Media coverage and the political outcomes of a crisis

Content:

Abstract

How does media coverage by traditional media affect the political outcomes for mayors of framing contests during mini-crises? Media coverage is often a neglected part of framing contest theory. The framing contest model of Boin et al. and the media coverage model of Ollson et al. are the models used in this research (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009; Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The question is researched through three cases: the monster truck incident in Haaksbergen, the riots in Hoek van Holland and an old-timer event in Oosterwolde. In the end the cases used in this research show no indications of influence by the type of media coverage and political outcomes. The assumption is that media coverage is one among many other factors that influence the political outcomes.

Introduction

This research should be seen as part of a bigger puzzle. This puzzle is how framing contests influence the political outcomes of crises. The aftermath of a crisis can have significant consequences for incumbent office-holders, such as resignation or dismissal. Therefore, it is important for them to deal with the crisis delicately. Because of the significant consequences it is necessary to identify all influencing factors and how those factors influence the political outcomes. This research will focus on the media coverage.

Boin et al. constructed a model to get an understanding on the framing contest and the political and the policy outcomes of a crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). According to Boin et al. all actors try to exploit the crisis after it happens, this results in the framing contest (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). In this framing contest the actors try to interpret events during a crisis and their causes and who is responsible. The framing contest eventually leads to the political outcomes. In the opinion of the researcher the model of Boin et al. is a general model which does not take into account other possible factors (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Boin et al. do mention media coverage in the end of their article as one of the possible other factors which could have an intervening influence. Therefore, this research will focus on the media coverage of crises. The focus of this research will be on the political outcomes and not the policy outcomes because otherwise the research would not be comprehendible within the time path of this research.

The media coverage as an intervening factor on media coverage has not been studied before. Boin et al. themselves point out that media play a crucial role after a crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). In this research it is researched what influence media coverage has on the relation between the framing contest and the political outcome of a crisis.

Olsson et al. did research into the different types of media coverage (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The different types of media coverage they described are: style of reporting, framing, objectivity of the media and tone of reporting. These types will be used to identify the types of media coverage in this research. The next step is to link types of media coverage with political outcomes. This research will be a stepping stone to research into the influence of the media on political crisis during crisis.

This leads to the following research question: How does media coverage by traditional media affect the political outcomes for mayors of framing contests during mini-crises?

The types of media coverage are: style of reporting, framing by the media/mayor, objectivity of the news and the tone of reporting. These types of media coverage will be researched by analysing articles from national, regional and local media. The political outcomes will be researched by analysing the council meetings.

Three cases will be analysed, the Haaksbergen monster truck incident, the Hoek van Holland beach riots and the Oosterwolde Old-timer event case. The cases had to have the following conditions: it had to be an event, there had to be a physical aspect (injuries or deaths), the crisis had to fall under the responsibility of the municipality and there had to be sufficient media coverage. Haaksbergen and Oosterwolde are similar in the way that both crises are accidents, and also the similar size of the municipality makes them a good comparison. The Hoek van Holland case is quite different: a large municipality and intense violence. Because it was different from the other two cases it revealed some valuable insights.

All three cases have in common that they are mini-crises in the sense that they were local crises on the level of the municipality. The definition of a mini-crises is: "Het gaat dan om gebeurtenissen die de gemeenschap (groot of klein) vaak kortstondig bezighoudt, veel (media-)aandacht krijgt, maar ook vaak relatief snel weer uit de aandacht verdwijnt" (Duin, Wijkhuijs, & de Jong, 2013, pp. 9-10). The reason for this is that crises on national level have so many abnormalities that it is difficult to compare them to each other. Those are abnormalities such as: a complex crisis, many involved actors, intense media coverage and huge number of media outlets. Mini-crises are easier to comprehend due to their small scale. Because of the use of mini-crises in this research the personal political outcomes for the mayor will be analysed. Mini-crises have a physical and a social component (Duin, Wijkhuijs, & de Jong, 2013).

Societal relevance of this research is the enhanced understanding of the role of the media in the politics. When it is found that in times of crises the media has no or little influence on the political outcomes it is an indicator that the influence of the media on politics is limited. More specifically this research could identify how the processes after a crisis enfold. This means that the knowledge of this research could help the public, media and political actors to base their actions more on facts instead of emotions or chosen frames which are distributed by actors and the media. This could save perfectly good incumbent office holders from resignation or dismissal and could uncover incumbent office holders who should have resigned or been dismissed for their part in the crisis. This could strengthen the trust of the public in politics. Also when it is uncovered how the media coverage influence the political outcomes the government, local or on other levels, could use this knowledge to enhance the trust in politics.

The academical advantages of this research are contributions to the article of Bion et al. (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Boin et al. created a model to explain political and policy outcomes, however, they do not explain the role of the media. This research could fill this knowledge gap. Furthermore this research contributes to the knowledge of the role of media on politics.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

The goal of this research is to provide a stepping stone to understanding what influence media coverage has on the political outcomes for the mayor as result of crises. To understand this, one has to look at how political outcomes in general derive from crises. Boin et al. already made huge progress in this field with their research on crisis exploitation (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Therefore this theoretical framework will first provide an explanation of their work. What is missing in their research is that they do not give an understanding of the role of media coverage.

Olsson et al. provided a framework of different types of media coverage after crises (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). However they don't link this to political outcomes. This research will try to link both studies. With the types of media coverage provided by Olsson et al. it is possible to analyze the media coverage (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The framework of Boin et al. already provides a typification of the different political outcomes (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). Both studies are combined to identify the influence of types of media coverage on political outcomes of a crisis.

Framing contest

In today's society there is a tendency to focus on risks (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Therefore, when a crisis occurs it has the potential to overwhelm society. When a society is faced with a crisis it becomes conscious about the risks they face. The public wants to know something is being done and changed to take away the risk. Although how are those changes constructed? Between the mini-crisis and the outcomes there has to be something that affects the outcomes. According to Boin et al., this is called the framing contest (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Boin, t' Hart and McConnell define framing contest as the competition where public perception and interpretation about a mini-crisis is determined (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnell, 2009).

Above is discussed that society wants to see changes after a crisis. However, all the actors want different political changes, because everyone will evaluate the crisis from a different perspective (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The conventional expectancy value model argues that one's attitude towards something is dictated by the attributed value of the different aspects of a crisis (Chong & Druckman, 2007). This means that the attitude of a person in regard to a crisis, depends on what aspect of the crisis he finds important. For example, when a major flood occurs, the public will focus on the fact that they are prone to the risk of flooding. An incumbent office-holder will focus on the fact that the weather circumstances that caused the crisis happen only once every thousand years and for that reason he could not have prevented it.

Eventually the public has to adopt a public opinion. This frame is constructed in the framing contest. Chong and Druckman define the public opinion as: "particular definitions and interpretations of political issues" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106). This public opinion is constructed by opposing frames which are brought up by different actors. For example, incumbent office-holders, political opposition or interest groups. The framing contest and the frame adopted by the public also influences the individual opinions of the public (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Another definition of framing is: "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation." (Entman, 2007, p. 164). Where the previous definition was more neutral this definition is more focussed on the fact the framing is trying to highlight one or more aspects of the story above other aspects of the story. For example, focussing on the mistakes an incumbent office-holder has made instead of that the incumbent office-holder could not have prevented the crisis. This definition is used in the context of the media (Entman, 2007). The media has three ways in which it can influence the story: Agenda-setting, Framing and Priming (Entman, 2007). Agenda-setting means the media determines what subjects are news-worthy. Framing is highlighting some aspects of the story. And last priming, which means using stories that fall within a popular story line. In this context framing is a container concept.

Boin et al. describe three different positions an actor (such as an incumbent office-holder, the political opposition or actors from interests groups) can choose from during a framing contest (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnell, 2009). An actor can choose between them according to his or her values, interests and positions (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). The first position is the minimalizing of a critical threat. When chosen this stance an actor states that the crisis was nothing more than an unfortunate accident. The second position means that the actor sees the crisis as a critical threat too collective good and the status quo. In this case the status quo has to be defended. This stance is taken to protect existing officials and policy. The third position involves seeing the crisis as a failure of existing officials and policy. The status quo needs to change.

During the aftermath of a crisis these three positions create two cut-off points where a choice will be made by the public, media and political actors (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). After a crisis occurs the first framing contests take place. In the first framing contest the public and all other actors determine if the crisis is an unfortunate incident (which should have no further consequences) or if the crisis has significant impact on the public and should be dealt with accordingly. This means something has to change to prevent further crises. When it is deemed that position 1 is in place, nothing happens. When it is deemed that the crisis should have been prevented, the second framing contest occurs. This framing contest

is to answer the question: what does the crisis mean for the status quo? This contest is between the second and third position. As is said above, the second position means an actor defends the status quo. The third position means an actor thinks the crisis is the result of action of the office-holders and of the current policy. Therefore, the actor wants to change the system because the crisis is a symptom of a failing system.

The political outcomes will be determined after the second framing contest occurs (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). The question is whether or not the incumbent office-holders have met their responsibilities in a sufficient matter. Incumbent office-holders will say they indeed have met their responsibilities because they want to stay in office. Other involved actors will try to blame them in order to get in office or try to influence the local political field. This is also known also the political exploitation game (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009).

Position one and two are normally taken by incumbent office-holders which have interests in defending the status quo. Position three is taken by actors who have interest in attacking or changing the status quo, such as politicians of the opposition in the municipality council.

Media coverage

Boin, t' Hart and McConnell (2009) give a proper introduction into the world of crisis exploitation with their framework of framing contests surrounding crises. This framework however does not provide a satisfying account of the role of the media. Boin et al. do acknowledge that the media is more than just a platform where the framing contest takes place by stressing that a public official has to convince the media to pay attention to their frame in order to influence the public (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009).

The cases of Boin et al. showed that incumbent officials can be effective in making their frame stick to the public (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). However, they can also fail miserably. Boin et al. discuss two interpretations of the influence of the media. One presumption is that a proactive media stance will help to enhance an incumbent office-holder's credibility (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Which frame the media will pay attention to is dependent on credibility. Another interpretation as discussed by Boin, T' Hart and McConnell is that the media pursue their own agenda. This is what Hopmann et al. (2011) would call the partisan media bias. This means the media will favour the political actors which they have always favoured. The agenda of the media is influenced by the frames and the biases that already existed in the media.

Scholars have yet to provide a clear and widely supported answer to the question what the role of the media is in crises. Gower and An found that media tend to put blame and responsibility on a person or organisation, especially when the public/media thinks that the crisis situation was controllable or intentional (2009). Furthermore, Olson and Nord (2015) make a distinction from a journalistic view between 'inside the media', and 'outside the

media' crises which refers to routine and non-routine crises. 'Outside the media' (routine) crises refers to crises that the media and the public are accustomed to and does not create a big shock when such a crisis, like a fire, occurs. In contrast, 'inside the media' (non-routine) are crises that are new for the media and the public and does shock the public and the media more, for example plane crashes. These crises are characterized with uncertainty and surprises even for the media themselves. What is important here is that journalists generally are less prepared for these none routine crises. According to Olsson and Nord, journalists will in times of non-routine crises collect as much information as possible, which means two things according to them: one, they rely more on government resources, and two, the gate keeping standards will be lowered (Olsson & Nord, 2015). The media will rely more on governmental sources, because in the beginning of the crisis the government are usually the first who have information available. Because information is scarce, the media has to accept every bit of information without being too critical. Otherwise they have nothing to tell to their audience.

There seems to be a general trend to interpretive media coverage (journalism where the media provides the audience with their own analyse of the situation) (Olsson & Nord, 2015). This would suggest that journalists are more prone to frame a crisis, whether in their own frame or in an adopted frame. When crisis reporting is compared to election campaign reporting, it is noticeable that during crisis reporting there is less interpretative journalism (Olsson & Nord, 2015). This could indicate that more crises are 'outside the media' or non-routine events.

Above it is explained what scholars have said about media coverage. Now it is time to break down media coverage in order to understand the dynamics of media coverage. Olsson et al. provide us with types of media coverage divided in four dimensions (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The first is style of reporting which is divided in descriptive journalism and interpretative journalism. Interpretative journalism means the media figures out for themselves what the facts actually mean in contrary to just reporting about the facts, which is descriptive style of reporting (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The second dimension is framing by the media which is divided in issue framing and game framing. Issue framing is when the media only reports about the crisis and game framing is when the media put the crisis in a wider context (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). For example, previous crises during the office term of the incumbent office-holder. The third dimension is objectivity of the news, which is divided in balanced and unbalanced reporting. Balanced reporting means that the media uses both governmental resources and non-governmental sources. Unbalanced means the media focus mostly on governmental sources. The fourth dimension is tone of reporting which is divided in a negative and positive tone of reporting.

Olsson et al. found that governmental sources are favoured during a crisis (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). This shows a lack in journalistic standards in the opinion of Olsson et al. (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). Furthermore, in all cases they found high numbers of issue framing and descriptive journalism. This points to the media being reliant on the government in non-routine cases. This suggests a limited role for the media in these kind of crises. Furthermore, the cases examined by Olsson, Nord and Falkheimer were big crises with strong societal unrest which generally leads to more unpreparedness of the journalists which consequently results in more descriptive journalism. The cases revealed that most media coverage was: descriptive, issue framing, unbalanced reporting that was in favour of the governmental actors (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015).

Boin et al. describe that the political outcomes derive from the framing contest (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). This research believes that one of the factors that influences the framing contest is media coverage. The type of media coverage influences which frame sticks with the public and other actors involved. In doing so the media is influencing the political outcomes of a crisis. The expectation on the basis of the above theoretical framework is that the different types of media coverage will contribute to a different political outcome.

Political outcomes

The following table of Boin et al. shows the political outcomes of a framing contest according to them (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). The opposition has two options: focus the blame on the government or absolve the blame. The government also has two options: accept or deny the responsibility. The model shows which political outcome belongs to the combination of choices of the government and opposition.

Table 1: Political outcomes

		Opposition	
		Absolve blame	**Focus blame**
Government	**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

Boin t' Hart and McConnell describe different political outcomes of a crisis exploitation game (2009). Those are: elite damage, elite rejuvenation and elite escape.

'Elite damage' means the incumbent office-holder is held responsible for the crisis. This leads to negative consequences for the incumbent office-holder, ranging from a drop of popularity to resignation. When the incumbent office-holder does not have to resign, it can mean an office-holder can recover from the damage. The alternative is that (s)he loses the next elections because of his/her diminishing public approval.

Another option is 'elite rejuvenation' (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). This means that office-holders who are underperforming in the view of the public before the crisis are seen as heroes after the crisis. For example, mayor Rudy Giuliani. Before 9/11 he was written of and after 9/11 he was seen as a hero. The same goes for Chancellor Gerhard Schröder after the floods in Germany. This happens when incumbent office-holders show themselves as capable crisis leaders. This regenerates the public's thrust in them and makes the public approval of them go up.

The last option is 'elite escape' (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). This could happen when evaluation reports show that the responsibility lies with many actors as well the incumbent office-holder. This means that the office-holder is not seen as blameworthy. Another option is that the office-holder actively takes the blame for the crisis. As a result, the public do not want him out of office and forgive him because he showed he is aware of his failure and his responsibilities.

This research will only look at the political outcomes at the local level, thus the municipality. In local politics there are several dominating actors (Derksen & Schaap, 2010). The incumbent office-holder in this research will be the mayor involved in the researched cases. As (s)he has the political responsibility for the safety of his/her town, while crises impact the safety of a town the mayor is responsible to handle the crisis. The mayor is part of the 'College of mayor and city council members' (Derksen & Schaap, 2010). This College is the government of the municipality. Besides the mayor the 'College of mayor and College of mayor and City Council Members' consist of city council members. These are normally people from the political parties who control a majority of the municipality council. Although, it is also possible that a city council member isn't part of a political party. The city council members are responsible for a small part of municipality policy (Derksen & Schaap, 2010). Opposite to the 'College of mayor and city council members are the other political parties who do not have own members in the College (Derksen & Schaap, 2010). The municipality council consists of political parties who get elected and get a proportional number of seats related to the elections.

Due to a changing interrelation between the College and the Council there is more rivalry between those actors (Boogers, 2010). In the past the college was an extension of the

council. Nowadays with an increasingly professionalised council there is more rivalry between the council and the college. This changes the dynamics between both actors when a crisis occurs (Boogers, 2010; Derksen & Schaap, 2010). Therefore, when a crisis occurs it is more likely the council will reject the view on the crisis from the college and the mayor.

The rejection of the view of the college/mayor is what Boin et al. calls the clash between the government (mayor) and the opposition (council), especially the political parties in the opposition (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). The mayor is therefore the defender of the status quo and the council (opposition), depending on their frame, support the mayor or argue for changing the status quo.

Conceptual model

The model of this research follows the following line: when a crisis occurs the framing contest starts. All actors have something to say about the crisis. The media coverage works as an intervening factor by selecting courses choosing a narrative and interpreting the facts. This eventually leads to political outcomes. This is illustrated in figure 1.
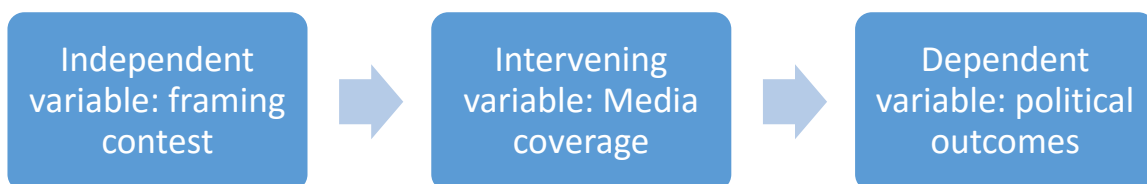

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Table 2 illustrates how media coverage are linked to the political outcomes. The table should be read in the following way. First look at the dimensions of media coverage, then look at the type of media coverage. The political outcomes column shows which political outcome is expected with that particular type of media coverage.

In this research media coverage exists out of four dimensions: interpretative or descriptive style of reporting, issue or game framing, balanced or unbalanced reporting and negative or positive tone towards the incumbent office-holder in reporting (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The four dimensions exists out of eight different types of media coverage, two types of media coverage for each dimension. The expectation is that every type of media coverage leads to a political outcome. This research expects elite damage when an interpretative style of reporting is found in media coverage. For every type of media coverage, it is explained in the table shown below why that particular political outcome is expected.

Table 2: Expectations of political outcomes

Dimension of media coverage	Type of media coverage	Political outcome
Style of reporting	Descriptive style of reporting	Elite rejuvenation or escape

	Interpretative style of reporting	Elite damage
Framing	Issue framing	Elite rejuvenation or escape
	Game framing	Elite damage
Objectivity of the news	Balanced	Elite damage
	Unbalanced	Elite rejuvenation or escape
Tone of reporting	Positive tone	Elite rejuvenation or escape
	Negative tone	Elite damage

The style of reporting dimension describes whether the media uses descriptive or interpretative journalism (style of reporting). When the crisis is to be found a non-routine crisis it means the crisis has overwhelmed the media, the media is struggling to create a story (Olsson & Nord, 2015). Therefore, they have to rely on easy information, which usually means information from the government. Because the media relies on the information from the government it is hard to be critically towards the government. Furthermore, because the media is struggling to create a story they have little information to be interpretative of. Therefore, when the media is found to be using an interpretative style of reporting, it means the media is not only relying on government information but also on other actors which enables them to be interpretative. In an interpretative style of reporting the media has more information and therefore is able to be critical on all actors, this increases the chance that the media is critically towards the government. With descriptive style of reporting the media is relying on the government information which makes it hard to be critically towards the government. Therefore, it is expected that interpretative journalism leads to elite damage and descriptive style of reporting leads to elite escape of elite rejuvenation.

The framing dimension describes whether the media uses issue or game framing (framing by the media/mayor). Game framing usually means the crisis is further investigated (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). For example, when the media portrays the crisis as the most recent failure of many failures from an incumbent office-holder. Game framing means that the crisis is set in a wider context. In the case of crises this mostly means past mistakes are covered up. This could stir up the public because this type of media coverage makes them feel even more unsafe and demanding more change or removal of the incumbent office-holder. For that reason, when a crisis portrays game framing, elite damage is more likely. Issue framing means the media is only reporting about the crisis and the facts of that particular crisis (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). Therefore, with issue framing elite escape or elite rejuvenation is expected.

The objectivity of the news describes whether the media is neutral in the use of sources. Balanced reporting means that the media is basing their reports on governmental sources as well as other sources. Unbalanced reporting means that more of governmental sources is used (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). The expectation is that when the media

is not properly representing all sources the influence of the media is higher because the media is choosing whom is being heard by the public. Olsson et al. argue that when media uses unbalanced sources this is mostly in regard to governmental sources (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). Thus when unbalanced sources are used it is expected that elite escape or elite rejuvenation are favorable. Balanced reporting is neutral in regard to political outcomes.

The tone of reporting is whether the media is positive or negative about the incumbent office-holder. When it is found the article is negative towards the incumbent office-holder the media is influencing the political outcomes by portraying the incumbent office-holder as a badly functioning official, this would lead to elite damage. With positive tone it is the other way around, thus it leads to elite escape or rejuvenation.

Chapter 2: Methodology

As illustrated in figure two, the independent variable in this research is framing contests. The intervening variable is media coverage and the dependent variable is political outcomes.
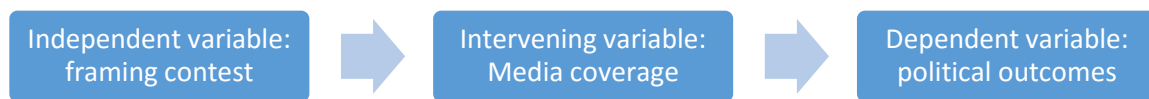
Independent variable: framing contest	→	Intervening variable: Media coverage	→	Dependent variable: political outcomes

Figure 2: Variables

The goal of this research is to find out how media coverage influences the political outcomes in mini-crises for mayors. To get a better understanding of the influence of media coverage on political outcomes, this research will use a multiple case study design. In a case study one subject is thoroughly analysed to get a grip on the complex subject (Swanborn, 2010). This research needs an in-depth view on the influence of media coverage on political outcomes. A case study design makes this is possible because it enables the researcher to analyse media coverage in different contexts (Swanborn, 2010).

Olsson, Nord and Falkheimer conducted a research on the appearance of different types of media coverage (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). They had chosen three cases which had positive political outcomes. They only focused on the characteristics of media coverage. This research will go further and will try to link the media coverage to the political outcomes.

In this research the unit of analysis will be the media coverage and the political outcomes during a particular crisis. The units of observations are the media coverage by traditional online and written newspapers and municipality council meetings.

Case selection

To get a proper understanding on the influence of media coverage on political outcomes multiple cases have to be compared. Only then, different characteristics of crisis exploitation coverage could be linked to a particular political outcome. This research will make the case selection based on four characteristics. First, the crisis has to occur on an event, for example a party or a show. This mostly means that the case is not that complicated. Second, there needs to be a physical aspect, thus injuries or deaths. This makes sure that the crisis without a doubt is a crisis. Those characteristics are chosen to select cases that are most-similar. With most-similar cases other intervenient factors will not disturb the results. Third, the crisis need to be within the realm of the municipality. Otherwise the cases would nog be mini-crises. The last criterion is that there has to be media attention in order to analyse the case, otherwise there would not be anything to measure. Furthermore, only Dutch mini-crises are selected.

Although it would be appropriate for an explorative research to select most-similar cases, the cases in this research are not. This choice was primarily a practical choice. The

selected cases are: the monster truck accident in Haaksbergen in 2014, the old timer event in Oosterwolde and the Beach riots in Hoek van Holland.

Although the Haaksbergen and Oosterwolde case are quite similar, the Haaksbergen case was slightly bigger. It was proven difficult to find a third case similar to the Haaksbergen and Oosterwolde case. The Hoek van Holland case is a bit off, but it does meet the standards of this research.

Table 3: Case selection

Table	Haaksbergen	Hoek van Holland	Oosterwolde
1. **Event**	Automotersportief 2014	Dancefestival Sunset Grooves	Old timer festival
2. **Physical aspect**	3 deaths, 28 casualties	1 Death, 6 casualties	1 death, 11 casualties
3. **Municipality**	The municipality issued a permit to allow the show.	The municipality was responsible for the festival and the police activities during that night	The municipality issued the permit
4. **Media coverage**	42 useful articles are found	41 useful articles are found	26 useful articles are found

Data collection

The data is collected through desk research by using Lexis Nexis and online media outlets through which all relevant media articles are accessible. This data will allow a thorough analyses of the media coverage. The criteria for news articles are the following: The article has to cover the crisis, it should be the main subject. When an article only remotely mentions the crisis, it is not used. Because every crisis has its own timeline, one case could become irrelevant after six months while another case is still represented in the media after two years. Therefore, for every case it will be evaluated when the political timeline of the crisis is ended. In this research, news articles from local, regional and national media will be used from both hard copy newspapers and online newspaper. The political outcomes will be analysed by looking at council meetings about the particular crisis. For every crisis the council meeting about the crisis will be analysed by using the transcripts of those meetings.

This research tries to find out whether media has an influence on the political outcomes of a crisis. Thus, any potential influence is better recognizable when the media coverage is taken broadly. For this reason, national, regional and local newspapers as well as online and reals newspapers are incorporated in this research. This combination of hard

copy newspapers and online news articles will give a better understanding of the crisis exploitation coverage, in comparison when only hard copy newspapers are used like Olsson, Nord and Falkheimer did (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015).

Triangulation of data sources is in place, both news articles and council meetings are used in this research. Through content analysis the articles and the written council meetings will be analysed.

Operationalization

Table 4 represents the operationalization of this research.

Table 4: operationalization

	Concepts	Definition	Indicators	Sources
Mini-crisis		: "Het gaat dan om gebeurtenissen die de gemeenschap (groot of klein) vaak kortstondig bezighouden, veel (media-)aandacht krijgen, maar ook vaak relatief snel weer uit de aandacht verdwijnen. "(van Duijn, Wijkhuijs, & de Jong, 2012, pp. 9-10)	- Crises where the authorities didn't scale up higher than GRIP 3	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written - Literature on (mini) crises
Framing contest		The purposefully influencing of the public perception and interpretation of a mini-crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009).	- Dialogue between political actors about what happened - Political actors publicly announcing what happened	- Press statements - News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
Style of reporting	Interpretive Journalism	Journalism where the focus is on analyses, evaluations and explanations of a situation (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- News articles which includes: analyses, evaluations or explanations in regard to the mini-crisis.	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
	Descriptive Journalism	Journalism where the focus is on just telling what happened (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- News articles about the factual happenings at mini-crisis	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
Framing	Issue framing	A frame which only reflects an issue or a political actors position on it (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- Focus on only the crisis - Or focus on issue positions or real life conditions relating to issue positions	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
	Game framing	A frame where the crisis is put in a bigger context	- When the focus was on tactics or strategies of	- News articles of national, regional

		(Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- politics - Opinion polls	or local newspapers published online or written
Balanced or unbalanced reporting	Balanced reporting	Balanced reporting is when both the municipality and other actor's sources (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- When both incumbent and oppositional political actors are both equally used as sources	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
	Unbalanced reporting	Unbalanced reporting is when the municipality or other sources are more often used as source (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- When the incumbent or oppositional political actors are more used as source	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
Tone of media	Positive tone	When there was a positive attitude in the media towards political actors, events, scandals, conflicts, and fiascos (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- Positive proposals - Political support and competence or progress	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
	Negative tone	When there was a negative attitude in the media. towards a political actor, events, scandals, conflicts, and fiascos (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015)	- Negative proposals - Negativity about a political actor	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written
Political outcomes	Elite Damage	When the mayor after a crisis is out of office or has a significant decrease in reputation (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009)	- Opinion polls - Political actor resigning or getting resigned - The media criticize the way the incumbent office-holder handled the crisis - Other public office-holders are negative about the incumbent office-holder	- News articles of national, regional or local newspapers published online or written - Press statements
	Elite Rejuvenation	Praise and support for the mayor (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009)	- Opinion polls - Political actor remains in office the media approves the way the incumbent office-holder handled the crisis - Other public office-holders are positive about the incumbent office-holder.	- Council meeting
	Elite escape	Diffused blame of the crisis, thus not only	- Opinion polls - Political actor	- Council meeting

the mayor but also other actors are seen to be responsible. Reputation damage is possible (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009)	remains in office - the media approves the way the incumbent office-holder handled the crisis - Other public office-holders are positive about the incumbent office-holder.

All the concepts above are borrowed from Boin et al. or Olsson et al. (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009) (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). However, balanced and unbalanced reporting deserve some more explaining. In the media coverage it was noticed that the divide was not primarily between governmental and oppositional sources, probably due to the mini-crisis, but between the municipality (mayor) and other sources of actors. Therefore this dimension was changed in the divide between municipality and other sources of actors.

Methods for analysis

The data will be analysed with content analysis in five steps:

1. The news articles will be coded following coding scheme
2. For every case the analysis of the intervening and dependent variables will be done
3. For every case the political outcomes will be analysed
4. Cases need to be compared to each other
5. Matching the expectations with the results

In the analysis, specific words will not be sought out. In this research it is impossible to specify specific words for the content analysis, because the variable doesn't lend itself for that. Instead, a more interpretive content analysis will be utilized. A coding scheme will be used to analyse the articles. For the variable style of reporting, it will be analysed whether there are explanations, analyses or evaluations of a crisis (interpretative) or whether there are just plain facts which try to describe the situation (descriptive). For the framing of the news articles there will be searched for tactics or strategies used by politician (game frame) or when there is only a focus on the crisis (issue frame). For example, opinion polls in articles will be used as an indicator of a game frame. For objectivity of the news the sources of the news articles will be analysed whether the source was an incumbent or oppositional actor, and the balance of sources. For tone of reporting, was the tone of the article positive or negative. This will lead to positive or negative code. When the variables are analysed, the overall picture needs to be looked at. This is where the types of media coverage are identified.

The fourth step of the analysis is comparing the influences of media coverage on political outcomes between the cases. In comparing the different political outcomes to the

characteristics of crisis exploitation coverage, some explanations could be found for the different political outcomes. the last step is matching the expectations with the results.

Validity and Reliability

The research will be done on a clear set of codes which are found in the coding scheme. In the content analysis there are no words linked to a code, which makes it rather difficult to test the reliability. Therefore, every code will be explained and all the media articles will be included with the regarding codes. This ensures follow-up research is able to follow the steps of this research.

Furthermore, it is important to make sure that the variables are truly measuring what you want to measure, in order to protect the validity of this research. In order to achieve this, every step of the analysis will be thoroughly explained. Due to this everyone will be able follow the specific reason for coming to the conclusion of this research. To enhance validity further the variables are thoroughly explained in this chapter.

External validity is also something one should take into account. This research is explorative. This means that the findings should be more thoroughly tested before it could be used for further research.

Chapter 3: Analysis

How does media coverage (by traditional media) affect the political outcomes (for mayors) of framing contests during mini-crises?

For the analysis there were three cases selected. These cases are the monster truck incident in Haaksbergen, the beach riots at Hoek van Holland and the accident at the old timer event in Oosterwolde. In this chapter the results of the analysis are presented.

Haaksbergen

On Sunday the 28th of September 2014, the event AutoMoterSportief took place (Monster Truck Ongeval Haaksbergen 2015). During this event, located on a parking lot, a demonstration of a monster truck took place. The public stood all around the stunt area. The demonstration included a stunt in which the truck would ride over six cars. Unfortunately, during that stunt the truck tried to make a turn to the left, however, the car kept driving straight ahead into the public. This caused 3 deaths and 28 injuries. The evaluation reports show that the municipality of Haaksbergen failed to take the safety aspect in account during the permit procedure (Monster Truck Ongeval Haaksbergen 2015). Furthermore, the driver and owner of the company who was hired for the show was subject to criminal investigation (Monster Truck Ongeval Haaksbergen 2015).

Results

Table five represents the results of the analysis of the Haaksbergen case. The results are categorized in the four dimensions of crisis exploitation coverage and of the political outcomes. For every dimension the total number of articles is given and the amount of codes for every type of media coverage. The total number of articles found, with a focus on the Haaksbergen case, is 42. Within the dimension objectivity of the news the total amount of codes is higher. This is caused by the fact that some of the articles had multiple sources. The tone of reporting had 34 codes, thus less codes than articles. This is caused by the fact that not every news article showed itself positive or negative, or it doesn't report about the political outcomes of the event.

Table 5: Haaksbergen

Style of reporting	Interpretative journalism	15
	Descriptive journalism	27
	Total	42
Framing by mayor/media?	Issue frame	28
	Game frame	14

	Total	42	
Objectivity of the news	Municipality	12	
	Other	39	
	Total	42	
Tone of reporting	Positive tone	2	
	Negative tone	32	
	Total	42	

Media coverage

Style of reporting

Table five shows that the majority of the coded articles showed a descriptive style of journalism. Only 15 of the coded articles show an interpretative style of reporting. This means that the most articles tried to describe the situation as it is. According to the expectation of this research and Olsson et al. this means that the media are to a lesser extend influencing the story in comparison when the media are using interpretive style of journalism (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). What stood out was that the journalists in many accounts described what other actors said of the crisis, for example experts on the cause of the accident. The following citation illustrates this: "The municipality Haaksbergen did not take into account the safety aspect when granting the permit for the Monster truck show." That's the conclusion of the OVV in the report about the accident that was published on Wednesday." (Gemeente Haaksbergen, Organisatie én Chauffeur Onderschatten Gevaar Stunt Monstertruck, 2015- translation by AJKH).

Framing by mayor/media

Table five shows that the majority of the articles focused only at the accident itself (issue framing) instead of the politics or framing contest surrounding the crisis (game framing). This suggests that the media limited its own impact by only focussing on the accident itself. This means that none of the articles reported about a failing permit appliance in Dutch municipalities. The OVV did hint on a failing permit policy nationwide (Monster Truck Ongeval Haaksbergen, 2015), as the following quote from one of the articles shows: "The municipality Haaksbergen did not take into account the safety aspect when granting the permit for the Monster truck show" (Gemeente Haaksbergen, Organisatie én Chauffeur Onderschatten Gevaar Stunt Monstertruck, 2015- translation AJKH). This gave journalists an reasonable opportunity to set up a frame on a failing permit policy nationwide. The OVV

claimed that Haaksbergen and others municipalities have to learn from the mistakes made in Haaksbergen: "The point of this investigation is to learn for the future, for the municipality of Haaksbergen and other municipalities" (Gemeente Haaksbergen, Organisatie én Chauffeur Onderschatten Gevaar Stunt Monstertruck, 2015- translation AJKH). This could have given ground for the media to put the Haaksbergen case in a bigger context, instead the media chose for issue framing, which limited the impact.

Objectivity of the news

Table five shows that the media used more other sources than municipality sources. Thus, the majority of the information is not provided by the municipality itself, in contrast to what Olsson et al. argue in the case of crises (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). This is also in contrast to what Olsson and Nord expected (Olsson & Nord, 2015).

Tone of reporting

The tone of reporting is overwhelmingly negative. This, together with the other dimensions of media coverage, would suggest that the media framed the story not by interpretive journalism but by selecting sources from outside the municipality that were negative about the handling of the driver and organisation and the handling of the permit by the municipality.

Political outcomes

The political outcome of this case is elite damage, resulting in a resignation of the mayor. The mayor himself confirmed this outcome of the crisis as covered by the media during his resignation speech by claiming there was 'no more trust' (Burgemeester van Haaksbergen Stapt op na Ongeluk Monstertruck, 2015- translation AJKH). The mayor felt there was no trust in him in his current position as a result of his actions relating the Haaksbergen incident. However, in the beginning of the council meeting the mayor was defending his actions, prior, during and after the crisis (Raadsvergadering Monstertruckdrama Haaksbergen 27 mei 2015 2015). During the meeting, council members renounced the mayor's stance and comments made during the mayors speech. In the opinion of the council members the stance and comments showed them that the mayor had to resign. Based on events during the council meeting it is concluded that the political outcome of the Haaksbergen Monster truck case is elite damage since the mayor resigned after the council meeting (Raadsvergadering Monstertruckdrama Haaksbergen 27 mei 2015, 2015)

Influence of media coverage on the political outcome

This case showed descriptive journalism, issue framing, unbalanced reporting, negative tone and negative expressions of political outcome. The political outcome as come forward in the municipality meeting, was elite damage since the mayor resigned in the end of this meeting.

Aside from the articles which reflected on the municipality meeting, there were no articles that pointed to the resignation of the mayor. Also, in the municipality meeting the report of the OVV was in many accounts referred to, which was very critical about the permit policy in the municipality. This reflected on the mayor as the one responsible for the policy. Furthermore, the mayor stance that he would have given the permit again after the crisis, as is discussed above, was not taken lightly. Thus it seems that there is no direct influence of the media on the political outcomes. However, it seems reasonable to give the media some responsibility for the chain of events. The media was constantly critical, showed sources which were overwhelmingly critical towards the organization by the municipality and other actors of the event. The media almost did not rely on the municipality for their information.

Hoek van Holland

On the 28th of August 2009, at the beach of Hoek van Holland, a festival was held (Muller, et al. 2009). Before the event there were signs that hooligans from a soccer club would come to disturb the festival. Those signs never reached commanding officers, resulting in an unprepared police force. During the party the hooligans had several incidents with other guests of the party. One of those incidents escalated completely when the hooligans recognized police officers in civilian clothing's. The agents were their next victims. Other police officers had to come in to protect the police officers. This escalated to the point that cops were hunted down on the beach. Finally, the cops felt so threatened that they shot directly at the public. This resulted in one death and six casualties. In the end, it took mounted police officers to end the riots.

Results

Table six represents the results of the analysis of the Hoek van Holland case. The results are categorized in the four dimensions of crisis exploitation coverage and of the political outcomes. For every dimension the total number of articles is given and the amount of codes for every type of media coverage. The total number of articles found, with a focus on the Hoek van Holland case, is 41. Within the dimension objectivity of the news the total amount of codes is higher. This is caused by the fact that some of the articles had multiple sources. The tone of reporting had 28 codes, thus less codes than articles. This is caused by the fact that not every news article shows itself positive or negative, or it doesn't report about the political outcomes of the event.

Table 6: Hoek van Holland

Style of reporting	Interpretative journalism	15
	Descriptive journalism	26
	Total	41

Framing by mayor/media?	Issue frame	21
	Game frame	20
	Total	41

Objectivity of the news	Municipality	31
	Other	36
	Total	41

Tone of reporting	Positive tone	3
	Negative tone	25
	Total	41

Media coverage

Style of reporting

The media coverage showed more descriptive journalism codes than interpretative journalism codes. However, when the media reflected mainly on what happened between the mayor and the police chief, interpretative style of reporting was used more.

Framing by the mayor/media

Table six shows that the number of articles containing game framing and issue framing is in balance: 21 issue framing versus 20 game framing. It is important to note that most of the game framing codes were given to news articles that were written some months after the beach riots. This could point to a certain timeline. In this case most of the game codes were about the political struggle of mayor Aboutaleb, for example: "The positions of Aboutaleb and Meijboom are under pressure after the COT concluded that especially the Police made serious mistakes during the dance party." (Aboutaleb Moet Spitsroeden lopen; Burgemeester Worstelt met Erfenis van zijn Voorganger Opstelten, 2009- translation AJKH). The change of media coverage after the release of the COT report revealed a certain difference in media coverage in time. The media coverage directly after the crisis and some months later could be two different stories. Just after the incident more descriptive journalism was used. In December of that year the media used more interpretative journalism to analyse the political game between the mayor and the police chief.

Objectivity of the news

What is interesting about this case is that the objectivity of the news is quite balanced, 31 municipality sources versus 36 other sources. Sources which were coded inside the

municipality were: the police, the mayor and police officials. Sources outside the municipality were the parents of the victim, the police unions, research institutes, ministers and more likewise sources. In a high amount of the articles both municipality and other sources were used, for example in the article: "Police underestimated beach party Hoek van Holland"- both of the following sentences were used. "According to Walter Welling of the police union ANPV the corps leadership underestimated the event. "(Politie Onderschatte Strandfeest in Hoek van Holland, 2009- translation AJKH). "The police Rotterdam-Rijnmond confirms that the plan anticipates 15000 visitors." (Politie Onderschatte Strandfeest in Hoek van Holland, 2009- translation AJKH). This, together with the descriptive style of reporting, suggests that the media (consciously or unconsciously) was trying to reflect neutrally on the crisis. The following citation illustrates articles based on only 'other sources': "Everything that could go wrong did go wrong. The COT mentions that the failures in his investigation report in regard to the beach riots of the 22th of August section municipality of Rotterdam." (Wat bij Strandfeest Fout kon gaan, ging ook Fout; Rapport COT Verwijt Betrokkenen in Hoek van Holland 'Onvoldoende Scherpte en Alertheid, 2009- translation AJKH). In contrast, articles based on only municipality sources showed that the mayor had learned from the crisis, exemplified with the following the quote: "The mayor defended himself on the radio and television. He points out that, in advance of the report, take some measures to prevent the same chain of events happening again." (Rapport over Strandrellen doet Korpschef Wankelen, 2009- translation AJKH).

Tone of reporting

The tone of reporting was overwhelmingly negative, 25 negative articles. The two articles that were positive where: "The Police shots were justified; OM does not pursue the cops", and: "'Het loopt hier he-le-maal uit de klauwen'; Vrijgegeven opnamen bieden nieuw perspectief op horrornacht in Hoek van Holland" (Politie schoot terecht tijdens strandrellen; OM staakt vervolging agenten, 2009) ('Het Loopt hier He-le-maal uit de Klauwen'; Vrijgegeven Opnamen Bieden Nieuw Perspectief op Horrornacht in Hoek van Holland, 2009- AJKH). Both articles focused on the police officers that were on the Beach of Hoek van Holland during the riots. The following citation shows why those articles were positive about their course of actions: "Wie na het zien ervan nog durft te beweren dat 21 agenten tijdens de strandrellen ten onrechte naar hun dienstwapen grepen, trekt een buitengewoon grote broek aan." ('Het Loopt hier He-le-maal uit de Klauwen'; Vrijgegeven Opnamen Bieden Nieuw Perspectief op Horrornacht in Hoek van Holland, 2009). Thus, the positive articles are about side actors that do not address the causes or responsibility for the political outcomes in this case. The articles that are about the performance of the mayor or the leaders within the police all are negative, for example: "According to the COT all services were blind in the preparations for the safety risks." (Autoriteiten Faalden bij Strandrellen, 2009- translation

AJKH). This concludes that the articles that are about the causes or responsibility of the crisis are negative. This could indicate that the media tries to frame/blame the mayor and police chief Meijboom in particular. However, the fact that most of the articles are descriptive indicates that sources outside the municipality are negative about the mayor and the police chief.

Also, it should be noted that in the first three months media was quite neutral. This would suggest that is was a non-routine crisis on which the media in the beginning did not know how to react. Style of reporting and mayor/media framing dimension show the same pattern.

Political outcomes

Despite the fact that mayor Aboutaleb could stay in office, many questions were asked during the council meeting which points to elite damage (Vergadering Gemeenteraad 17-12-2009, 2009). It eventually led to a motion that, if voted for, showed a lack of confidence in the mayor. But the motion was only backed up by one political party. However, other parties did ask critical questions to the mayor. The mayor had to apologize to stay in office. One of the reasons he could stay in office was that he was only in office for eleven months (Vergadering Gemeenteraad 17-12-2009, 2009). This is one of the factors that Boin et al. point out that could lead to 'elite escape' (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Because of above mentioned points it is concluded that the political outcome of the beach riots at Hoek van Holland is elite damage.

Influence of media coverage on the political outcome

The media coverage shows a predominant descriptive style of reporting, the framing is undetermined, the reporting is balanced, a mostly negative tone of reporting is used and there is a predominant negative expression of political outcome. The fact that this crisis was a non-routine crisis could be the reason for this kind of media coverage. The media was not prepared for a crisis like this one (Olsson & Nord, 2015), which resulted in a more neutral type of media coverage. However, the type of media coverage changed after three months, especially after the release of the COT report. The media coverage became more interpretative, more negative and more game framing was used. The political outcome is elite damage. It should be noted that the damage for the mayor could have been worse, for example he could have been put out of office. This could be explained by the neutral type of media coverage which is in favour of incumbent office-holders (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015).

The different types of media coverage seen within this case could explain why the political outcome is mild. Also, it matters that mayor Aboutaleb was only in office for eleven months. Mayor Aboutaleb suffered reputation damage but he stayed in office.

Oosterwolde

Oosterwolde is a small town where every year an old timer event is organized. During the event of 2015 an accident happened with a lifting ramp. Every year a lifting ramp was used to set up the event, and it seemed the lifting ramp was also used to lift people for a better view. However, this year the lifting ramp fell to the ground killing one man instantly. In addition, eleven people were wounded, amongst them were children. The accident scared the Oosterwolde community immensely because it is a small town with a strong cohesive community.

Results

Table seven represents the results of the analysis of the Oosterwolde case. The results are categorized in the four dimensions of crisis exploitation coverage and of the political outcomes. For every dimension the total number of articles is given and the amount of codes for every type of media coverage. The total number of articles found, with a focus on the Oosterwolde case found, is 26. Within the dimension objectivity of the news the total amount of codes is higher. This is caused by the fact that some of the articles had multiple sources. The tone of reporting had 8 codes, thus less codes than articles. This is caused by the fact that not every news article shows itself positive or negative, or doesn't report about the political outcomes of the event.

Table 7: oosterwolde

Style of reporting	Interpretative journalism	7
	Descriptive journalism	19
	Total	26
Framing by mayor/media?	Issue frame	24
	Game frame	2
	Total	26
Objectivity of the news	Municipality	8
	Other	20
	Total	26
Tone of reporting	Positive tone	1
	Negative tone	7

Total	26

Media coverage

Style of reporting

The incident during the old timer event resulting in a death was perceived as minor as is seen in the total number of articles (26) found concerning the incident. The articles that were coded as interpretive journalism focused primarily on how the lifting ramp could have tipped over: "Naar de oorzaak lopen verschillende onderzoeken. De poten waren niet verzakt en de machine was niet te zwaar beladen. De machinist staat te boek als zeer ervaren. Al een keer of zeven eerder bediende hij de hoogwerker op dit dorpsfeest." (Oosterwolde moet Drama Verwerken, 2015). Most articles focused solely on the results of the crisis. For example: "Two days after the accident on an old-timer show in the Gelderse Oosterwold the consternation is huge in the close community." (Oosterwolde Verwerkt Verdriet in Stilte, 2015- translation AJKH). Table seven shows that style of reporting is more focused on descriptive journalism and therefore in this case the media mostly focused on what the results of the crisis were instead of trying to find out what happened or finding someone to blame the crisis on.

Framing by the mayor/media

Table seven shows that framing dimension showed the same picture; the media did not try to blow this crisis up. In only two articles the media looked beyond this crisis. For example: "It is not the first time a lifting ramp is involved in an accident." (Hoogwerker Valt Geregeld Om, Meestal Met een Goede Afloop, 2015- translation AJKH) Thus, even when the crisis is put in a bigger picture the media still keeps neutral in the framing picture. Nowhere in this particular article a negative tone is found about the crisis in Oosterwolde.

Objectivity of the news

In regards to the objectivity of the news, the municipality is not overrepresented in the sources, mostly other sources are used. Sources that are used are mostly visitors of the event, the company that owned the lifting ramp and a personal injury lawyer. Thus the objectivity of the news dimension shows a neutral media coverage as the used mostly sources outside the municipality. This suggests that this crisis was a routine crisis for the media.

Tone of reporting

Only seven of the 26 articles had a positive or negative tone of reporting. This also shows a more neutral media. From the seven codes only one was positive. However, this article had an extraordinary positive tone: "According to Schoonhoven in the town nobody blames the organisation." (Oosterwolde Verwerkt Verdriet in Stilte, 2015- translation AJKH). The article reported on how harmonious the town handled the crisis and, in the view of the community, even the man who was operating the lifting ramp (known by everyone in the

town) was not held responsible for the crisis. The seven negative tone codes were articles with a perspective on the crisis from outside the town. The article with a positive tone showed that from within the town there was no need to blame someone. This could be the reason why the reporting surrounding this case was so calm and neutral.

Political outcomes

After desk research it is concluded that this case has no political consequences for the municipality or the mayor as responsible official for public order and safety, since there was no mentioning of the crisis. Therefore, the political outcome of this case can be considered as an elite escape. In none of the agendas of municipality Oostellingswerf, which covers the city Oosterwolde, from the second of May 2015 till the first of January 2016 the incident is mentioned. (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009).

Influence of media coverage on the political outcome

It seemed that the media viewed this case as type 1 crisis in the definition of Boin et al. (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). The case was just an unfortunate incident. The local politics also considered the crisis as a type 1 crisis, since they never discussed it in the municipality meeting. Although the tone of reporting was mostly negative this was primarily reflected on other actors instead of the municipality. This suggests that this case was not political relevant. Furthermore, this was a routine crisis for the media which can be seen with the objectivity of the news and the negative tone of the media.

This case suggests that minor crises generate less attention by the media. More important, minor crises generate more neutral media focussed on reporting acts instead of looking to political games or possible outcomes. This eventually led to the political outcome of elite escape.

Cross-case comparison

The cases considered separate are interesting, however, to analyse the influence of media coverage on the political outcomes the cases have to be compared. This also led to some additional insights.

Table 8: Cross case comparison

Monster truck Haaksbergen	Beach riots Hoek van Holland	Old timer event Oosterwolde:
Media coverage	Media coverage	Media coverage
Descriptive Journalism	Descriptive Journalism	Descriptive Journalism
Issue framing	Framing is neutral	Issue framing
Unbalanced reporting	Balanced reporting	Unbalanced reporting

Negative tone of reporting	Negative tone of reporting	Negative tone of reporting
Political outcome: elite damage	Political outcome: Elite damage	Political outcome: Elite escape

The Haaksbergen case and the Oosterwolde case are both similar in their characteristics. Even the type of media coverage as measured in the model of this research was the same. Though, in the Haaksbergen the mayor eventually resigned while the mayor in Oosterwolde did not. This could be due to the report of the OVV, which concluded that the permit policy had failed in the pretext of the crisis. Although, it was the media who covered the report and did not question the conclusions. In the Oosterwolde case the media almost did not report about the actions of the municipality.

It could be that the Haaksbergen case in the view of the media was perceived as a critical threat and the Oosterwolde case was perceived as just an unfortunate accident as described by Boin et al. (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). In the Haaksbergen case this would mean that the public demanded that measures were taken to prevent another accident. Therefore, the media reported critical about the crisis and used a lot of critical sources, they were critical towards the municipality the driver of the truck and the event organisation. In the Oosterwolde case it would mean that, besides some superficial searches for the causes, the media was only interested in short reports about the facts of the crisis. This could have caused the little social and political upheaval about the crisis.

This all together indicate that three positions, as discussed by Boin et al., is also important for the media in order to predict or explain the way the media reported about a crisis and the political outcomes of a crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009).

The Hoek van Holland case showed different patterns between media coverage and political outcomes. This case had a lot more political impact than the other two cases. There are a couple of reasons that could have led to this. The media reported more on the political consequences than in the other cases. This is probably due to the fact that this crisis is not an accident but a rupture of intense violence and because it was about the municipality Rotterdam, which is a bigger municipality than Haaksbergen and Oosterwolde. This made the crisis a non-routine crisis. In the first weeks after the crisis, the media only reported in a descriptive style with issue framing while it changed to more interpretative journalism and game framing three months later. This could indicate that the media got more grip and understanding of the crisis over time.

It is noticeable that all three cases had a descriptive style of reporting. This is in accordance with the findings of Olsson et al. (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). This means that the media stick with the facts most of the time. The descriptive style of reporting

suggests that the media is limited in influencing the political outcomes. However, it should be noted that the media still could influence the narrative by choosing which facts or sources are used. Two cases show elite damage and one elite escape, therefore the expectation of this research that descriptive style of reporting elite escape or elite rejuvenation is not proven right by this research.

The Oosterwolde and Haaksbergen case showed no game framing, the Hoek van Holland case showed a neutral framing. In the last case game framing became visible in the media coverage when the political game became important. This leaves us with zero cases which are coded game framing, suggesting that all cases should point to elite escape according to the model. However, these two cases showed elite damage. Therefore, the expectation that issue framing leads to elite escape or elite rejuvenation is not proven right by this research.

The media coverage in the third dimension showed something interesting. According to Olsson et al. the media focuses primarily on the governmental sources when there is unbalanced reporting. However, in the two cases that showed unbalanced reporting, the other sources were actors outside the municipality (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). This could be due to the fact that mini-crises were analysed instead of normal crises. As discussed by Olsson et al. this research expected with unbalanced reporting that most sources were from the municipality (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). In none of the cases this became true. Thus all cases showed more sources from outside the municipality. Nevertheless, not all cases showed elite damage which was expected when outside the municipality sources are used.

All cases showed negative tone of reporting, which is not surprising since a crisis means something went wrong. It appears that negative tone of reporting is common use in the media after a crisis. This is something incumbent office-holders always have to take into account because it could affect the political outcomes.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to uncover the influence of media coverage on the political outcomes of framing contests during mini-crisis with the research question: How does media coverage by traditional media affect the political outcomes (for mayors) of framing contests during mini-crises?

The model used in this research showed no indications of influence of the type of media coverage and political outcomes. Every case showed a different pattern of media coverage. Furthermore, the expectations of political outcomes caused by different types of media coverage were not met. Therefore, this model shows no influence of types of media coverage on the political outcomes. Though the research revealed some valuable insights about the role of the media in the process that leads to the political outcomes. The distinction between the three types of crisis, as discussed by Boin et al., seemed important to predict the way the media report about the crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Furthermore, it seemed that the media are influenced by the differences between non-routine and routine crises. In non-routine crisis such as Hoek van Holland the media tends to cover the crisis more neutral in sense of style of reporting, framing and tone of reporting.

This non-routine crisis seems also to have caused a difference in media coverage within crises. The Hoek van Holland case showed a descriptive style of reporting, issue framing and neutral tone of reporting in the first three months of the crisis. After the three months the case showed more interpretative style of journalism, game framing and negative tone of journalism, especially surrounding the coverage of the political consequences of the crisis.

It should be concluded that this model could not reveal the influence of types of media on the political outcomes of crises. Therefore, it is concluded that this influence is limited. However, it is not said that this influence does not exist. Media coverage is probably one among many factors that influence the political outcomes. Further research should investigate which factors influence the political outcomes and further the influence in comparison to each other.

Besides the findings surrounding the research question, other findings of this research provide valuable insights. Boin et al. stated that when a public officer is in office for a small amount of time he is likely to survive a crisis (Boin, 't Hart, & McConnel, 2009). Mayor Aboutaleb did not have to resign although there was numerous criticism on his performance. It appeared that because mayor Aboutaleb only just took office, the council let him off with a warning. Another reason for this was that Aboutaleb could transfer some of the responsibility to his police chief Meijboom, who in the end had to resign. These examples showed that, besides the media coverage, numerous things influence the political outcomes of a crisis.

Another interesting result was found. In the smaller cases, Haaksbergen and Oosterwolde, the media focused on what happened during the accident and in the Haaksbergen case what caused the crisis. Almost no attention went to the political game. In the case of Hoek van Holland, a lot of attention went to the political game between mayor Aboutaleb and police chief Meijboom. Thus it appears that in smaller crisis the media is more prone to use descriptive journalism, like in the Oosterwolde case. In bigger cases the media tends to use more interpretative journalism like in Hoek van Holland. This suggests that the role of media in bigger cases tends to grow. Therefore, with bigger cases the media will have a bigger influence on the political outcomes. In smaller cases the media appear to operate more like a platform for all involved actors.

Another finding of this research is that the media in smaller cases focused on a lot of different sources. In the bigger case Hoek van Holland, the media focused more on the municipality as main source. It seems that the effect of Olsson et al. proves accurate (Olsson, Nord, & Falkheimer, 2015). When the crisis is bigger the media is more overwhelmed and not in comfort with the situation at hand. Because of that, they have to rely on governmental sources for their stories. This seems to counteract the growing effect in bigger crisis, as is explained above.

This research also revealed some practical insights. For example, the Haaksbergen case showed that a mayor should not try to defend his actions that led to the crisis when there is too much criticism towards that action. This eventually led to the resignation of the mayor. The Hoek van Holland case showed that incumbent office-holders have an advantage when they just took office and further that it helps to show you want improve and will learn from the crisis. The Oosterwolde case revealed that crises in smaller towns could have no political outcomes even when there is ground for a political discussion.

It is advised that further and more extensive qualitative research is done on media coverage which could lead to more understanding in the way the media influences the political outcomes of a crisis. This could later on be tested in quantitative research.

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