion can have the opposite effect. Subsequently, the next hypothesis can be derived:

H2: Political leaders are more likely to gain public popularity during the crisis if they proactively communicate the crisis

The creation of dominant frames during crisis

Finally, it is suggested that the ‘blame game’ has a significant impact on the political fate of a leader. According to Kuipers and ‘t Hart, ‘societies need a purification ritual to move on from crises’ (2014, p.590). Through media coverage, crises focus public attention on all parties involved; victims, responders, corporations and politicians (Kuipers & ‘t Hart, 2014, p.590). Each party aims to influence how the crisis is portrayed and understood. Crises are thus linked to ‘accountability management’; through accountability, crises can make or break political careers and reputations (Kuipers & ‘t Hart, 2014, p.590). Accountability does not only provide legitimacy to public officials, but it also has a significant impact on public trust in the government (Bovens, 2010, p.954). The media increasingly plays an important role in the creation of these dominant frames. Olsson et al. (2015) identify a growing tendency of journalists to adhere an interpretative style of journalism, as opposed to traditional descriptive journalism: interpretative journalism focuses mainly on providing answers to why an event has occurred, whereas descriptive journalism focuses on ‘what, where, when and who’ questions. As a result, the journalist has become an analyst, rather than an observer of political events (Olsson et al., 2015, p.162). Hence, incumbent officeholders and the opposition must ‘sell’ their crisis frame to the media to gain or strengthen their political authority (Boin et al., 2009, p.95). Officeholders can fail to do so, if their opponents succeed in establishing a dominant counter-frame. This results in the following hypothesis:

H3: Political leaders are more likely to gain public popularity during the crisis if they succeed in creating a dominant frame in the mass media

In the section that follows, the methodology, scope and limits are discussed. Moreover, the presented hypotheses and subsequent variables are explained and operationalized, in order to explain how these hypotheses will be measured.

3. Methodology

3.1 Case selection

This research consists of a qualitative, comparative case study. Case study research is an in-depth examination of phenomena in real-life context, suited to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Yin, 2003). As this research aspires to examine why the popularity of political leaders varies after crises, a case study design is chosen. The case selection is based on a most similar systems design (MSSD). Subsequently, it is important to select cases that are similar with regard to most background conditions, but show variance with regard to the dependent variable (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p.304). The theory of crisis exploitation is examined by an in-depth case study on President Hollande’s performance as a crisis manager during Charlie Hebdo (2015) and Bastille Day (2016). These cases are chosen because they have important similar features; first, they both occur in France. Furthermore, both cases concern a terrorist attack by Islam-inspired radicals, resulting in a high number of casualties. Moreover, both attacks are considered to be an attack on the values of the French society. Importantly, during both cases, François Hollande is President of the Republic, and the political landscape and order has remained similar, since no elections were held in-between the terrorist acts. Finally, both cases involve the same key media actors reporting on the crisis, in a liberal, democratic climate. However, despite these important similarities, these cases have a different political outcome: President Hollande’s public popularity increased after the first attack, but decreased after the second. An overview is presented in table 2:

Table 2 - Most similar systems design: Charlie Hebdo & Bastille Day

	Crisis involves act of terrorism	Attack on French values	High number of casualties	Hollande is President	Same political order	Same country	Same media actors	Public popularity after crisis
Charlie Hebdo	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Increase
Bastille Day	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Decrease

3.1.1 Scope and limits

The most similar system design allows for a controlled comparison method of research. This method is useful to explain the variance in outcomes, while you control for background conditions and important alternative explanations. It can help explain the variation in public support for Hollande after crises. However, this method also has flaws. A disadvantage of this

method is that it is hard to find cases that are completely similar (George & Bennett, 2005, p.151). However, the cases of Charlie Hebdo and Nice score similarly on a large number of important independent variables, but score differently on the dependent variable. Furthermore, in the most similar systems design, the investigator cannot be ensured that all the possible relevant independent variables have been identified (George & Bennett, 2005, p.156). Another flaw in this research relates to the fact that for a most similar systems design, the study of two or more cases need to resemble each other in every aspect but one; the author of this thesis is aware that in this research, more than one independent variable is examined in order to address the research question (pre-crisis media portrayal; proactive communication; the creation of dominant frames during crisis). Moreover, in terms of external validity, another disadvantage of case study research is that it encounters problems of representativeness, because it includes, by definition, only a limited number of cases of a more general phenomenon (Gerring, 2006, p.43). This makes it difficult to generalize to other cases. Nevertheless, this research can provide important insights in the evaluation of public leaders as crisis managers in democratic context. For this research, generalization is possible for public leaders of other Western European countries or semi-presidential systems that have been in office for a long time. Additionally, another strength of this research lies in the ability to keep many background conditions constant by focusing solely on President Hollande, which excludes the interference of other possible factors, such as personal charisma.

3.2. Data collection and sources

The data for this study is retrieved from primary sources, including speeches, press releases, governmental documents, opinion polls and public statements to discover the frames established by the media, President Hollande and his opposition. Other sources include French local and national newspapers. Newspapers are chosen based on circulation numbers, to determine whether the frames of key media actors, François Hollande and oppositional forces reached a great number of readers. To assess the political frames in the mass media, the following left-wing, right-wing and Catholic newspapers are analyzed: La Croix, L'Express, Le Figaro, Libération, Le Monde, L'Opinion and Le Parisien. With this selection, all aspects of the French political spectrum are represented. Furthermore, articles were selected that devoted their main content to the event in question, which means that the event was not just mentioned in passing. This choice significantly downsized the number of article available for analysis. The articles were retrieved from Google by searching on [name of attack] and the terms [Hollande] and [attack/attentat] in the context of the articles. Due to time restrictions,

only articles of the previously selected newspapers that are directly linked to the disaster were included. Hence, a total of 59 news articles were analyzed. The period of analysis for the second and third variable is restricted to the acute phase of the crisis. Hence, the analysis of speeches, statements and news articles after Charlie Hebdo cover the period of 7-28 January 2015. The period of analysis for the Nice 2016 attacks covers articles published in the period of 14 July – 4 August 2016. For the hypothesis regarding Hollande's pre-crisis media portrayal, the coverage of the major French newspapers is analyzed in terms of implicit/explicit support to Hollande, neutral, or critical. For the analysis of this hypothesis, articles are selected in a period of one year prior to the attack.

3.3 Operationalization

3.3.1 *Dependent variable*

The dependent variable in this study concerns the public popularity of a political leader. According to McConnell (2011), a leader is considered to be successful after a crisis, if he manages to enhance his electoral prospects. Subsequently, McConnell speaks of failure when the leader's reputation is damaged, thus worsening the electoral prospects for the political leader or his party (McConnell, 2011, p.69). In line with McConnell's typology, this paper defines public popularity after crises in terms of popular support. As an indicator for public popularity this thesis uses the opinion polls conducted by IFOP, which reflect the percentage of the public approving of the way President Hollande is handling his job as President. This variable can be divided into two categories: 1) increase of public popularity and 2) decrease of public popularity. The case of Charlie Hebdo can be placed in the first category, whereas the case of Bastille Day belongs to the second category. Evidence for the dependent variable is based on popularity polls conducted by IFOP. IFOP provides monthly indicators of presidential popularity, which allows for the analysis of his popularity prior and shortly after the crisis occurs. Hollande's popularity rates after the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 demonstrate an increase from 17% to 29% (IFOP, 2016). By contrast, in July 2016, after the Bastille Day attack, Hollande's approval rates dropped from 17% to 16% (IFOP, 2016).

3.3.2 *Independent variables*

Pre-crisis media portrayal, proactive communication and dominant frames during crises are the independent variables, which are derived from the hypotheses presented in the theoretical framework. In what follows, the operationalization of these hypotheses is discussed.

The first hypothesis focuses on the *pre-crisis media portrayal*. This variable is revealed by mass media coverage of Hollande prior to the crisis and can be divided into three groups: 1) implicitly/explicitly supportive; 2) neutral and 3) negative/critical prior to the events of the crisis. The pre-crisis media portrayal of the President is considered supportive when the tone of coverage on Hollande is associated with positive proposals, political support and competence or progress. For example, descriptions such as ‘a solution for France’ are considered to be of a supportive nature. Hollande’s media portrayal is coded as neutral if there is no tendency at all in the news items prior to the crises, just unbiased references to political actions or statements. For instance, ‘the president announces a series of economic and social measures’ is perceived as neutral. Finally, the pre-crisis media portrayal is regarded as negative when media coverage of Hollande is related to negative proposals or incompetence. Examples include the use of the words ‘nightmare’, ‘catastrophic’ or ‘failure’.

With regard to the second hypothesis of *proactive communication during crisis*, it is important to address the elements that constitute this proactive communication strategy. According to ‘t Hart (1993), rituals are an important dimension of crisis communication. This entails for example if and how fast prominent officials visit the site or victims of the crisis (‘t Hart, 1993, p.43). Moreover, they need to be seen in control of the crisis and reassure the public that every effort is made to address the root of the problem (‘t Hart, 1993, p.43). Furthermore, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2013, p.65) emphasize that leaders should be visible and accessible to the media, as well as responsive to the needs of the victims. Moreover, they argue that transparency and honesty creates trust, credibility and support. For example, Boin et al. (2009) state that lying, understating or denying problems undermines proactive communication. Moreover, proactive communication strategies involve disclosing potentially negative information concerning the incumbent officeholder at stake before it is released by another entity, such as the opposition or the media.

Finally, the third hypothesis focuses on *the creation of dominant frames during crisis*. Crises challenge public leaders as well as anti-establishment forces to create persuasive narratives about what is happening and what is at stake, why it is happening and how the crisis should be dealt with (‘t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.22). Since the mass media plays a crucial role in reporting political crisis rhetoric, this research focuses on the frame reflected by the media to assess which frame has become dominant and thus which politician has ‘won’ the blame game. If the leader’s frame is supported by the media regarding its claim about the severity and causes for the crisis, as well as its own handling of the crisis, it has succeeded in establishing a dominant frame. Key mass media actors involve the newspapers discussed in

the section concerning data collection. The table below demonstrates a summary of the variables and indicators for this research.

Table 3 – Operationalization

Variables	Operational definitions	Indicators	Source
Public popularity	Public popularity is defined as the 'enhancement of one's reputation or electoral prospects'	One's public popularity is enhanced in case of an increase in opinion polls conducted by IFOP to the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you satisfied with François Hollande as President of the Republic? One's public popularity declines if there is an increase in opinion polls conducted by IFOP to the question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you unhappy with François Hollande as President of the Republic? 	(McConnell, 2011, p.69)
Pre-crisis media portrayal	This variable relates to the style of reporting by key media actors in terms of supportive, neutral or critical language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive language of the media concerning Hollande ('solution for France', French Maverick') • Neutral language of the media concerning Hollande ('the President announced a series of economic and social measures') • Critical/negative language of the media concerning ('nightmare', 'failure', 'catastrophic') 	(Olsson, Nord & Falkheimer, 2015, p.165)
Proactive communication during crisis	This concerns the communication of a political leader during a crisis in a visible, accessible and timely manner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quick attendance: did Hollande visit the scene of attack within two hours? 2. Transparency: did Hollande provide accessible and timely information to stakeholders? 3. Visibility: was Hollande seen to be in control of the crisis by the mass media? 4. Rituals: did Hollande express his sympathy to the victims? 5. Did Hollande reassure the public that every effort is made to address the root of the problem? 6. Did Hollande lie, understate or deny any problems? 7. Did the media reveal any negative information before Hollande or his administration was able to do so? 	('t Hart, 1993, p.43; Boin et al., 2009, p.94; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2013, p.140; Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005, p.426)
The creation of dominant frames during crisis	The narrative created by politicians to explain what is happening, what is at stake, why it is happening and how the crisis should be dealt with which is supported by key media actors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is blamed or held accountable for the crisis by the media? 2. Can this attack be seen as an incident or was it a symptom of underlying policy failures? 3. Could it have been prevented? 	('t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.22)

The remainder of this research is as followed: first a brief description of the cases is discussed, providing background information on the presidency of Hollande as well as the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in Paris (2015) and Bastille Day in Nice (2016). The next section presents the empirical analysis, before discussing the findings and recommendations for further research in a conclusion.

4. Case description

4.1.1 Presidency of François Hollande

Hollande was elected president in May 2012, becoming only the second candidate of the Left to be elected president of France since the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958 (Kuhn, 2014, p.436). During the 2012 campaign, while promoting the slogan ‘Le changement, c’est maintenant’, Hollande wanted to be portrayed as ‘a normal president’, to differentiate himself from Sarkozy (Kuhn, 2014, p.444). Shortly after his inauguration, President Hollande had an approval rating of 61% - a score that, in comparison to his predecessors at the start of their presidential term, placed him just behind De Gaulle (67%) and Sarkozy (65%), but ahead of Chirac (59%), Mitterrand (54%) and Pompidou (54%) (Kuhn, 2014, p.436). Soon, however, his approval rates dropped significantly. Hollande became president at a time when the French economy was performing poorly, with low levels of economic growth (Kuhn, 2014, p.440). During his presidency, France had to deal with the severe impact of the global banking crisis and the eurocrisis. Although Hollande had promised during his campaign to tackle the problem of growing unemployment in France by the end of 2013, the unemployment rate kept rising (Kuhn, 2014, p.441).

Consequently, Hollande’s leadership qualities were called into question by many voters: in a February 2014 opinion poll, 84% of the respondents agreed that Hollande was not able to maintain order and therefore not a ‘real leader’ (Kuhn, 2014, p.445). It was often said that Hollande looked ‘indecisive’, for example with regard to the gay marriage issue, when Hollande initially suggested that mayors were allowed to choose not to perform same-sex ceremonies (Kuhn, 2014, p.445). Additionally, in the international arena, Hollande was criticized for miscalculating France’s influence in the international community, as he underestimated the reluctance to intervene in Syria, leaving France diplomatically isolated (Gaffney, 2014).

In short, President Hollande became an unlucky president, who was in desperate need of a popularity boost and a chance to demonstrate his statesman-skills. This opportunity

finally presented itself from January 2015 onwards, when France was shocked by a series of coordinated terrorist attacks. The shootings in January 2015 even represented the most severe terrorist attacks since the bombing of the Paris metro by the Algerian Armed Islamic Group in 1995 (Moran, 2017, p.316). The remainder of this section discusses two of these terrorist attacks: Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day.

4.1.2 Charlie Hebdo, Paris

From January 7 to January 9, a wave of terror attacks occurred in Paris, killing a total of 17 people. The first attack occurred on Wednesday January 7, 2015, as two terrorists, dressed in black and armed with Kalashnikovs, opened fire in the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo (Cohu et al., 2016, p.51). The Charlie Hebdo magazine, which satirizes religion and politics, had a history of receiving threats and criticism, in particular after Charlie Hebdo published controversial cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in 2006 (CNN, 2016). Not only does Islam forbid the representation of the prophet; Charlie Hebdo's cartoons also stressed similarities between Islam and religious terrorism, referring to al-Qaeda (Alicino, 2016, p.61). The cartoons were even described as 'overt provocation' by French President Chirac (CNN, 2016). After having published another caricature of the prophet Mohammed in 2011, the magazine's offices were destroyed by a gasoline bomb (CNN, 2016).

On Wednesday January 7, 2015, eleven people were killed, including several of the magazine's cartoonists, and several others were wounded. The police, alerted to a shooting incident, arrived at the scene as the terrorists were leaving the building (BBC News, 2015). The getaway car was found abandoned, three kilometers north of the Charlie Hebdo offices. Investigators found two jihadist flags and Molotov cocktails in the car.

In the morning of Thursday January 8, as the police continued their search for the Charlie Hebdo terrorist suspects, an armed man shot two people in the southern Paris suburb of Montrouge (BBC News, 2015). The search for the perpetrators ended on the morning of Friday January 9, as the police closed in on the suspects at a printing firm in Dammartin-en-Goele, 35 kilometers from Paris (BBC News, 2015). Eventually, both suspects – the brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi – were killed. On that same Friday, another attack occurred as a gunman entered a kosher supermarket in the Paris suburb of Porte de Vincennes, later identified as Amedy Coulibaly. Coulibaly killed four hostages in the grocery store and was later killed by the police during an operation. He was also linked to the attack in Montrouge the day before (CNN, 2016). A few days after the attack, Charlie Hebdo released a new

edition of its magazine, featuring a cartoon of the prophet Mohammed on the cover, holding a sign that says 'Je suis Charlie' (CNN, 2016).

4.1.3 Bastille Day, Nice

On the evening of July 14, 2016, France was once again targeted. During Bastille Day, the French national holiday, a truck deliberately drove into crowds watching a firework displays in Nice, resulting in the death of 87 people and injuring 458 (Carli et al., 2017, p.1). The driver, later identified as Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, a 31-year-old Tunisian resident of France, barreled the truck two kilometers through the crowd on the Promenade des Anglais, before opening fire on the police (BBC News, 2016a). The attack ended after a gunfire between the driver and the police, during which the driver was killed. The police later discovered two guns, a number of fake weapons and grenades in the vehicle. Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was 'totally unknown' to the French security services (BBC News, 2016a). The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was a 'soldier of the Islamic State' (The Washington Times, 2016).

On the morning before the attack, President Hollande said that the national state of emergency, which was put in place after the November 2015 Paris attacks, would end on July 26, 2016, after the Tour de France (Boutin & Paulussen, 2016). France had also just hosted the Euro 2016 football tournament, during which the country had put extensive security measures in place. Some of the matches in the tournament were hosted in Nice, ending with the England-Iceland match on 27 June. Hollande had explained that the state of emergency was not extended because 'that would mean we are no longer a republic with the rule of law applied in all circumstances' (Boutin & Paulussen, 2016). Nonetheless, on July 15, one day after the Bastille Day terrorist attack, it was announced that the state of emergency would be prolonged after all.

5. Analysis

5.1 Pre-crisis media portrayal

Only a few months into his presidency, Hollande's popularity started to fade, resulting in becoming the 'least popular president in French history' (Le Monde, 2013). Although Hollande promised rapid change during his campaign, once he was elected, he was not able to live up to the expectations of reforms. Quickly the label 'indecisive' was sticking to Hollande's image (The Guardian, 2013). According to experts in the field of crisis management, a favorable reputation prior to a crisis constitutes an important resource during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). This section addresses whether President Hollande is more likely to gain public popularity during the crisis if he receives positive media portrayal prior to the crisis, by focusing on the tone of news coverage on Hollande by key media actors before Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day.

5.1.1 *Charlie Hebdo, Paris*

Soon after President Hollande was elected in 2012, his approval rates declined, and the tone of media coverage on Hollande gradually shifted from a supportive to a relatively critical tone. Interestingly, however, the French media appeared to consider private life and the public office to be kept separate, when Hollande's affair with actress Julie Gayet became public knowledge in 2014. When Hollande organized a press conference shortly after this revelation, the French press responded 'with kid gloves', giving President Hollande a fairly easy ride (Telegraph, 2014). Even the more populist magazine *Le Parisien* (2014) remained mostly political, writing that 'the president announced a series of economic and social measures, while remaining very discrete about his personal situation'. Instead of highlighting his alleged affair, the French media largely praised him for his economic reforms. Center-right newspaper *Le Figaro* (2014a) even praised him for his 'martial language'. Considering his low popularity rates and his alleged affair in 2014, for a while, the media portrayal of Hollande remained fairly supportive, as they remained neutral during his affair and did not give him a very hard time.

Nevertheless, when his popularity rates declined even more, the French media started to publish articles with a more critical tone. Whereas the media attributed relatively positive terms to his press conference in January 2014, despite the news of his alleged affair, the tone of news coverage of his press conference in September 2014 was much more critical. *Le Figaro* (2014b) for example used the words 'catastrophic' and 'nightmare' to describe

Hollande's leadership. La Croix (2014) observed that Hollande behaved 'defensive' during the conference, since Hollande kept emphasizing that 'the results are coming soon', which was not considered reassuring. Similarly, Le Figaro (2014c) stated that Hollande is in an 'extremely difficult political situation', declaring that 'almost all indicators are red'. The newspaper even detected a trend of 'Hollande bashing' among the French mass media. L'Express (2014) criticized Hollande for constantly emphasizing that his job 'is not easy, it is hard'. Additionally, Libération (2014) underscored that its editors were not reassured by Hollande's acknowledgement that the results of his policies are 'slow'. Even Le Monde (2014), which usually approached Hollande in neutral terms, reported in a more serious manner to Hollande's conference, stressing the 'severe tone' of his press conference.

As the nature of Hollande's media portrayal quickly deteriorated in the months prior to the Charlie Hebdo attacks, the president's team launched a charm offensive for the public and the media. In December, a small group of French citizens were invited for coffee with the President at the Elysée Palace. This reputation-move was mocked by Le Point (2014), writing that 'we can expect everything from a president, except that'. Le Point (2014) continued on a skeptical tone: 'Should we see this coffee break as a sign that he is not at ease as a president, a sign that he is lost? Or is it simply a tactic?' On January 5, two days prior to the attack, President Hollande kicked off a marathon media campaign, starting with a two-hour interview on the public radio station France Inter (France 24, 2015). Additionally, it was announced that he would make several more media appearances in the coming days, including a visit and speech to the nation's armed forces and veterans, as well as a huge biannual press conference (France 24, 2015). However, two days later, the Charlie Hebdo attack occurred.

5.1.2 Bastille Day, Nice

Whereas the media became fairly harsh on President Hollande prior to Charlie Hebdo, at least he did not have to share the spotlight with another political opponent in the months before the attack. By contrast, in the period prior to Bastille Day, Hollande had trouble even making the headlines, as he faced severe competition from Minister Emmanuel Macron, who increasingly received positive appraisal from the French press. In April 2016, Macron launched a new liberal, progressive political party, 'En Marche!'. In the weeks leading up to Bastille Day, his movement gathered enormous media coverage: 'In less than two weeks, Macron has been absolutely everywhere' (Europe 1, 2016a). Gradually, while a new candidacy of Hollande was constantly questioned, the French media focused on Macrons influence on the political left (Europe 1, 2016a). Almost every prominent newspaper featured Macron on the front page

in the weeks before Bastille Day (Acrimed, 2016). By contrast, President Hollande was not once featured on the cover. One day before the attack, on July 13, Acrimed, an organization that critically assesses the French press, concluded that the French key media actors are ‘unanimously in favor of Emmanuel Macron’ (2016).

While Macron was receiving a lot of support from the French media, Hollande attempted to regain the spotlight. In April 2016, Hollande orchestrated a television interview on France 2. This ‘dialogue citoyen’ was an effort to justify his actions as a president in order to increase the public support for his candidacy for re-election (Europe 1, 2016b). According to *Le Parisien* earlier that day, 76% of the French people thought that Hollande should give up on the presidential election (2016). Subsequently, this television interview was an important defining moment for his future political career; it was even considered to be Hollande’s ‘last chance’ to win back public opinion for his participation in the elections (Europe 1, 2016c). The interview was carefully staged in order for Hollande to convince skeptical voters that his policies were bearing fruit (*Le Parisien*, 2016).

However, conveniently, the same day, Macron participated in the launch of the French Tech Hub, speaking to some journalists before Hollande’s television interview with France 2 (Europe 1, 2016a). During this interview, when he was asked whether he would participate in French politics in 2017, Macron hinted for a possible presidential candidacy (Europe 1, 2016a). Consequently, with this interview Macron skillfully stole Hollande’s thunder, only minutes before Hollande’s important television appearance. While the press dedicated a lot of attention to Macron’s subtle announcement that day, Hollande’s television interview was not well received. The French media reported with a negative tone to Hollande’s appearance: for example, *Le Figaro* (2016a) accused him of ‘denying reality’ for stating his optimism about the future. Newspaper *La Croix* (2016) claimed that the president was politically isolated and remained ‘skeptical’ about his explanation for his policies. *Le Point* (2016) used the word ‘indifferent’ to describe Hollande’s dialogues citoyens: ‘a disturbing signal’. Even *Le Monde* (2016a) portrayed his performance as ‘a president standing in the cloud of criticism’. Moreover, *Libération* (2016a) noticed how the word ‘failure’ came back regularly in the questions of the journalists and even labeled his interview as a ‘flop’, criticizing him for not being able to capture the audience.

Meanwhile, Macron had become one of the ‘favorite figures’ in the French traditional media, praising him for his youth and reformist ideas (*Libération*, 2016b). In June 2016, only days before the Bastille Day attack, support for Macron and his movement began to grow in the media, as *L’Express*, *Les Echos*, *Le 1* and *L’Opinion* started to voice their support for

Macron. L'Express published Macron in its cover with the headline; 'Macron, what I want for 2017'. Christophe Barbier, director of L'Express, stated that Macron is 'what is needed to reinvent the country' (Libération, 2016c). L'Opinion perceived Macron as a 'French Maverick' (L'Opinion, 2016). Finally, even Le Monde (2016b) wrote that Macron 'is a problem for Hollande, as the student is surpassing the teacher, but perhaps a solution for France'. The pro-Macron influence within the French press was even coined with the term 'Macronite'; 'Emmanuel Macron fills the rooms, inflates the polls, is talked about in bistros and salons; Macronite is a pandemic' (Libération, 2016d).

5.1.3 Sub conclusion

In short, the pre-crisis media portrayal of Hollande prior to Bastille Day does not differ significantly from the media coverage he received before Charlie Hebdo. Overall, the pre-crisis media portrayal of Hollande is related to negative proposals, skepticism or incompetence. Table 4 presents an overview of the tone of coverage by the key media actors as discussed in the sections above.

Table 4 – Overview pre-crisis media portrayal Hollande

Newspaper	Political alignment	Prior to Charlie Hebdo	Prior to Bastille Day
La Croix	Catholic	Critical	Critical
L'Express	Centre-right	Critical	Critical
Le Figaro	Centre-right	Critical	Critical
Libération	Left-wing	Critical	Critical
Le Monde	Centre-left	Neutral	Critical
Le Parisien	Neutral	Neutral	Critical
Le Point	Right-wing	Critical	Critical

Hence, analyzing the pre-crisis coverage of the key media actors, it can be concluded that the style of reporting by the French mass media is both critical and therefore similar for the cases of Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day. It is therefore not likely that the pre-crisis media coverage was a decisive factor in the variation of Hollande's popularity after the crises. With regard to these considerations, the hypothesis of pre-crisis media portrayal can be discarded.

5.2 Proactive communication during crisis

The actions of the French President are largely restricted by protocols and routines (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.8). Usually, presidential trips are planned a long time in advance, but visiting the location of terrorist attacks or catastrophic events can be of great symbolic value, as they give meaning to the place visited, focus attention on the governmental actors and indicate the support of the president (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.8). For a short period of time during the crisis, the government remains the only source of reliable information: it has the advantage of speaking with authority and is better informed than oppositional forces (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.12). The government thus profits from this initial period, the ‘elasticity of reality’, by maximizing their exposure in the mass and social media (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p.445). This requires the quick attendance of the government at the scene of attack, the transparent provision of information and reassurance to the public that every effort is made to address the root of the problem. Moreover, rituals constitute an important dimension of crisis communication to the public.

This section examines whether President Hollande is more likely to gain public popularity after a crisis if he proactively communicates the crisis. It thus analyzes the efforts of the François Hollande to communicate in a visible, accessible and timely manner, by focusing on his communication strategy after the Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day attacks.

5.2.1 *Charlie Hebdo, Paris*

As ‘t Hart (1993) argues, rituals constitute an important element of crisis management, for instance how quick political leaders can visit the scene of the crisis. On Wednesday January 7, 2015, within an hour after the attack on Charlie Hebdo, it was announced by the Elysée that President Hollande was on his way to the site of the attack (Le Figaro, 2015). Hence, even before the buildings had been fully secured by the police and security services, Hollande went to the scene to publicly demonstrate that he was assessing the situation himself. Once he arrived, he had a short encounter with journalists in front of the offices of Charlie Hebdo, where he declared that he would bring together all ministers and that the Vigipirate Plan was activated (Le Figaro, 2015). Hollande thus made every effort to be visible and accessible to the media, which Ulmer et al. (2013) recommend for public leadership during crises. Hollande declared that the attack was ‘a terrorist attack, without a doubt’. A few minutes after he had left the scene of the attacks, he wrote on Twitter: ‘No barbarous act will ever extinguish the freedom of press. We are a united country that will react and stand together’, which was retweeted over 20.000 times, receiving 8000 likes (Le Figaro, 2015).

Consequently, within two hours of the attack, François Hollande was physically present at the site of the attack, demonstrating his sympathy with the victims and establishing the severity of the attack, while also presenting a target or cause for the attack – ‘the freedom of press’ – and a solution - ‘a united country’.

After the attack, Hollande was seen more than he was heard. The speeches he gave were designed for a more ‘spontaneous expression of emotion and compassion’: his communication team worked hard to make sure that Hollande presented himself in an authentic way, to avoid accusations of spin (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.10). His presence in front of Charlie Hebdo’s offices deeply impressed the French public and media (L’Express, 2015). He also visited the Paris Hospital of Hotel-Dieu to thank the people at the emergency medical-psychological unit that was set up after the attack, before visiting the victims for half an hour (Le Figaro, 2015). According to Hollande’s communication advisor, the visibility and physical presence of the President was a strategic move: ‘It was very strong, the fact that he went; it gives a national and even international dimension to the event; it is also reassuring for the people, because the president is physically there’ (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.8). A lot of thought was given to the presentation of symbols and rituals during his public appearances: whenever Hollande delivered a speech or statement, attention was paid to the settings in order to emphasize that the president was speaking not as an individual, but as a symbol of the people.

Only several days before the attacks, it was announced that Hollande would launch a charm offensive, as Hollande had a ‘likeability problem’ and had to work on his communication skills. According to communication expert Moreau-Chevrolet, who analyzed Hollande’s previous media performances, Hollande’s ‘voice gets out of hand, and you can see that he is stressed’ (France 24, 2015). Hence, Hollande’s communication team was already working on a well-thought-out strategy, and Charlie Hebdo was the first opportunity to implement it. As Hollande’s communication advisor insisted: ‘The presidential team decided that it was important not to get stuck at the Elysée. Hollande hardly slept, and we made sure people knew about it’ (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.9). His address to the nation in which he called for ‘unity as a weapon against terrorism’ was seen by 21.5 million viewers (Le Figaro, 2015).

That same day, the Elysée announced it would organize a ‘Marche Républicaine’ on January 11. This march was the largest gathering of people on the streets of Paris since the Allies liberated the city in August 1944. The Marche Républicaine was carefully and purposely staged to produce an image of unity after this act of terror that had shocked the

country (Gürsel, 2017, p.136). François Lamy, the official coordinator of the March for the Socialist Party, explained: ‘A march was the best way to avoid speeches; silence the best way to show respect for the dead, to prevent slogans and to create an image of consensus’ (Gürsel, 2017, p.141). To demonstrate international solidarity, an impressive long list of political leaders was invited to participate. Three symbolically important groups were brought together: the families of the victims; representatives of political parties, unions and civil society associations; and the executive and international community (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.18). Locations were carefully selected for practical security reasons and symbolic significance: for that reason, the march took place between Place de la Nation and Place de la République (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.18). In order to produce memorable images for the media, the President was seen comforting the survivors and the victims’ families; the row of important state leaders walking arm-in-arm; political opponents, walking side-by-side, united, without any banners; and a silent, grieving crowd (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.18). Marine Le Pen, leader of Front National, was not invited, as she did not support the ‘republican values’, according to mayor Hidalgo, referring to Le Pens anti-islam and anti-immigration politics (Le Monde, 2015). When Angela Merkel walked next to Hollande, a strong statement of international solidarity was made between France and Germany, and this image ‘says more about a Franco-German axis than twenty official speeches’, according to L’Express (2015).

5.2.2 Bastille Day, Nice

Compared to Charlie Hebdo, President Hollande encountered more difficulties to communicate in a proactive manner shortly after the occurrence of the crisis. During the festivities of Bastille Day in Nice, Hollande was present in Avignon on a private occasion. The attack happened at 22.30 on July 14; at 00.07 on July 15 it was announced that Hollande was returning from Avignon to Paris, to visit the crisis unit that was set up at the Ministry of Interior (Le Figaro, 2016b). At 3.00, Hollande first reacted on Twitter: ‘France is distressed, but it is strong and will always be stronger than the fanatics who wanted to hit us today’. His message was retweeted 10,000 times on Twitter; by contrast, his first tweet after Charlie Hebdo was retweeted twice as much (Time, 2016). At 03.40, Hollande was able to address the nation in a television speech. In this statement, he argued that the terrorist character ‘cannot be denied’, hence labeling the attack as a terrorist act. Compared to Charlie Hebdo, he was much less straight-forward in describing the nature of the attack in Nice.

Moreover, Hollande did not succeed in making a very good impression during his television speech; The Guardian (2016a) for example described his appearance as ‘an ashen-faced Hollande’, the fear, shock and tiredness could be read from his face. According to Philippe Marlière, professor of French and European politics at London University College, Hollande was ‘almost looking like a broken man’ when he appeared on television at 4am (The Guardian, 2016b). Analyst Jerome Sainte-Marie, chairman of the Paris-based opinion agency PollingVox even said: ‘He gives the impression of a president overwhelmed by events; someone who has lost control of them’ (DW, 2016a). Consequently, Hollande was not seen to be in control of the crisis; nor was his appearance reassuring.

In order to address the on-going terrorist threat in France, Hollande announced that the government had taken measures to extend the state of emergency (Boutin & Paulussen, 2016). Under the state of emergency regime, administrative authorities have broad powers: they can order individuals to be placed under house arrest, order warrantless house searches, prohibit meetings, dismantle associations, pass curfews and order the temporary closure of public venues (Boutin & Paulussen, 2016). This decision received a lot of criticism: not only did rightwing politicians claim that prolonging the state of emergency was merely a cosmetic measure to reassure the public; leftwing politicians highlighted the uselessness of the state of emergency (The Guardian, 2016b). Professor Marlière openly claimed that Nice had the reputation of being one of the ‘safest’ cities in France, as the mayor has installed more than 1000 CCTV cameras and has one of the greatest number of policemen in France (The Guardian, 2016b). Hence, it was widely suggested that the actions the government had taken were ineffective.

However, similar to Charlie Hebdo, Hollande made an effort to express his sympathy to the victims; not only in television statements, but also in person. After attending the crisis unit set up in Paris on July 15, Hollande flew to Nice to visit the victims of the attack in the Pasteur Hospital. Additionally, he scheduled a meeting with security and rescue services to thank them for intervening during the attack (Europe 1, 2016d). Nevertheless, Hollande’s efforts were not received well; when Hollande and Prime Minister Valls visited the memorial service on the Promenade des Anglais with Christian Estrosi, the former mayor of Nice, they were publicly booed at by an angry crowd (Independent, 2016). This was a scene never seen before in France at a national act of homage (BBC News, 2016b).

Moreover, negative information about handling the crisis was revealed by the mass media before President Hollande addressed the problems that the French intelligence services had been coping with prior to Nice. For example, The Guardian (2016c) wrote that the French

authorities did not communicate effectively with each other, emphasizing the difficulties posed by France's six different intelligence units, which all answer to different ministries. Moreover, it was revealed that intelligence agencies complained that it was impossible to work within 'such a bureaucratic mess' (The Guardian, 2016c). Additionally, in an open letter to Le Monde, leading security analyst François Heisbourg publicly accused the government of responding insufficient and ineffective. 'At least the opposition has taken the responsibility of launching a parliamentary commission of inquiry; it angers me that the government refuses to set up a national commission of inquiry to correct past and present mistakes' (Le Monde, 2016c).

Finally, the performance of Hollande and his administration angered the French for understating problems. The Deutsche Welle newspaper detected a sense of desperation among the French; 'What do you mean, France needs to live with terror?' a French woman told the DW-reporters, referring to Prime Minister Valls' words on the day of the attack. 'How can anyone simply live with that?' (DW, 2016b). Christian Estrosi even accused Hollande's government of lying about the number of police officers deployed during the celebrations to protect the crowd; according to Estrosi, too few were on duty (BBC, 2016). The French people wanted to see the government taking action, leaving written messages at the Promenades des Anglais such as 'enough with the speeches', mirroring their security concerns (DW, 2016c).

5.2.3 Sub conclusion

In short, after Charlie Hebdo, Hollande succeeded in proactively communicating to the media and the public: he was very fast to attend the scene of attack; he was accessible to the media; he paid attention to his visibility in front of the offices of Charlie Hebdo, the hospital and the Marche Républicaine; he used many rituals to express sympathy to the victims and create a sense of unity; he was not accused of lying, understating or denying any problems and no negative information was revealed by the media before Hollande was able to. Hence, Hollande's communication strategy during Charlie Hebdo can be characterized as proactive. By contrast, after Bastille Day, Hollande was not able to quickly visit the scene of the attack in Nice; and when he did, he was booed by the crowd. Moreover, compared to Charlie Hebdo, it took a long time before Hollande addressed the nation and made his first statements regarding the events. Additionally, Hollande was criticized for looking 'broken' and 'overwhelmed' and his decision to prolong the state of emergency was deemed useless; he was thus not seen to be in control of the crisis. It was also revealed by the media that the

French security services were dealing with a variety of problems, before Hollande could. Finally, Hollande was accused of understating the problems France was dealing with, as ‘France needs to live with it’, and lying about the number of police officers on duty. An overview of Hollande’s proactive communication is presented in table 5.

Table 5 – Assessment of Hollande’s proactive communication strategy

Communication strategy	Charlie Hebdo	Bastille Day
Quick attendance at scene of attack (within two hours)?	Yes	No
Transparency: provision of accessible and timely information?	Yes	Yes
Visibility: seen in control of the crisis?	Yes	No
Rituals: express sympathy to victims?	Yes	Yes
Reassurance to public that root of the problem is addressed?	Yes	No
Lie, understate or deny problems?	No	Yes
Negative information revealed by media before Hollande was able to do so?	No	Yes

In sum, considering that many elements of proactive communication were present during Charlie Hebdo and absent during Bastille Day, the second hypothesis can be confirmed: it is likely that political leaders gain public popularity during the crisis if they proactively communicate the crisis.

5.3 The creation of dominant frames during crisis

A crisis generates a political game, in which the opposition has to decide whether they can blame the incumbent political leader for the crisis. After Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day, both President Hollande and the opposition were challenged to create persuasive narratives about what is going on, why it happened, how one should act and the crisis should be dealt with. Those who succeed in creating a dominant, persuasive narrative obtain support; those who fail, risk becoming the scapegoat ('t Hart & Tindall, 2009, p.22). This section examines the frames established by Hollande on the one hand and the oppositional forces on the other hand after Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day. First, it is analyzed how the attack is framed in terms of severity, causes and consequences. Next, it is established which frame has become the dominant frame in the mass media and which actor has won the framing contest.

5.3.1 *Charlie Hebdo, Paris*

On January 7, 2015, shortly after the attack on Charlie Hebdo had occurred, François Hollande went to the scene of the attack and visited the magazine's headquarters in Paris. In front of Charlie Hebdo's offices, he spoke to the French media, describing the attack as 'an act of exceptional barbarism' against the newspaper, which he considered to be the equivalent of the freedom of expression (France Diplomatie, 2015a). Hence, he immediately portrayed the terrorist attack as an attack on French core values, an attack against 'the very spirit of the Republic' (France Diplomatie, 2015a). He continued his first speech in front of Charlie Hebdo by declaring that the Vigipirate Plan has been raised to 'attack level' (France Diplomatie, 2015a). Later that day, he gave another speech concerning the attacks, this time in front of the Elysée Palace. He depicted the victims as 'courageous columnists' and 'the defenders of freedom', while stressing the importance of the freedom of expression in France (France Diplomatie, 2015b). He contrasted the concept of freedom to the 'barbarism' of the attackers. Importantly, once again, Hollande did not consider the attack to be solely an attack on Charlie Hebdo itself: he framed it as an attack on the Republic as a whole. For instance, his speech addressed elements of French culture, pluralism, democracy, justice and peace; according to Hollande, France was under attack for simply being a country of freedom (France Diplomatie, 2015b). Finally, he emphasized the need for unity and the importance of solidarity for France, as 'our best weapon is unity [...] nothing can divide us' (France Diplomatie, 2015b).

In short, Hollande and his administration framed the attack as an attack on all values of the French Republic, including democracy and the freedom of expression. Moreover, in

order to address the terrorist threat, he announced several security measures. Subsequently, Hollande proposed a diagnose of the problem and a course of action to remedy it (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.13). In order to distribute this frame, President Hollande, together with Prime Minister Valls and the Interior Minister Cazeneuve, maximized their exposure in the mass and social media (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.13). Their frame was first presented in their speeches, after which it was spread to interviews and media articles.

Shortly after the attack had happened, a movement emerged to demonstrate solidarity with the victims of Charlie Hebdo. This movement adopted the slogan of 'Je suis Charlie'. To say 'Je suis Charlie' did not necessarily mean to approve the content of the magazine, but to support and protect the right to satirize in a secular, democratic republic (Ferencik, 2017, p.54). Conveniently, this slogan fitted neatly into the frame of Hollande's call for unity and protection of French values. However, responding to this movement, a 'Je ne suis pas Charlie' counter-stance emerged in the public discussion (Ferencik, 2017, p.54). Many people refused to identify themselves with a magazine that had published images that were offensive to Muslims (Dawes, 2015).

Two days after the attack, the front page of daily newspaper Le Monde featured the headline: 'le 11-Septembre Français': this powerful reference to the American 9/11 reflected the shock generated by the terrorist attack among the French (Moran, 2017, p.316). For several days after Charlie Hebdo, the media did not make any critical comments on Hollande or his government; even the Front National remained fairly neutral in the discussion (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.19). Even the French traditional media supported the 'Je suis Charlie' tag by showing unconditional solidarity with Charlie Hebdo and making an effort to ensure the continued existence of the satirical magazine. Only a few days after the attack, the French media had raised over half a million euros to ensure the continuation of Charlie Hebdo (Independent, 2015).

Within hours of the attacks, the slogan 'Je suis Charlie' became trending on Twitter: at one point, its hashtag was tweeted at a rate of 6500 times per minute (Moran, 2017, p.317). The online response was driven by a feeling of solidarity with the victims and the wish to support Charlie Hebdo's values, as the magazine was the symbol of the freedom of speech, satirizing the established political, religious and economic powers (Moran, 2017, p.317). According to Moran (2017), Hollande and his government appeared particularly keen to gain public support under the 'Je suis Charlie' banner. This combative narrative depicted the situation in binary terms: those who considered themselves to 'be Charlie' in defense of free speech and the broader values of democracy and pluralism of the French Republic, and a

‘other’ group who did not (Moran, 2017, p.318). The refusal of these ‘others’ to show their solidarity, for example by the ‘Je ne suis pas Charlie’ movement, was heavily criticized by politicians and the mainstream media and considered to be a rejection of republican values and ignorance of French culture (Dawes, 2015). President Hollande and his administration made a clever move by framing the attack as an attack on the French Republic as a whole and demanding for unity. By organizing the Marche Républicaine, Hollande forced the anti-establishment parties to take a stance; many oppositional forces decided to participate. Only Front National leader Le Pen did not participate in the march, and decided to march outside of Paris instead (Faucher & Boussaguet, 2017, p.20). Damien Philpott, director of political studies at IFOP, analyzed that as a result, Le Pen saw her public image overshadowed by her lack of participation in the march (Newsweek, 2015).

5.3.2 Bastille Day, Nice

In the middle of the night, several hours after the Bastille Day attack had happened, Hollande addressed the nation on television and delivered a speech. In his statement, he reiterated the war-like stance he had taken after the Paris attacks in November 2015, in which he declared that France was ‘at war’, promising to ‘eradicate terrorism’. Ever since his performance after the November 2015 attacks, his presentation was described as a ‘transformation from a soft, conflict-avoidant marshmallow into a self-styled chief of war’ (The Guardian, 2015). He attempted to continue this style during his Nice-speech (Vie Publique, 2016). As the 14th of July is France’s national day, celebrating the unity of the French people, Hollande viewed the terrorist act as an attack on the ‘symbol of freedom’, because human rights were ‘denied by fanatics’ (Vie Publique, 2016). After having expressed his solidarity with the victims, he listed all measures that were taken in order to address the terrorist threat, because France ‘must show absolute vigilance and unwavering determination’ (Vie Publique, 2016). First, he proposed to maintain a high level of ‘Operation Sentinelle’, which enables the mobilization of 10,000 military personnel in addition to gendarmes and the French police, particularly at border checks. Next, he announced an extension of the state of emergency by three months (Vie Publique, 2016). Embarrassingly, however, only hours before the Bastille Day attack occurred, Hollande had said in an interview that the state of emergency would not be renewed after July 26, as it was no longer necessary (The Guardian, 2016a). Finally, President Hollande advocated a reinforcement of actions in Syria and Iraq. He ended his speech by emphasizing that France was strong and ‘will always be stronger than the fanatics who wish to attack it’ (Vie Publique, 2016).

Hence, Hollande tried to continue the strong rhetoric he had introduced after November 2015 attacks. Moreover, his administration attempted to recreate the feeling of unity among the French that emerged after previous attacks. Prime Minister Valls reinforced this message by concluding that ‘the only dignified answer will be one that remains true to the spirit of July 14, a united France’ (Le Figaro, 2016c). Again, Hollande portrayed himself as the leader of this unity. ‘It is because of this unity, this cohesion, that I ask for France to be stronger than those who want to harm France, he declared (Le Figaro, 2016c).

This time, however, the opposition would not let Hollande succeed in building a dominant frame of unity. Many oppositional forces criticized the actions the Hollande administration had taken since previous attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan. Former President Nicolas Sarkozy, for example, accused incumbent officeholders of having a ‘hand that trembles’. In an interview, Sarkozy said that ‘all the things that should have been done in the last 18 months were not done’ (Le Monde, 2016d). Alain Juppé, the mayor of Bordeaux and presidential candidate for the center-right at that time, had a similar point of criticism. He even went a step further and argued that ‘if all the right steps had been taken, Nice would have never happened’ (BBC, 2016). Juppé referred to a parliamentary inquiry into the November attacks in Paris, which had revealed flaws and shortcomings in France’s intelligence services (The Guardian, 2016c). The report concluded that the French intelligence services were unreformed and ‘poorly coordinated’ (The Guardian, 2016c). Marine Le Pen, leader of the Front National, blamed the incumbent officeholders for not taking any actions that ‘contribute to security’ (Le Figaro, 2016d). According to Le Pen, many of the reforms proposed by her party to tackle the issue of terrorism were not put in place. ‘Absolutely nothing has been done; no reintroduction of double punishment, nor depriving people of their nationality, nor the closure of salafist mosques, nor the banning of certain organizations’ (The Guardian, 2016c). Moreover, Hollande’s announcement to lift the state of emergency and to prolong it within several hours was described by Estrosi, former mayor of Nice, as ‘very disorganized’ (Le Monde, 2016d). Julien Odoul, regional councilor of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, claimed that the extension of the state of emergency is ‘useless and fictional’ (Le Figaro, 2016e). Hollande’s policies were even described as ‘fatalism’ (Le Monde, 2016e).

Finally, the extension of the state of emergency was condemned as a ‘cosmetic measure’, with the sole purpose of reassuring the French public (The Guardian, 2016c). Georges Fenech, head of the commission that examined the November 2015 attacks in Paris, was not impressed by Hollande’s response to the attack in Nice. Fenech declared that the state of emergency ‘clearly’ did not prevent the attack. ‘The state of emergency solves nothing: it

reassures, that is all'. He continued saying: 'It is also questionable whether strengthening Operation Sentinelle is relevant; it is purely psychological' (France 24, 2016).

Hollande's war rhetoric was not an easy gamble; by declaring 'war to terrorism' after the November 2015 attacks in Paris, he had to be considered capable to win the war, which was not an easy task, as France is not a nation that is easily calmed by pure rhetoric (The Guardian, 2015). Hollande's 'self-styled chief of war' presentation was not successful: the opposition and the public criticized the extension of the state of emergency. Hours before the Nice attack, Hollande had used his Bastille Day television interview to announce that 'things are getting better' (The Guardian, 2016c). In this same interview, he had declared that the state of emergency would not be prolonged, which he was very quickly forced to revise after the attack had occurred. This however sabotaged own his frame, because it generated a widespread feeling that the Hollande administration and its intelligence forces were not fully prepared for this attack, as they did not see it coming. 'The government cannot get away with it for the third time, with all the political forces rallying around', according to mayor Estrosi (BBC, 2016). Only hours after Hollande had declared that security in France was improving, a major terrorist attack proved otherwise. Hollande's political opponents claimed that 'any president who has allowed three of the nation's deadliest attacks' is failing on security (The Washington Post, 2016). Hollande was under a lot of pressure to explain the concrete measures he had taken since the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan to address the threat of terrorism (The Guardian, 2016c). Hollande's 'chief of war' frame was thus not very credible. Marine Le Pen even said: 'In truth, we are not at war. For the moment, we are in a war of words' (Le Monde, 2016d).

Meanwhile, his opposition presented a frame that 'more could have been done' and that the Nice attack could even have been prevented. Oppositional forces underlined that although there were barriers to prevent vehicles from entering the promenade, they were flimsy, and police officers were not present at every barrier (The Washington Post, 2016). It is likely that the changing political context had an effect on fact that the opposition has been taking a stronger stance against the Hollande administration. The Nice attack occurred only a few months before Nicolas Sarkozy and Juppé would compete for presidential candidate of their political party. Neither one of them could afford to take a soft position against the Socialist party of Hollande, especially when on their right flank Marine Le Pen was spreading her own frame of 'I told you so' on Hollande's government's ineffectiveness, holding the government accountable (Le Figaro, 2016f). Hence, with the presidential primary campaigns coming up, the tone of criticism was unusually sharp for a time of national crisis.

Additionally, although Hollande once again called for a united people, the public grew tired of his message. The BBC (2016) observes that ‘the people today do not feel any sense of national unity’. Similarly, Le Monde (2016d) writes that ‘the unity after Charlie Hebdo seems like a distant memory’. According to the French newspaper, attempts to revive a national unity such as the one that emerged after Charlie Hebdo or Bataclan have had no effect (Le Monde, 2016d). The brief period of ‘patriotic euphoria’ and unity after Charlie Hebdo was fading, as ‘after Nice, the spirit of togetherness barely lasted into the following morning’ (BBC, 2016). Even the politically neutral newspaper Le Monde criticized Hollande’s administration for ‘hiding behind formulas’ by saying: ‘we did not make any mistakes’ and ‘we are doing everything we can’ (2016f).

5.3.3 Sub conclusion

In conclusion, Hollande was able to use the window of opportunity created by Charlie Hebdo to establish a dominant frame and present himself as the leader of a unified France. His narrative of unity was persuasive and supported by oppositional forces as well as the media: he did not receive any critical comments on his performance and policies. By contrast, Hollande was given a hard time after Nice, as he was criticized for his inactions and the ineffectiveness of the state of emergency. Generally, there was a tendency that the Bastille Day attacks could have been prevented if the right measures had been taken. Subsequently, Hollande and his administration ended up becoming the scapegoat.

Table 6 – The creation of dominant frames after Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day

Dominant frame	Charlie Hebdo	Bastille Day
Is Hollande held accountable for the crisis by the media?	No	Yes
Can this attack be seen as a symptom of underlying policy failures according to the media?	No	Yes
Could it have been prevented according to the media?	No	Yes

In sum, whereas Hollande was able to win the framing contest and establish a dominant frame after Charlie Hebdo, he miserably failed to sell his frame during Nice. Instead, the opposition succeeded in creating a dominant counter-frame, blaming Hollande for his policies and inactions. Based on this evidence, it can be concluded that the third hypothesis can be confirmed: political leaders are more likely to gain public popularity during the crisis if they succeed in creating a dominant frame in the mass media.

6. Conclusion

This research has generated insights in the field of crisis management and communication, by addressing the question of what explains the variation in public popularity of political leaders after crises? After an in-depth analysis of President Hollande's performance during the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and Bastille Day, several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the hypothesis of pre-crisis media portrayal cannot convincingly explain the variation in Hollande's public popularity. Prior to both attacks, the media coverage on Hollande was critical and generally related to negative proposals or incompetence. Therefore, this variable cannot be a decisive factor in explaining Hollande's popularity boost after Charlie Hebdo. Another important implication of this analysis is that the variables of proactive communication and the creation of dominant frames during crises are of high importance for Hollande's public popularity. With regard to proactive communication, Hollande's strategy was much stronger during Charlie Hebdo compared to Bastille Day. Whereas he was visible, transparent and reassuring during the first case, he appeared overwhelmed and distant during the second case. Moreover, it is likely that the creation of dominant frames contributed to Hollande's variation in popularity, as he successfully imposed his frame of unity after Charlie Hebdo, but was heavily criticized by the media and his opposition after Nice. The central claim of this thesis is therefore that political leaders will gain public popularity if they succeed in communicating proactively and creating a dominant frame during the crisis. The first variable of pre-crisis media portrayal, as suggested by the theory of crisis exploitation by Boin, 't Hart and McConnell (2011), is insufficient to explain the variation in public popularity and can be rejected.

This thesis aspired to contribute to the theory of crisis exploitation. Therefore, some recommendations for further research to strengthen and alter this theory include a further examination of the variable of pre-crisis media portrayal; more cases should be included to assess why this hypothesis is discarded. Moreover, in order to increase the generalization of the findings of this thesis, the variables of proactive communication and creation of dominant frames could be applied to other cases similar to Hollande. Another important element in the creation of dominant frames is the notion that upcoming elections seem to play a role in whether an incumbent political leader succeeds or fails in establishing his frame. As demonstrated in the case of Nice, the opposition took a much stronger stance against Hollande when the presidential elections were approaching. This thesis suggests looking into the role of electoral interests and upcoming elections more specifically in order to explain the variation

in popularity after crises. Furthermore, the theory of crisis exploitation has a focus on traditional media; however, with the growing importance of social media, the role of online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter should not be overlooked. It is recommended that future research should include the role of social media in explaining popularity.

7. References

- Acrimed (2016). La presse est unanime: Emmanuel Macron. July 13, 2016. Available at: <http://www.acrimed.org/La-presse-est-unanime-Emmanuel-Macron> [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Alicino, F. (2016). Freedom of Expression, Laïcité and Islam in France: the Tension Between Two Different (Universal) Perspectives. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 27(1), pp.51-75
- Ansell, C., Boin, A. & 't Hart, P. (2014). Political Leadership in Times of Crisis. In *The Oxford Handbooks of Political Leadership*.
- Arpan, L.M. & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D.R. (2005). Stealing Thunder: Analysis of the Effects of Proactive Disclosure of Crisis Information. *Public Relations Review*, 31, pp.425-433
- Baum, M. A. & Groeling, T. (2010). Reality Asserts Itself: Public Opinion on Iraq and the Elasticity of Reality'. *International Organization*, 64, pp.443-479
- BBC News (2015). Charlie Hebdo attack: three days of terror. January 14. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237> [accessed November 24, 2017]
- BBC News (2016a). Nice attack: what we know about the Bastille Day killings. August 19. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36801671> [accessed November 24, 2017]
- BBC News (2016b). Attack on Nice: Why the French PM was booed. July 18. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36823124> [accessed December 6, 2017]
- Birkland, T. (2006). *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change After Catastrophic Events*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Boin, A. & 't Hart, P. (2003). Public Leadership in Times of Crisis: Mission Impossible? *Public Administration Review*, 63(5), pp. 544-553
- Boin, A., 't Hart, P. Stern, E. and Sundelius, B. (2005). *The politics of crisis management: public leadership under pressure*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Boin, A., 't Hart, P. & McConnell, A. (2009). Crisis Exploitation: Political and Policy Impacts of Framing Contests. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(1), pp. 81-106
- Boutin, B. & Paulussen, C. (2016). From the Bataclan to Nice: A Critique of France's State of Emergency Regime. ASSER Policy Brief No. 2016-01.
- Bovens, M. (2010). Two Concepts of Accountability: Accountability as a Virtue and as a Mechanism. *West European Politics*, 33(5), pp.946-967

- Brändström, A. (2016). *Crisis, accountability and blame management: strategies and survival of political office-holders*. Utrecht University.
- Brändström, A. & Kuipers, S. (2003). From ‘normal incidents’ to political crises: understanding the selective politicization of policy failures. *Government and Opposition*, 38(3), pp.279-305
- Carli, P., Pons, F., Levraut, J., Millet, B., Tourtier, J.P., Ludes, B. Lafont, A. & Riou, B. (2017). The French emergency medical services after the Paris and Nice terrorist attacks: what have we learnt?. *Lancet*, pp.1-8
- Claeys, A-S. & Cauberghe, V. (2012). Crisis response and crisis timing strategies, two sides of the same coin. *Public Relations Review*, 38, pp.83-88
- CNN (2016). 2015 Charlie Hebdo Attack Fast Facts. December 22. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/index.html> [accessed November 24, 2017]
- Cohu, M., Maissonneuve, C. & Testé, B. (2016). The ‘Charlie-Hebdo’ Effect: Repercussions of the January 2015 Terrorist Attacks in France on Prejudice Toward Immigrants and North-Africans, Social Dominance Orientation and Attachment to the Principle of Laïcité. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 29(1), pp.50-58
- Coombs, W.T. (2007). *Ongoing crisis communication: planning, managing and responding*. Sage Publications.
- Coombs, W.T. & Holladay, S.J. (2006). Unpacking the halo effect: reputation and crisis management. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10(2), p.123-137
- La Croix (2014). François Hollande fera son ‘devoir jusqu’à la fin’. September 18. Available at: <https://www.la-croix.com/Actualite/France/Francois-Hollande-fera-son-devoir-jusqu-a-la-fin-2014-09-18-1208309> [accessed December 13, 2017]
- La Croix (2016). François Hollande à l’heure de la grande explication. April 14. Available at: <https://www.la-croix.com/France/Politique/Francois-Hollande-heure-grande-explication-2016-04-14-1200753310> [accessed December 1, 2017]
- Dawes, S. (2015). Charlie Hebdo, Free Speech and Counter-Speech. *Sociological Research Online*, 20(3), pp.3-5
- DW (2016a). Hollande under fire after Nice attack. July 19. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/hollande-under-fire-after-nice-attack/a-19409689> [accessed January 5, 2017]

- DW (2016b). In Nice, the French are starting to ask the difficult questions. July 17. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/in-nice-the-french-are-starting-to-ask-the-difficult-questions/a-19406554> [accessed January 4, 2017]
- DW (2016c). Attack in Nice puts French government under pressure over security measures. July 18. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/attack-in-nice-puts-french-government-under-pressure-over-security-measures/a-19407216> [accessed January 2, 2017]
- Edelman, M. (1977). *Political language: Words that succeed and policies that fail*. Academic Press, New York.
- Europe 1 (2016a). La folle sequence médiatique d'Emmanuel Macron. April 22. Available at: <http://lelab.europe1.fr/la-folle-sequence-mediatique-demmanuel-macron-2726665> [accessed November 13, 2017]
- Europe 1 (2016b). Comment François Hollande a préparé son passage à l'émission "Dialogue citoyen" sur France 2. Available at: <http://lelab.europe1.fr/comment-francois-hollande-a-prepare-son-passage-a-lemission-dialogue-citoyen-sur-france-2-2719396> [accessed November 13, 2017]
- Europe 1 (2016c). 'Dialogues citoyens', l'émission de la dernière chance pour Hollande. April 14. Available at: <http://www.europe1.fr/politique/dialogue-citoyen-lemission-de-la-derniere-chance-pour-hollande-2719093> [accessed November 13, 2017]
- Europe 1 (2016d). Hollande attend à la préfecture et au centre hospitalier de Nice. July 15. Available at: <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/hollande-attendu-a-la-prefecture-et-au-centre-hospitalier-de-nice-2800477> [accessed January 5, 2017]
- L'Express (2014). Hollande: c'est vraiment fort, ses anaphores? September 19. Available at: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/ps/hollande-c-est-vraiment-fort-ses-anaphores_1577335.html [accessed December 12, 2017]
- L'Express (2015). Communication de Hollande: un avant et un après 7 janvier. January 21. Available at: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/communication-de-hollande-un-avant-et-un-apres-7-janvier_1643270.html [accessed November 13, 2017]
- Faucher, F. & Boussaguet, L. (2017). The Politics of Symbols: Reflections on the French Government's Framing of the 2015 Terrorist Attacks. *Parliamentary Affairs*, pp.1-27
- Ferencik, M. (2017). I'm not Charlie: (Im)politeness evaluations of the Charlie Hebdo attack in an internet discussion forum. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 111, pp.54-71
- Le Figaro (2014a). Conférence de presse de Hollande: entre 'offensive courageuse' et 'annonces vaines'. January 15. Available at: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2014/01/14/01002-20140114ARTFIG00604->

- conference-de-presse-de-hollande-entre-offensive-courageuse-et-annonces-vaines.php
[accessed December 3, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2014b). À 13%, François Hollande au plus bas dans l’histoire du baromètre Figaro Magazine. September 4. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2014/09/04/01002-20140904ARTFIG00266--13-francois-hollande-au-plus-bas-dans-l-histoire-du-barometre-figaro-magazine.php>
[accessed November 23, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2014c). François Hollande peut-il rebondir? September 18. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2014/09/17/31001-20140917ARTFIG00320-conference-de-presse-francois-hollande-peut-il-tenir.php> [accessed November 22, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2015). Revivez l’attaque de Charlie Hebdo minute après minute. March 4. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/01/07/01016-20150107LIVWWW00152-en-direct-Charlie-Hebdo-Paris-fusillade.php> [accessed November 14, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2016a). ‘La France va mieux’: Hollande conteste tout déni de réalité. April 15. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/2016/04/15/25001-20160415ARTFIG00188-la-france-va-mieux-hollande-conteste-tout-deni-de-realite.php> [accessed November 20, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2016b). EN DIRECT: Attentat de Nice: le bilan grimpe à 84 morts. July, 15. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/07/14/01016-20160714LIVWWW00269-attentat-nice-promenade-des-anglais.php> [accessed December 4, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2016c). Attentat de Nice: les socialistes indignés par les critiques de la droite. July 15. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/citations/2016/07/15/25002-20160715ARTFIG00178-attentat-de-nice-les-socialistes-indignes-par-les-critiques-de-la-droite.php> [accessed December 8, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2016d). La droite à l’offensive contre l’exécutif. July 15. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2016/07/15/01002-20160715ARTFIG00263-la-droite-a-l-offensive-contre-l-executif.php> [accessed December 6, 2017]
- Le Figaro (2016e). Après l’attentat, la classe politique au chevet de Nice. July 15. Available at:
<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/citations/2016/07/15/25002-20160715ARTFIG00014-apres-l-attentat-la-classe-politique-accourt-au-chevet-de-nice.php> [accessed December 8, 2017]

- Le Figaro (2016f). Attentat de Nice: Marine Le Pen dénonce la responsabilité du gouvernement. July 16. Available at: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2016/07/16/01002-20160716ARTFIG00115-attentat-de-nice-marine-le-pen-denonce-la-responsabilite-du-gouvernement.php> [accessed December 6, 2017]
- France 24 (2015). France's unpopular Hollande launches 2015 charm offensive. January 5. Available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20150105-france-francois-hollande-media-offensive-tv-radio-2015-sarkozy> [accessed November 13, 2015]
- France 24 (2016). Attentat de Nice: l'affichage politique prime sur l'efficacité des dispositifs de sécurité. July 15. Available at: <http://www.france24.com/fr/20160715-attentat-nice-francois-hollande-efficacite-dispositifs-securite-fenech-pietrasanta-sentinel> [accessed December 8, 2017]
- France Diplomatie (2015a). Charlie Hebdo/shootings – Statements by M. François Hollande, President of the Republic. January 7. Available at: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/the-ministry-and-its-network/events/article/charlie-hebdo-shootings-statements> [accessed November 5, 2017]
- France Diplomatie (2015b). Attack against Charlie Hebdo statement by Mr. François Hollande, President of the Republic. January 7. Available at: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/the-ministry-and-its-network/events/article/attack-against-charlie-hebdo> [accessed December 2, 2017]
- Gaffney, J. (2014). Political Leadership and Statecraft: France, Syria and the Chemical Weapons Crisis of August-October 2013. *Political Leadership and Statecraft in Challenging Times*, pp.1-18
- George, A. & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Gerring, J. (2006). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge University Press.
- The Guardian (2013). François Hollande becomes most unpopular French president ever. October 29. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/29/francois-hollande-most-unpopular-president> [accessed December 14, 2017]
- The Guardian (2015). Hollande completes transformation from 'marshmallow' to 'chief of war'. November 16. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/16/hollande-transformation-marshmallow-to-chief-of-war> [accessed December 6, 2017]

- The Guardian (2016a). Nice attack is a crisis for presidency of François Hollande. July 15. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/15/nice-attack-is-a-crisis-for-presidency-of-francois-hollande> [accessed December 14, 2017]
- The Guardian (2016b). Hollande's response to the Nice massacre will please only the far right. July 17. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/17/attack-nice-hollande-response-state-emergency> [accessed January 5, 2017]
- The Guardian (2016c). François Hollande faces political backlash after Nice attack. July 15. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/15/francois-hollande-faces-political-backlash-nice-attack> [accessed December 6, 2017]
- Gürsel, Z.D. (2017). Visualizing Publics. Digital Crowd Shots and the 2015 Unity Rally in Paris. *Current Anthropology*, 58, pp.135-148
- Hargrove, E. (1998). *The President as Leader*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- 't Hart, P. (1993). Symbols, rituals and power: The lost dimensions of crisis management. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 1(1), pp.36-50
- 't Hart, P., Tindall, K. & Brown, C. (2009). Crisis Leadership of the Bush Presidency: Advisory Capacity and Presidential Performance in the Acute Stages of the 9/11 and Katrina Crises. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 39(3), pp.473-493
- 't Hart, P. & Tindall, K. (2009). Understanding Crisis Exploitation: Leadership, Rhetoric and Framing Contests in Response to the Economic Meltdown. In 't Hart, P. and Tindall, K. (eds), *Framing the Global Economic Downturn: Crisis Rhetoric and Politics of Recessions*. Canberra: ANU E.Press, pp. 21-41
- Hood, C. (2002). The Risk Game and the Blame Game. *Government and Opposition*, 37, pp.15-37
- IFOP (2016). Les indices de popularité, Août 2016. Available at: http://www.ifop.com/?option=com_publication&type=poll&id=3462 [accessed October 19, 2017]
- Independent (2015). French media raises 500,000 euro to keep satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo open. January 8. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/french-media-raises-500000-to-keep-satirical-magazine-charlie-hebdo-open-9965576.html> [accessed December 6, 2017]
- Independent (2016). Nice attack: Manuel Valls booed at memorial service to victims on Promenade des Anglais. July 18. Available at:

- <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nice-terror-attack-francois-hollande-manuel-valls-memorial-service-victims-promenade-des-anglais-a7142376.html> [accessed January 5, 2017]
- Keeler, J.T.S. (1993). Opening the Window for Reform: Mandates, Crises and Extraordinary Policymaking. *Comparative Political Studies*, 25(4), pp. 433–486
- Kuhn, R. (2014). Mister Unpopular: François Hollande and the Exercise of Presidential Leadership, 2012-14. *Modern & Contemporary France*, 22(4), pp.435-457
- Kuipers, S., & 't Hart, P. (2014). Accounting for Crisis. In M. Bovens, R. E. Goodin & T. Schillemans (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Libération (2014). Ce qu'il faut retenir de la conference de presse de François Hollande. September 18. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/france/2014/09/18/francois-hollande-la-solidarite-c-est-la-meilleure-facon-d-assurer-sa-propre-securite_1103305 [accessed December 11, 2017]
- Libération (2016a). Pour Hollande, ca ne va pas 'bien' mais 'mieux'. April 14. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/04/14/pour-hollande-ca-ne-va-pas-bien-mais-mieux_1446332 [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Libération (2016b). Ces journaux qui en pincent pour Macron. July 12. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/futurs/2016/07/12/ces-journaux-qui-en-pincent-pour-macron_1465762 [accessed December 12, 2017]
- Libération (2016c). L'Express: une nouvelle formule special franc Macron. March 8. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/futurs/2016/03/08/l-express-une-nouvelle-formule-special-franc-macron_1438268 [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Libération (2016d). 2015, une année en mots. January 1. Available at: http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2016/01/01/2015-une-annee-en-mots_1423545 [accessed December 12, 2017]
- Littlefield, R.S. & Quenette, A.M. (2007). Crisis leadership and Hurricane Katrina: the Portrayal of Authority by the Media in Natural Disasters. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 35(1), pp.26-47
- MacKuen, M.B. (1983). Political drama, economic conditions, and the dynamics of presidential popularity. *American Journal of Political Science*, pp.165-192
- McConnell, A. (2011). Success? Failure? Something in-between? A framework for evaluating crisis management. *Policy and Society*, 30, pp. 63-76

- Le Monde (2013). Record d'impopularité pour Hollande dans l'histoire des sondages BVA. October 28. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/10/28/sondage-bva-francois-hollande-president-le-plus-impopulaire-de-la-ve-republique_3504486_823448.html [accessed December 1, 2017]
- Le Monde (2014). Ce qu'il faut retenir de la conference de presse de Francois Hollande. September 18. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2014/09/18/un-grand-oral-decisif-pour-hollande_4490141_4355770.html [accessed December 1, 2017]
- Le Monde (2015). Ils participeront à la marcher républicaine dimanche à Paris. January 11. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/01/11/ils-participeront-a-la-marche-republicaine-dimanche-a-paris_4553608_3224.html [accessed December 1, 2017]
- Le Monde (2016a). 'Président hors-sol', ou 'debout dans la nuée des critiques', Hollande divise le politiques. April 15. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/04/15/president-hors-sol-ou-debout-dans-la-nuee-des-critiques-hollande-divise-les-politiques_4902555_823448.html [accessed December 1, 2017]
- Le Monde (2016b). Macron, l'homme qui derange la gauche. March 12. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/03/12/macron-l-homme-qui-derange-la-gauche_4881689_823448.html [accessed December 3, 2017]
- Le Monde (2016c). François Heisbourg: les mesures prises contre le terrorisme sont inefficaces et dérisoires. July 18. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/07/18/les-mesures-prises-sont-inefficaces-et-derisoires_4970971_3232.html [accessed January 2, 2017]
- Le Monde (2016d). Attentat de Nice: les responsables politiques, entre emotion et colère. July 15. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/07/15/attentat-de-nice-les-responsables-politiques-entre-emotion-et-colere_4969928_823448.html [accessed December 8, 2017]
- Le Monde (2016e). La droite mène l'offensive sécuritaire. July 18. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/07/18/la-droite-mene-l-offensive-securitaire_4971195_823448.html [accessed December 6, 2017]

- Le Monde (2016f). Après l'attentat de Nice, comment débattre? July 19. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/07/19/apres-nice-comment-debattre_4971771_3232.html [accessed January 2, 2017]
- Moran, M. (2017). Terrorism and the Banlieues: the Charlie Hebdo Attacks in Context. *Modern & Contemporary France*, 25(3), p.315-332
- Newsweek (2015). French president's popularity rating doubles following Paris attacks. January 19. Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/french-presidents-popularity-rating-doubles-following-charlie-hebdo-attacks-300518> [accessed November 21, 2017]
- Olsson, E., Nord, L.W. & Falkheimer, J. (2015). Media Coverage Crisis Exploitation Characteristics: A Case Comparison Study. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(2), pp. 158-174
- L'Opinion (2016). Macron, un French Maverick. April 7. Available at: <https://www.lopinion.fr/edition/politique/macron-french-maverick-100430> [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Le Parisien (2014). Hollande-Gayet: une histoire vieille de deux ans selon 'Closer'. January 16. Available at: <http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/affaire-hollande-gayet-closer-lance-une-nouvelle-salve-de-revelations-16-01-2014-3500925.php> [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Le Parisien (2016). "Dialogue citoyen" avec Hollande: 90 minutes contre le 'procès en trahison'. April 14. Available at: <http://www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/actu/90-minutes-contre-le-proces-en-trahison-14-04-2016-5713151.php> [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Le Point (2014). Hollande et ses visiteurs du soir. December 18. Available at: http://www.lepoint.fr/editos-du-point/michel-richard/hollande-et-ses-visiteurs-du-soir-18-12-2014-1890924_54.php [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Le Point (2016). 'Dialogues citoyens': Hollande ou la tentation de l'indifférence. April 15. Available at: http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/dialogues-citoyens-hollande-decroche-une-audience-mediocre-15-04-2016-2032648_20.php [accessed December 13, 2017]
- Seawright, J. & Gerring, J. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options, *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), pp. 294-308
- Telegraph (2014). How the French press is giving François Hollande an easy ride. January 13. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/francois->

- hollande/10568981/How-the-French-press-is-giving-Francois-Hollande-an-easy-ride.html [accessed December 8, 2017]
- Time (2016). The world reacts to the Nice, France, attack. July 15. Available at: <http://time.com/4407331/nice-terror-attack-reactions> [accessed January 2, 2018]
- Ulmer, R.R., Sellnow, T.L. & Seeger, M.W. (2013). *Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity*. Sage Publications.
- Vie Publique (2016). Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur l'attentat terroriste à Nice, à Paris le 15 juillet 2016. July 15. Available at: <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/167002202.html> [accessed December 8, 2017]
- The Washington Post (2016). Anger in France over Nice attack focuses on apparently lax security. July 15. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/anger-in-france-over-nice-attack-focuses-on-apparent-security-lapses/2016/07/15/b02d26b4-4a9c-11e6-8dac-0c6e4accc5b1_story.html?utm_term=.83dd02a64f4e [accessed December 6, 2017]
- The Washington Times (2016). ISIS claims responsibility for Bastille Day attack in Nice. July 16. Available at: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jul/16/isis-claims-responsibility-bastille-day-attack-nic> [accessed December 21, 2017]
- Wood, M., Corbett, J. & Flinders, M. (2016). Just like us: everyday celebrity politicians and the pursuit of popularity in an age of anti-politics. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18(3), pp.581-598
- Wolfenstein, V.E. (1967). Some psychological aspects of crisis leadership. In L.J. Edinger (Ed.). *Political leadership in industrialized societies*. New York: Wiley.
- Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.