Master Thesis Crisis and Security Management

Victims of Terrorist Attacks and the Media

*Exploring the Victim Narrative in the British News Media*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to establish how victims of terrorist attacks are portrayed in the media and determine whether this aspect is framed differently when the act of terror takes place on national ground compared to when it occurs in another country. In order to do so, this thesis first looked into the literature that was published on terrorism, on the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the media, on the concept of framing and on victims. In order to conduct this thesis, news media articles that were published in the Guardian and the BBC during the second and the third day after the occurrence of four terrorist attacks were selected. By using latent content analysis, the first part of the study identified 7 aspects in the portrayal of terrorist attacks in the British media: Victim, Suspect, Terrorist Incident, Security, National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents, Terrorist Organization. According to the data, the Victim aspect was assigned the highest ratio of content. In addition, the Victim, alongside the Security aspect were assigned more content in the articles that were published on the Manchester bombing by the two British news outlets, compared to the attacks that took place in other countries. This is a supporting argument that the concept of proximity is applied when journalists cover events that occurred in their home country. The second step of the analysis consisted of categorizing the data attributed to the Victim group. The findings show that the most common themes in the victim narrative after the occurrence of a terrorist attack are: Casualties, Injured, Missing, Survivors, Tribute, Reactions and Community. In most cases, the Casualties, Survivors and Injured groups received more content compared to other categories. The findings of this study suggest that when following news media articles, terrorism revolves around victims. This, in turn, can influence the audience into having a more positive perspective towards the security measures adopted by authorities.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Goal

Throughout history, there have been different informal methods of communication. For a long time, the regular means of local media were streets and marketplaces, including gossips of the taverns (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 51). Meanwhile, it has become significantly easier for the information to circulate as newspapers, radio, television or internet have come into sight. Therefore, these days, news of different nature are easily transferred into households, regardless of the geographical distance from the events. Due to mass media, fear, crime, terrorism, and victimization are known by the audience (Altheide, 2006, p. 420).

Chermak and Gruenewald (2006) argue that media messages are ideological as they influence public priorities, narrow awareness of certain issues and “limit the field of response options” (p. 455). With this in mind, according to Lipschults and Hilt (2002), there are two levels of social construction of reality regarding news media. The first level is influenced by news media producers, who prioritize events that are to be covered. On the second level, however, viewers construct their own realities through the interpretation of the news by relating the information to their own experiences (p. 16).

Even though terrorism does not present a new interest in the academic world, scholars attributed more attention to this topic after the September 11 attacks took place. The urgency to provide an answer to the question of how a person turns to political violence contributed to the increased research on terrorism (Sageman, 2014, p. 566). In addition, due to advanced technologies that ensure that the media reaches big audiences, and competition amongst media companies to be the first to broadcast exclusive materials, a relationship between terrorists and the media has evolved (Marthoz 2017, p. 11).

The discourse that follows a terrorist attack often surrounds the victims of the event. In this sense, many scholars agree that the victim has a significant role in the portrayal of terrorist attacks (Vigilant and Williamsons, 2003; Keinan et al., 2003; Powell, 2011; Altheide, 2006). Nevertheless, there is little literature that concentrates on how victims of terrorist attacks are presented in the media. Therefore, the goal of this study is to establish how victims of terrorist attacks are portrayed in the media and determine whether this aspect is framed differently when the act of terror takes place on national ground compared to when it occurs in another country. In order to conduct this study, 4 terrorist events have been selected: the Manchester attack (2017), the Barcelona attacks (2017), the Brussels attacks (2016) and the Paris attacks (2015). Articles published in the BBC and the Guardian during the second and the third day after the
attacks took place were selected for this thesis. A total of 197 articles related to these 4 events have been analyzed for this study.

1.2 Research Question & Sub-questions

The Research Question for this thesis is the following: *What has been the role of victims of terrorist attacks in the British media?*

In order to provide an answer for this question, it is important to look into these two sub-questions:
- What aspects have been emphasized in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media?
- What features of the victim aspect received more attention in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media?

In order to answer these 2 sub-questions, the analysis process has been divided into 2 parts that will be described next. The role of the first sub-question was to provide a better understanding on how terrorist attacks have been framed by the British media and how much attention did the victim aspect receive compared to other issues that are predominantly discussed in the aftermath of such events. In doing so, it was essential to first identify what the other issues were, and how much content was allocated to them compared to how much was assigned to the victim aspect.

Before starting the analysis, four articles published by the BBC and the Guardian on the Manchester and Barcelona attacks have been pre-analyzed. Due to the role that victims play in the way terrorist events are framed by the media, presented in the literature, and the results from the pre-analyzed sample, the following two hypotheses have been established:

- The victim aspect is attributed the highest percentage of the news content published on terrorist events.
- The victim narrative is used more predominantly when the terror event occurs on national ground compared to when it takes place in other countries.

Only after the groups of information used by the British media for terrorist events have been identified, could the following phase start. In this sense, the process conducted in order to answer the second sub-question consisted of selecting the victim related information and developing a new codebook in order to determine what features of the victim aspect have been
discussed by the British media. Therefore, the second part of the thesis will analyze whether patterns can be identified in the portrayal of victims of terror attacks in the media.

1.3 Academic and Societal Relevance

Compared to pre-9/11, the amount of studies conducted on terrorism and published in political science journals has increased significantly (Young and Findley, 2011, p. 411). A similar trend has been observed in the media: the number of stories published on terrorism has escalated after the September 11 attacks (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 171). The literature indicates that conflict stories attract mainstream media, next to the shocking and sensational (Tuman, 2009, p. 196). With this in mind, the interdependent relationship between terrorism and the media has also been addressed by scholars (Wilkinson, 1997; Tuman, 2009; Barnett and Reynolds, 2009; Sütulan, 2013).

Various scholars argue that victims play an important role in terrorist attacks, as the victims of terrorist attacks are not the final intended targets, instead, they are means to gain the attention of the general public (Vigilant and Williamsons, 2003; Keinan et al., 2003; Powell, 2011; Altheide, 2006). The literature previously discussed the “good” and the “bad” characters in the media’s coverage of terrorist attacks. For example, the media portray the terrorists in the role of the bad character while the victims, their families and the heroic antiterrorist fighters are attributed the role of the good character (Weimann, 1987, p. 28).

In regards to the victim, studies also describe the ideal victims as “innocent, vulnerable, very young/old and a good citizen, who has been attacked by a bad offender who is a stranger” (Moffet, 2016, p. 149). Nevertheless, there is not much attention given to victims of terrorist attacks in the literature. The findings of this study, however, intend to add to the existing knowledge by looking into how victims of terrorist events are portrayed in the media and what aspects are most discussed when such events are covered.

In the aftermath of such events, the society pays much attention to the victims in terms of tributes, donations or other similar initiatives. Alongside these activities, the media broadcasts biographical details of people who lost their lives in the attacks and of those who were wounded. In this sense, the findings of this thesis will help to better understand how societies cope with the loss in the aftermath of terrorist attacks by looking into how the media frames the acts of terror.
1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis is structured as follows. The introduction chapter presented the research goal, the research question that this study is based on, as well as the academic and societal relevance that the findings are expected to bring. The second chapter aims to present the literature that surrounds the concept of terrorism and its relation to the media. As this thesis looks into the portrayal of terrorist events in the media, it is essential to understand the concept of framing, which will also be discussed in the second chapter. The last part of the same section will look into how previous studies addressed victims of terrorist attacks and how the findings of this thesis could contribute to the already existing knowledge on this topic. This will be followed by chapter 3 which will present and justify the methods selected in order to answer the research question. The codebooks developed for the first and second part of the analysis will also be inserted in this chapter. Next, chapter 4 will present the findings and the discussion based on the results of the first part of the analysis. By analyzing the victim related content identified in chapter 4, chapter 5 will look into how victims of terrorist attacks have been portrayed by the British media. By using the data from chapters 4 and 5, chapter 6 will look into how victims of terrorist attacks impact the audience. Lastly, the conclusion of this thesis will be presented in chapter 7. An overview of the findings and an answer to the research question will be provided in the last chapter of this thesis.
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of this chapter is to present an overview of previously published studies that were considered to be essential for this thesis. The first part of this section will look into the concept of terrorism and the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the media. As this thesis will analyze news articles published on terrorist events, it is important to understand how terrorism is connected to the media. In addition, as this research looks into the coverage of terror acts, the following part will explore what the concept of framing entails, with a special attention to news framing. The third part consists of an overview of the literature published on victims of terrorist attacks. The conclusion will be inserted at the end of this chapter and it will present the identified gap in the literature and what the findings of this study intend to add to the existing knowledge.

2.1 Terrorism and Mass Media

2.1.1 The Concept of Terrorism

It is believed that the word terrorism has derived from the Latin word terrere, which means “to tremble”. Combined with the French suffix isme, meaning “to practice”, it becomes “to practice the trembling” or “to cause or create the trembling” (Tuman, 2009, p. 4). Even though terrorism might seem like a somewhat new phenomenon, “the practice of terrorizing for political, ideological, religious, and/or economic purposes extends back many thousands of years and across many different cultures” (Tuman, 2009, p. 2). Terrorists regularly stress the absolute justice or righteousness of their cause, which is often based on a secular ideology (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 55). Historically, death by terrorism has been used as a negotiation tool between less powerful fringe groups and controlling nation-states (Vigilant and Williamson, 2003, p. 240).

Even though scholars have not yet agreed on a common definition of terrorism, the definition provided by Schmid (1983) is considered to be the most appropriate for this study: “Terrorism is an anxiety inspiring method for repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative of symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience[s]), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention
depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought” (p. 70) (as cited in Powell, 2011, p. 91).

After the attacks from September 11, 2001, various conflict scholars have centered their attention to researching the causes and consequences of political terrorism (Young and Findley, 2011, p. 411). Research on political violence continued the academic tradition that culminated in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Sageman, 2014, p. 565). Some scholars characterize the accumulated theory as “stagnant, poorly conceptualized” (Ranstorp, 2009, p. 13). In this sense, Schmid and Jongman (1988) argue that “there are probably few areas in the social science literature in which so much is written on the basis of so little research” (as cited in Ranstorp, 2009, p. 13).

2.1.2 The Symbiotic Relationship between Terrorism and the Media

It was repeatedly stated by scholars that terrorism and the media share a symbiotic relationship (Wilkinson, 1997; Tuman, 2009). On the one hand, the media communicates the message to large audiences, enhancing its significance. On the other hand, as the audience tends to increase after terrorist activities, the media benefits from this relationship as well (Tuman, 2009, p. 180). The significance of mass media in the terrorist strategy has led to what Weimann (1983) refers to as the concept of the “theater of terror” (p. 38). Terrorists need maximum publicity for their messages and in the same time, media coverage of terrorism intensifies the threat, which leads to fear of terrorism to the public (Tuman, 2009, p. 196). Nevertheless, getting the message to the intended receiver would not be possible without the natural curiosity of human beings (Vigilant and Williamson, 2003, p. 241), as, the theater of terror becomes realistic only when the media allows access to a large audience (Weimann, 1983, p. 38).

Today’s terrorism understands the power of the news media and the big audience it can reach (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 171). Brian Jenkins wrote in 1995 that “terrorist attacks are often carefully choreographed to attract the attention of electronic media and the international press. Terrorism is aimed at the people watching, not at the actual victims” (Marthoz 2017, p. 11). In this sense, the Chinese proverb “kill one, frighten ten thousand” is appropriate (Sütulan, 2013, p. 70). Terrorism is seen as a process which affects the discourse of several target audiences. Due to the fact that these organizations understand how stories about terrorism are framed by news media, they influence the way these stories are told (Tuman, 2009, p. 197). For example, suicide attacks are often applied because the bomber, or an external controller, have the power to decide when to detonate the explosive in order to secure a maximum or minimum number of casualties (Horowitz, 2010, p. 40). In addition, such
organizations attribute significant importance for this decision by taking into account media preference in regard to targets, location and timing (Weimann, 2005, p. 383).

Tuman (2009) suggests that mainstream news media is usually drawn to stories that bring to mind conflict and the potential for what is shocking and sensational (p. 196). Therefore, terrorism often receives worldwide attention. These types of events meet the media’s needs in terms of unexpectedness, unpredictability, absolute intensity or negative reference to elite people or elite nations (Weimann, 1983, p. 38). Some of the elements that assure large audiences are the live coverage, the characteristic drama for these events and the significance of international terrorism (Weimann, 1987, p. 28). After September 11, 2001, news media has published a growing number of stories about terrorism (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 171). While many of them report on these events, others cover potential threats or intend to reveal the causes on terrorism and the actions taken by the government to combat it (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 171).

Researchers also observed that media coverage of terrorist acts was different than from other types of events. Nossek (2008) argues that, in case of negative events, such as a major terrorist attack, when the society perceives the incident as a crisis and a threat to its social order, the media tends to become an independent actor and perform a ritual that is functional in helping the society cope (p. 314). Such crises create a kind of “fusional journalism” as it is a time when the public is in shock and in need of reassurance (Marthoz, 2017, p.29). Nossek (2008) suggests that the ritual “is a convention in which journalists, editors, producers, directors, photographers, and the audience follow a familiar, highly ritualized script in which each has a part” (p. 315). The author argues that “the society creates the ritual, which is dictated by the need of the hour, the perception of an existential threat, and that the journalists of the electronic and print media automatically and unconsciously perform the required ritual as proxies of their society” (Nossek, 2008, p. 315). Therefore, the media might give a different meaning to terrorist events than that intended by the ones who planned the attack. It establishes a national affront and it can mobilize the patriotic stance of the society that strengthen public solidarity and legitimize the government’s response to the attacks, which, at times, is contradicting the media’s professional stance. This means that the role of the media might be even greater in negative events that in positive events (Nossek, 2008, p. 315).
2.1.3 Dilemmas in Terrorism Coverage

The recent terrorist events in democratic countries illustrate that terrorists do thrive due to the publicity it is allocated to them. However, this does not mean that the media share their values. Instead, it demonstrates that the free media is notably vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by terrorist organizations (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 56). In this sense, Ross (2007) enumerates six basic difficulties with the coverage of terrorism. First, there is the aspect of selective reporting and self-censorship due to the fact that journalists sometimes face blackmail and intimidation when trying to get in contact with terrorists. Second, the existence of editorial discretion. This means that even if the story is good, it does not necessarily mean that the editor or the producer will publish it. The third aspect is the lack of specialists focusing on terrorism. Generally big news organizations have several departments which specialize in a specific area, nevertheless, there are few that have reporters who are specialized in covering terrorism. The fourth factor described by Ross (2007) is misinformation given to reporters by national security agencies. Fifth, news media obstructing counter-terrorist efforts, meaning that on occasion, news media have unintentionally hindered anti-terrorist efforts. The sixth factor is sensationalization created by the high competition between news organizations to be the first to report any news, which might have an effect on how news is obtained and portrayed (Ross, 2007, pp. 218).

As terrorist organizations have continuously exploited modern ways of communication, governments, as well as some media organizations have adopted a certain number of steps in order to tackle this phenomenon. These include limiting of access to mass media to terrorists or reducing and censoring broadcasting of terrorist acts (Weimann, 2005, p. 380). Nevertheless, contemporary terrorists have access to different opportunities in terms of delivering their message to the intended receivers (Weimann, 2005, p. 381). For example, computer-mediated communication allows terrorists organizations an easier way to disseminate messages. This environment is not as subjected to control or restriction and it is not censored (Weimann, 2005, p. 380).

In addition, there is also the dilemma of how much should the public be exposed to details of terrorist acts. On the one hand, the public has the right to know, meaning that the government, nor the media can prevent access to information (Keinan et al., 2003, p. 151). Moreover, there have not been many studies done on the journalist roles in reporting terrorist actions (Zhong et al., 2011, p. 36). Even though “self-imposed media guidelines on reporting” could indeed generate content that might be considered as good journalism by the press, nevertheless, the public might not see it as such (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 176). “Media
transparency and more understanding of the significant role a critical press plays in society are two key areas to help the public understand the role the press plays in crisis” (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 176).

2.2 News Framing

2.2.1 The Concept of Framing

When looking to analyze the media, understanding the concept of framing is crucial in order to conduct the study. Simons and Xenos (2000) argue that the concept of framing indicates the organization and packing of information (p. 366). Frames accentuate implicitly or explicitly features of complex issues, hence, making it possible for the audience to establish “why an issue is important, who is responsible, and what might be the consequences” (Dirikx and Gelders, 2010, p. 732). Thus, in order to frame a message, it is necessary for the message to be developed in a specific way so that it would contain certain associations rather than others (Simon and Xenos, 2000, p. 367).

When discussing frames, there is not a single commonly accepted definition of the concept. Goffman (1974, p. 10) (as cited in Linström and Marais, 2012, p. 23), for example, defines frames as “the principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them”. For Gamson and Modigliani (1989) (as cited in Linström and Marais, 2012, p. 23), a frame is a “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue”, while for Gitlin (1980) (as cited in Linström and Marais, 2012) frames “help journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely package the information for efficient relay to their audiences” (p. 23).

There are different ways the news can be framed, however, by observing prior frame research, there can be identified two main types of media frames: issue specific and generic frames. Issue specific frames are relevant to specific topics or events, while generic frames “transcend thematic limitations” and can be determined in relation to particular topics (Linström and Marais, 2012, p. 28). Issue framing, also known as emphasis frames, focus on a “subset of potentially relevant considerations”. It can also be defined as “a process of selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of an issue on the basis of which the audience can evaluate the issue described or the protagonists associated with the issues” (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 70).

Examples of studies that have looked into issue-specific news frames are framing of the Intifada, the Internet, women’s movement or labour disputes (de Vreese, 2005, p. 55). In the case of generic frames, an issue can be presented in distinct ways by using different but
“logically equivalent words or phrases” (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 70). For example, researchers identified changes regarding audience preference when the same problem was presented in a different phrasing, such as rescuing some versus sacrificing others (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 70). Scholars distinguish between two groups of generic frames. The first group centers its attention onto the coverage of politics, especially on political campaigns, while the second group of generic frames concentrates on more general aspects of news coverage, such as journalistic conventions, norms, or news values (de Vreese, 2005, pp. 55-56).

2.2.2 The Use of Framing by the Media

Mass media has the ability to distribute ideology, mainly through framing (Powell, 2011, p. 91). The media has a great potential for societal effects in “attracting and directing public attention; persuading in matters of opinion and belief; influencing behavior; structuring definitions of reality; conferring status and legitimacy, and informing speedily and broadly (McQuail 1994, p. 69) (as cited in Linström and Marais, 2012, p. 22). In this sense, any event might be presented in different ways and the media chooses to emphasize certain elements of the reality and suppress others. “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, so as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993) (as cited in Yarchi et al., p. 278).

Not only that news set agendas, in addition, news that rely on certain symbols and promote particular relationships between words, deeds, and issues also guide to perspectives, frameworks, language and discourse that people use when relating to particular issues (Altheide, 2006, p. 419). Despite the media’s intention to portray the reality as closely as possible, the projection of the events within a particular narrative might play a part in changing attitudes, such as perception of the enemy and stereotypes. The intensity of portrayals of difficult events, for example, and selectivity of content displayed might generate cognitive processes that are based on a “distortion of reality” (Shoshani and Slone, 2008, p. 630). Each journalist uses a set of frames that are expressed by pushing some aspects of reality to the front and keeping others in the background. In this way, when presented to the audience, certain considerations are subtly promoted while others are ignored. Without presenting a specific argument, the news frames used by a journalist can have a relevant influence on the importance attributed to a certain belief and even forward new beliefs (Nevalsky, 2015, p. 469). This does
not mean, however, that all frames have the intended impact, nor that all people exposed to a certain frame can be influenced in the same way (Haider-Markel et al., 2006, p. 547).

Rhodebeck (1998) (as cited in Scheufele, 1999) suggests that even if the process of framing is usually presented as a process rising from the elites, interest groups or mass media in a hierarchical manner, “there is a reciprocity in framing that the ‘top-down’ depiction omits” (p. 119). The selection for what journalists should report is more complex than it seems and it takes place on several levels, as it is not based on personal preference. Journalists are not isolated, they work for media organizations which, in turn, form part of a wider social organization, “the institution of the media” (Nossek, 2008, p. 315). Journalists are people too. Aside from having to fulfill a professional role in reporting the events as they are, journalists are part of the audience as well. In this sense, they might also be affected to frames set by the news media (Nevalsky, 2015, p. 473).

2.2.3 Framing of National vs. International Terrorist Events

The concept of proximity is relevant when journalists report on different types of events. It illustrates how close (physically and psychologically) are both the reporters and the audience to a certain news event (Zhong et al., 2011, p. 37). For example, a study of the news coverage in a Swedish newspaper of terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, as well as in Madrid in 2004 determined that there was a big difference between the amount of attention paid to both events, as Madrid received more attention. The events were also interpreted differently. The incident which occurred in the African countries was framed as a tragedy and crime, while Madrid was a “moral outrage everyone should care about” (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 73). Nevalsky (2015), too, observed that while both, the Paris attacks and Borno attacks have occurred during the same week, the Paris attacks received significantly more coverage and it lasted much longer than the ones in Borno (p. 470).

Previous studies have repeatedly concluded that journalists report incidents which have occurred in their home country differently from those which had occurred on international soil (Matthews, 2016, p. 14). Terrorism can be classified into domestic, in the case the victims and attackers are citizens from the same single-nation state, or as multinational if there are any victims or perpetrators from more than one nation-state (Norris et al., 2003, p. 7). Hafez (1999) researched the link between news coverage and the country the event has occurred. The scholar observed that media coverage is connected to specific cultural conditions surrounding news production and consumption. In his analysis, Hafez (1999) suggested that Western media conglomerates dominate the global news market, and, therefore, that coverage is strongly
curved towards Western news stories. In addition, Weimann and Winn (1994) looked into the news coverage of terrorist events in the New York Times from 1972 to 1980. The authors also argued that the location of the event and the nationality of the victims were significant, in particular, for television news (as cited in Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 73). Similarly, Gartner (2004) suggests that media outlets from areas that suffered more casualties in international terrorist events are inclined to make the story more visible and for a longer period of time (p. 154).

Nossek (2008) argues that “the more ‘national’ a report is, the less ‘professional’ it will be” (p. 318). In other words, the more attached the editors and the reports are to a news event in terms of national interest, the more likely they will be further from applying professional news values. In this sense, journalists from all over the world tend to cover terrorism from a local point of view, meaning that the place the events occurred and the nationality of both the victims and attackers are important aspects (Kern et al., 2003, p. 293). During a usual work day, journalists apply a so-called professional narrative, which serves as a balance between their journalistic values and the social pressure of their working world (Nossek, 2008, p. 317). However, when the core values of the society are being attacked, journalists “switch to using a master narrative that shifts the public mind to thinking about the dominant social/cultural order. In this way, journalists become in the same time media producers and media audience (Nossek, 2008, p. 317).

This also applies in regards to the politics promoted by a nation. For example, Wittebols (1992) found that the Canadian and the U.S. media is nationalistic oriented. In his study, the scholar observed that the media portrayed terrorism and political violence in a we-they orientation. This representation formed a variation in sympathy for victims as well as the identification of the enemies. In other words, these aspects corresponded to the countries’ foreign policy (p. 277). Hence, it is safe to state that reporters often use national frames instead of professional ones when the victims are fellow citizens (Zhong et al., 2011, p. 36).

2.3 Coverage of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks

2.3.1 The Concept of Victim

Opposed to the past, when the military fought conventional warfare, modern warfare has shifted right in the midst of civilians. Therefore, this alteration needed the deconstruction of traditional concepts of warfare and the formation of new perceptions of the enemy, along with civilian defense (Shoshani and Slone, 2008, p. 629). Today, terrorism is cast into the lives of people through different means, such as victimization, loss and acquaintance with victims or
via the media (Shoshani and Slone, 2008, p. 629). Schmid and de Graaf (1982) argue that the media concentrate their presentations on a couple of dramatic roles: “the ‘good’ (heroes), the ‘bad’ (villains), and the ‘spectacular’ (celebrities from the world of sports, entertainment, and show business)” (p. 75) (as cited in Weimann, 1987, p. 28). Usually, the terrorists play the role of the bad characters while the role of the good character is attributed to victims, their families and the heroic antiterrorist fighters (Weimann, 1987, p. 28).

It is not always clear who is to be considered as a victim. Nevertheless, the ideal victim in the eyes of the society is supposed to be “innocent, vulnerable, very young/old and a good citizen, who has been attacked by a bad offender who is a stranger” (Moffet, 2016, p. 149). This is one of the reasons why victims of a terrorist attack have a great role in the perpetrators’ intended message. According to Schmid’s definition of terrorism, the victims are not often targeted intentionally, however, they are used as a means to gain attention and to send a message to the principal target which could either be government of the country where the incident took place or it could even be the culture or values of said country (Powell, 2011, p. 91). It feeds the fear that people might become terrorist victims in the future (Altheide, 2006, p. 432). Vigilant and Williamsons (2003) argue that the goal of terrorists is not to instill fear and panic into immediate victims, rather, they intend to shape these feelings in the witnessing public (p. 238). Keinan et al. (2003) similarly state that the victim is not the target of terrorism, instead, it is the media consumer (p. 150). Consequently, with the help of mass media coverage, the story of the event reaches to a big audience (Powell, 2011, p. 91). Altheide (2006) argues that “victims are a byproduct of fear and the discourse of fear…fear and victim are linked through social power, responsibility, and identity” (p. 433). There can be no fear with no victims or potential victims as victim is “a status and representation and not merely a person or someone who has suffered as a result of some personal, social, or physical calamity” (Altheide, 2006, p. 434). By targeting the right person or groups, terrorist organizations intend to speed political changes and manipulate official discourse, expecting that the consequences of these events would lead to systemic changes on both political and social levels (Vigilant and Williamson, 2003, p. 238).

In the existing literature, the status of a victim is not always attributed to a single person. Nations could also be looked at as victims of traumatic events in cases such as invasion or terrorist attacks, that condition their culture and behavior for a certain amount of time (Çelik, 2013, p. 15). For example, Anker (2005) describes a victimized America when referring to the September 11 attacks. Anker (2005) argues that media coverage following 9/11 “situated the United States as a morally powerful victim in a position that required it to transform
victimization into heroic retributive action for crisis resolution” (p. 23). In other words, the United States were positioned as a “victim engaged in a battle against evil” (Anker, 2005, p. 23). For this study, however, the term *victim* will be associated to individuals who suffered directly from a terrorist attack.

### 2.3.2 The Portrayal of Victims in the Media

While the journalist ethics call for a “feeling of humanity”, the main duty of journalism, which is to inform on subjects of public interest, cannot be compromised (Marthoz, 2017, p.30). Nevertheless, Weimann (1983), argues that “media coverage is by no means confined to creating awareness; it also affects image formation, attitude change, and the formation of public opinion” (pp. 38-39). Media coverage represents an important aspect that can influence knowledge and political attitudes of individuals (Gartner, 2004, p. 141). The media has the power to affect opinions in the case of foreign policy events such as an international terrorist act (Gartner, 2004, p. 141).

Acts of terrorism are condemnable by definition, they are not to be distinguished from one another regardless of the number of victims nor their qualification or condition. However, what characterizes them is, for example, how they are discusses by the media (Sádaba and La Porte, 2006, p. 80). Weimann (1987) argues that “media coverage often over-dramatizes an event by focusing on the emotional build-up, deadlines, and possible scenarios” (p. 27). According to Altheide (2006), terms such as crime, victim and fear are used in news reports about terrorism in order to “construct public discourse that reflects symbolic relationships about order, danger, and threat that may be exploited by political decision makers” (p. 416). In addition, Altheide (2006) states that news reports enhanced the relation between terrorism and fear, nonetheless, victim and victimization play a significant role in the politics of fear (p. 429). Every time a terrorist act occurs, in order to satisfy the needs of the audiences’ curiosity, mass media will broadcast stories on both the victims and the victimizers (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 53). The media tends to personalize terrorist events. In these cases, the actors often include the terrorists, their victims, the authorities, and the media (Weimann, 1987, p. 28).

After looking into 11 terrorist events that occurred in the United States, Powell (2011) discovered three common themes in the portrayal of the victims. First, the victims of terrorist attacks were labeled on many occasions as heroes. Second, victims were characterized as good or innocent. Third, victims were often presented as spiritual, usually Christian, and this portrayal is distinct from naming terrorists as Muslim (p. 103). As an explanation to this phenomenon, scholars suggest the existence of a culture of victimization. Altheide (2006)
argues that various news reports, talk shows and other similar programs affirm that everybody is a victim of something, even though not all of them know it (p. 430). Looking into the news reports published in the U. S., Altheide (2006) indicates that the term victim is used even when it is not required, for example, “victimless crime” and that reports are inclined to stress the victim status (p. 430). This occurs mainly because “entertaining news emphasizes fear and institutionalizes victim as an acceptable identity” (Altheide, 2006, p. 429).

Nevertheless, during war, genocide, or repression, one of the main aspects of human rights violation is the denial of the victim’s human dignity. This means that in the case of armed insurgency, violent protest or terrorism, authorities are inclined to use victims to justify the implementation of different national measures (Crelinsten, 2005, p. 76). In the aftermath of an attack, journalists rush towards the victims in order to take photos of them and interview them as the victims are at the core of journalistic coverage in these situations (Marthoz, 2017, p.50). However, covering terrorism requires respect-based ethics. On many occasions, a great number of journalists go to traumatized people, fire all kinds of questions at them and even film the wounded and the dead and get far too close to them, which basically means that on occasions they violate private lives. Such an example occurred after the Lockerbie attack in 1988, in Scotland, when press offices lifted the sheets which covered the deceased in order to take photos of them (Marthoz, 2017, p.50). Also, after the first suicide attacks during the 1972 Olympic Games, television teams broadcasted raw footage. Family members of the victims saw the remaining of the exploded vehicles with their deceased loved ones on screen (Cohen – Almagor, 2005, p. 399). After this tragic event, TV crews became more cautious when airing such images.

Journalist are supposed to diminish as much as possible the negative effects that news coverage might have regarding the rights and interests of the victims and their families (Lim, 2016, p. 265). In time, journalist responsibility has been increased. For example, Sütulan (2013) argues that the reporting on the 9/11 attacks did not display much graphic content in the media by portraying bodies of the victims. After the 7/7 terrorist attacks in London, British journalists behaved similarly (p. 73). Also, after the 9/11 attacks, the New York Times published portraits and biographies of the victims. Journalist Roy Harris said in that context that “impressionism, rather than obituary-style detail, was needed to help readers see these victims as real people” (Marthoz, 2017, p. 52). This type of presentation was later adopted by French newspapers such as Liberation, after the Paris attacks on 13 November 2015 or Le Soir after the Brussels attacks on 22 March 2016. The idea behind was to give a face, a personality to the victim by showing some of their passions or a philanthropic commitment which gave meaning to their lives and
made everybody equal (Marthoz, 2017, p. 52). Altheide (2006) adds that repetitive broadcasting of the 9/11 attacks led to people being more perceptive to the governmental directives to donate blood, supplies, and money to victims (p. 425).

2.4 Conclusion
As previously stated, the victim plays a big role during terrorist attacks for more than one party involved. It is significant for the terrorist organization, as a tool to convey a message to a bigger audience, it is used by the media, as an emotional instrument when covering a tragic event, and it is also used by the government to justify political changes. Therefore, it is surprising that there is a small amount of research on the victims of terrorist attacks, particularly the portrayal of victims in the media. For this reason, the results of this study aim to complement the existing literature with more knowledge on how terrorist events are portrayed by the media and look into what aspects of the victims do journalists stress in their reports. In addition, the aspect of where the attack took place will be taken into consideration. This means that a careful attention will be attributed to determine whether the concept of proximity influenced how the attacks were later framed in the media.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to present and justify the choice of using content analysis in order to conduct this study. This section of the thesis is structured as follows. First, the news outlets and case selection that will be analyzed for this thesis will be presented. Second, it is important to understand what content analysis is and how it is applied as a methodology. This will be followed by an explanation on how quantitative content analysis differs from qualitative content analysis, as both approaches will be used in the process of conducting this study. Fourth, this chapter will present how the unit of analysis was determined and how the samples have been selected. Fifth, the coding process will be explained in detail and both the codebook for the first and for the second part of the analysis will be inserted consequently. The reliability and validity aspects will be discussed at the end of this chapter, after which a conclusion will be presented.

3.1 News Outlet & Case Selection

Four cases have been selected to be analyzed in this thesis: the Paris Attacks from 13 November, 2015; the Brussels attacks from 22 March, 2016; the Manchester Arena Bombing from 22 May, 2017 and the Barcelona Attacks from 17 August, 2017. All the events were not randomly selected. First of all, at the moment of the attacks, all the countries were members of the European Union. All of the chosen incidents ended with a big number of victims and the attackers intended to affect big groups of people. It is also important to note that the four terror attacks have occurred during less than two years, meaning not only that the countries are situated in a relative geographical proximity, also, the incidents are not separated by large periods of time.

Paris Attacks

On November 13, 2015 in a series of attacks across Paris, 120 people were killed and 200 were injured. Eight attackers of the ISIS terrorist group also died, seven of which by detonating explosive suicide belts. A state of emergency was declared in France after the attack and security at country borders was increased (Ginesta et al., 2017, p. 625). The Paris attacks targeted the Bataclan theatre during a rock concert, the Stade de France football stadium in the midst of an international football match and a number of street cafes (Bruns and Hanusch, 2017, p. 1125).
Brussels attacks
The Brussels attacks occurred on 22 March 2016 and were centered on key transport infrastructure: the international airport at Zaventem and a central metro station at Maalbeek (Bruns and Hanusch, 2017, p. 1125). The attacks left 32 people dead while more than 300 were injured (Paul and Seyrek, 2018). Three suicide bombers died during the attacks and several other men identified to be linked to the event have been arrested at a later time (BBC, Mar/22/2017).

Manchester Bombing:
On Monday, May 22, 2017, a jihadist terrorist suicide bomber exploded during a concert in Manchester Arena. 22 people were killed and 119 were injured as a result of the attack. This was the deadliest terror attack since the 2005 London bombing (Ben-Ezra et al., 2017, p. 235). The perpetrator named Salman Abedi, was 22 years old at the time of the attack and was born and grew up in Manchester. His parents fled Libya in 1991 and arrived in the UK (The Manchester terrorist bombing, 2017, p. iii).

The Barcelona Attacks
On 17 August, 2017, a white van drove down Las Ramblas while the pedestrian avenue was filled with tourists. The driver, named as Younes Abouyaaqoub was 22 years old killed 14 people and injured more than 100. Eight hours later, a car ploughed into pedestrians at Cambrilis and a Spanish woman lost her life (BBC, Aug/27/2017).

The selected online news media outlets are the BBC and the Guardian. The BBC is a British public service broadcaster. Some of its principal duties include providing impartial public service broadcasting in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man (Gov UK). The Guardian is a British daily newspaper, which is generally considered to be on the left sphere of politics. (MBFC, 2016, May 18). A survey conducted by YouGov revealed that the Guardian is perceived as “Britain’s most left-wing newspaper” (Smith, 2017) with 16% of the respondents considered the Guardian to be “very left-wing” (Smith, 2017). The BBC is also considered to have a slight to moderate liberal bias (MBFC, 2016, May 15). Nevertheless, both the BBC and the Guardian are known to provide factual information. The BBC maintains its rank of the main news source for adults among all ages in the United Kingdom (Pew Research Center, 2018, p. 7). The news outlet enjoyed a privileged position for its “adherence to the highest ideals of truthful, objective and fair journalism (Hermida, 2009, p. 268). The Guardian also regularly
presents itself as a “provider of serious news” (Sointu, 2005, p. 257). As of a result of a survey conducted by Pew Research Center (2018), the Guardian was rated the most trusted UK newspaper among people in the age group of 18-29 (p. 44). In terms of the audience for these news outlets, a report published by Ofcom (2018) showed that BBC websites had the highest unique audience of news websites in the UK, followed by The Sun Online, Daily Mail and The Guardian on the fourth position (p. 66). The Guardian, however, was ranked first as “the most widely read digital newspaper” (Ofcom, 2018, p. 41).

3.2 Content Analysis as a Methodology

Content analysis has been selected as a main method in order to achieve the goal of this study. Content analysis might be “the oldest way of studying the media and is an answer to the age-old concern with media content” (Newbold et al., 2002, p.79). Especially in the twentieth century, books, written press, movies, radio and television received much attention in their narrative. In this sense, researchers were mainly interested to determine how the media “reflect or interpret social, cultural and political norms, attitudes, beliefs and values” (Newbold et al., 2002, p.79). As a sophisticated research methodology, media content analysis became popular during the 1920s and the 1930s for “investigating the rapidly expanding communication content of movies” (Macnamara, 2005, p. 1; Newbold et al., 2002, p. 79). Media content analysis was first brought in by Harold Lasswell (1927) (as cited in Macnamara, 2005, p. 1) with the initial purpose to study propaganda.

Analysts attributed different definitions to content analysis. Berelson (1952) (as cited in Prasad, 2008, p. 176) defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” while Holsti (1968) states that “it is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages” (as cited in Prasad, 2008, p. 176). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) point out that the media content includes a broad range of phenomena such as the medium, messages or the context and, according to them, the purpose of content analysis is “to impose some sort of order on these phenomena in order to grasp their meaning” (as cited in Macnamara, 2005, p.4). In addition, Newbold et al (2002) suggests that “the general idea [of content analysis] is to gather a relatively extensive amount of data via a research tool that will be used in exactly the same way for all units of analysis” (p. 80). White and Marsh (2006, p. 27) argue that it is important for the data to express appropriate information that can be used in order to test hypotheses and/or is suitable to answer research questions.
According to them, another critical factor is that the data should communicate, and provide a message from a sender to a receiver.

3.3 Quantitative & Qualitative Content Analysis

Researchers look into content by using different “conceptual and methodological tools” (Macnamara, 2005, p.4). Depending on the goal of the research and the available data, analysts decide on a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach or a mixed method in regards to what is a better fit for their study.

This thesis aims to look into what focus can be discovered in the way victims of terrorist attacks are portrayed in the media. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, a mixed method will be used. While the identification of the main aspects in news media articles on terrorist attacks will be performed quantitively, the analysis of the data will be carried out by using qualitative methods.

Traditionally, quantitative content analysis is deductive in its approach and its goal is to test hypotheses which are drawn from existing research (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 30). Qualitative content analysis is, on the other hand, inductive and, while it might invoke testable hypotheses, it is not its main objective (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 34). Newbold et al. (2002) indicate that “there is no simple relationship between media texts and their impact, and it would be far too simplistic to base decisions in this regard on mere figures obtained from a statistical content analysis” (p. 80). Therefore, for an in-depth analysis of media portrayal of terrorist events, the qualitative approach is more appropriate for this study.

Another reason for deciding on qualitative methods is that by reading closely the texts, important aspects might emerge, as opposed to when using other automated approaches (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2017). A disadvantage is, however, the fact that intensive readings cannot be applied to large samples, and therefore, would not be able to generate data to depict the prevalence of certain frames and how they are distributed (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2017).

As previously indicated, an inductive approach will be used in this research. The theory suggests that an inductive approach is mainly used in the cases when limited literature exists on subject the researcher aims to analyze. Researchers avoid adopting already existing categories, instead, they prefer to identify them from the data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1279), as it is the case with this thesis as well. In contrast, the deductive approach is based on existing prior research regarding a phenomenon that might be incomplete or might need extensive description. In other words, the purpose of a deductive approach is to validate or
“extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). For the inductive approach, the research begins with no identifiable theory used as a guide for the design of the codebook and the analyst will try to build a theoretical feature from the findings of the study (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 264). For this research, the paragraphs from the selected articles are distributed into different categories according to the priory identified themes. In this sense, the process of categorization is qualitative as it also includes interpreting meanings and some other dimensions of communication (Linström and Marais 2012, 26).

Researchers also distinguish between manifest and latent content analysis. Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) define manifest content as “on the surface and easily observable, such as the appearance of a particular word in a written text, the gender of a character in a film or certain behaviors (blinking eyes, scratching head) in interpersonal conversations” (p. 259). On the other hand, latent content aims the attention to the “meaning underlying the elements on the surface of a message” (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 259). Even though the latter of the two might be more challenging and time-consuming, the findings are rewarding (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 259). In qualitative content analysis, the researcher looks closely into the data in order to identify concepts and patterns. During this process, some patterns and concepts, which were not described in the beginning of the research, might emerge. In the case that they are important aspects to consider, the analyst might change their interests and research questions in order to look into these new patterns (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 34). As the process for this research aims to be qualitative and inductive, the label of latent content analysis is best fitted for this study.

3.4 Sample Selection
The selection of samples when working on a research topic is a crucial decision as it must make sure that each entity is equally represented (Hester and Dougall, 2007, p. 812). As a large amount of content cannot always be analyzed, the researcher needs to decide on a sample that has to be in the same time practical, feasible and adequate in terms of theory and methodology (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 80). “More than half a century of news media research, beginning with Stempel’s 1952 study of sampling daily newspapers, has shown that ‘the cyclic nature of media content can render simple random sampling inefficient compared to other types of sampling’.” (Hester and Dougall, 2007, p. 812).

When selecting the data for this research, the three fundamental steps in sampling described by Newbold et al (2002, p. 80) have been used. The first step is “the selection of
media or titles depending on the research topic” (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 80). In other words, the researcher needs to determine the medium that is best to answer their research question that can vary from written press or online media to radio or television. In addition, it is important to select the specific channels which should be used, whether the research is to be based on home or foreign content, public or private, thematic or general and other characteristics relevant to the study (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 80). While televised news is also a viable option, the tone of the news presenter, the images and audio might also be considered as variables and the methodology would take a different form.

The second step is the “selection of issues or dates” (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 81). In order to do so, it is relevant whether the researcher needs to look into the content for a specific event or whether they are concerned to study a general aspect of the content (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 81). This study aims to look into four different terrorist attacks. This means that specific events will be analyzed. In order to do that, The Guardian and the BBC have been selected as news media sources.

The third step suggested by Newbold et al. (2002) is “the sampling of relevant content” (p. 81), meaning that the researcher is to select types of content or genres “and within these genres, sample articles/programmes ‘relevant’ to the research topic” (Newbold et al., 2002, p. 81). In this sense, articles published in the second and the third day after the attacks have occurred are considered to be relevant for this study. This timeframe has been selected as a wide range of information is published when a small amount of time has passed since the unfolding of the events.

3.5 Coding Process
Coding is the act of distributing the unit of analysis in a specific content category and the individual who perform coding are called coders (Prasad, 2008, p. 190). Kassarjian (1977) states that “Content analysis is no better than its categories, since they reflect the formulated thinking, the hypotheses, and the purpose of the study” (p. 12). This is why, in preparation for the research itself, it is essential to get acquainted with the data. Test coding is essential for the preparation of a coding scheme for the research as the pilot testing of a small sample of the content which is to be analyzed shows inconsistencies as well as inadequacies in the construction of the category (Prasad, 2008, p. 188). In the case of qualitative coding, the researcher does not use already existing codes, instead, the analyst looks into the data and identifies tag key phrases or text segments that correspond to the questions that they want to
answer with this study. This way, the whole process might suggest new questions or patterns that were not foreseen initially (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 37).

When using content analysis, some researchers prefer machine coding while others choose to code manually. Computerized text coding spread as a tool for content analysis with the growing number of computers in the 1960s (Woodrum, 1984, p. 4). Even though there are some advantages to computer coding, such as reliability, speed, and “coder labor savings”, one limitation of this tool is that it “restricts content analysis to the manifest characteristics of texts” (Woodrum, 1984, p. 4). Following this logic, manual coding will be used for this research as the researching process is qualitative and inductive, which means that categories are determined during the process of coding.

In order to conduct a study by using content analysis, one has to determine the unit of analysis, in other words, the elements that are to be counted (Newbold et al, 2002, p. 81). Prasad (2008) defines the unit of analysis as “the smallest unit of content that is coded into the content category” (p. 189). Weber (1990) enumerates commonly used units of analysis when researching media texts and they include: the word (or term), the sentence, the theme, the paragraph or even the whole text (pp. 8-9). Kassarjian (1977) suggests the word, the theme, the character, the item and space-and-time *measures* as possible units of measurement (pp. 11-12).

In order to select a sample, first a universe must be identified (Weber, 1990, p. 3). Therefore, when looking for determining the proper unit of analysis for this thesis, it was observed that the content of a single news media article can be distributed into more than one category, on which it will be elaborated in this chapter. In other words, the article cannot be analyzed as a whole. The word and the sentence proved to be too small units of analysis for this research. On the other hand, the paragraphs, which are generally short for these types of media articles, were usually classified into a single category and on a few occasions in two or more. Following the logic previously explained, the recording unit for this study is the *paragraph* while the context unit is the *news media article*.

Before starting the analysis, a small sample of articles was pre-analyzed and working with the existing literature, a number of expected categories have been selected. Therefore, this research has confirmed, disproved and added to the existing initial list of categories. Hence, categories were generated by first using a qualitative analysis of a number of 4 articles from the sample and coded afterwards in a manual content analysis (Matthes and Kohring, 2008). Simon and Xenos (2000) (as cited in Matthes and Kohring, 2008), for example, took a similar approach for their study: they did a comprehensive analysis of a number of newspaper articles
during the first step of the analysis after which they generated six working frames that were later defined in a codebook and coded in a subsequent quantitative content analysis.

In the beginning of the analysis, after looking into four news articles four categories have been identified: Victims, Attackers, Terrorist Incident, Police Activity. Nevertheless, throughout the coding process, the codebook has been adjusted to 7 categories: Victim, Suspect, Terrorist Incident, Security, National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents and Terrorist Organization. The content from the articles published after the Paris Attacks, the Brussels Attacks, the Manchester Arena Bombing and the Barcelona Attacks was later divided into these seven categories so that the results could be analyzed in order to identify patterns. Table 1 contains the Codebook with the definitions and indicators of the variables needed for the first part of the analysis.

### Table 1 – Codebook for the Portrayal of Terrorist Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Details regarding the state of people who suffered from the terrorist incident either directly (wounded, casualties) or in an indirect way (witnesses, relatives or acquaintances of people who died, who were wounded or who witnessed the event).</td>
<td>Mentions of victim stories or their state of health; statements given by witnesses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Suspect</td>
<td>Details regarding the whereabouts and personal details regarding people suspected to be involved in the organization of the attack.</td>
<td>Mentions of the people suspected to be involved either in the attack itself or in the planning of the attack, their arrest, capture, wounding or their killing; personal details of the perpetrators; statements on who holds the responsibility for the attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrorist Incident</td>
<td>Details regarding the unfolding of the specific discussed event(s).</td>
<td>Mentions of the type of the incident and how the event occurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Details regarding the actions taken by the law enforcement agents related to the search and capture of the people involved in the discussed terrorist incident(s) or statements made by officials regarding the national threat level.</td>
<td>Mentions of measures taken by the police during or after the incident occurred; raids made by the police, arrests and other similar operations; mentions on short/long term security measures; actions taken to ensure the security of citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>National/International Reactions</td>
<td>Statements made by public figures in regards to the attacks that occurred.</td>
<td>Messages of condolences; messages of condemnation of the attacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Previous Terrorist Incidents</td>
<td>Details regarding other terror acts that previously occurred within the same country or on foreign grounds.</td>
<td>Mentions of the magnitude, number of victims or unfolding of other terrorist events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Terrorist Organization</td>
<td>Details regarding known terrorist groups mentioned in connection to the attacks.</td>
<td>Mentions of ISIS or other Islamist groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second step in conducting this study was to select the content that was attributed to the victim category and distribute the information into a number of categories that were later identified. After looking into the victim related content, the paragraphs were divided into 7 new categories: casualties, injured, missing, survivors, tribute, reactions, community. The definitions and indicators of the variables taken into consideration for this step are presented in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Casualties</td>
<td>Information attributed to people who died in the attacks, as well as reactions of members of the deceased’ families, friends, classmates or coworkers.</td>
<td>Mentions of the number of the deceased, their names or life story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Injured</td>
<td>Information attributed to people who were wounded in the attacks; updates on the state of health of the wounded;</td>
<td>Mentions the number, state of health, names and life stories of people who were wounded; statements made by individuals who received injuries, by their coworkers and by their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>Information attributed to people who were unaccounted for in the aftermath of the attacks.</td>
<td>Mentions on the number, names and life stories of people who disappeared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>Details that surrounded people who witnessed the attacks, as well as their description of the unfolding of the events.</td>
<td>Statements made by people who witnessed the attacks, their names and life story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tribute</td>
<td>Details regarding different types of actions taken in the memory of the victims within.</td>
<td>Mentions of spontaneous memorials, minutes of silence, official mourning period, or statements made during vigils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reactions</td>
<td>Statements made by public figures that are directed to the victims of the attacks.</td>
<td>Messages of condolences; comments addressed by public figures to the victims or their families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community

Details regarding initiatives of different form to help people in need in the aftermath of the attack.

Mentioning of actions such as opening the door to strangers who cannot get home, taking care of the wounded or donations of blood, clothes, toys or money.

The following coding rules are applicable for both the first and the second part of this thesis:

1. Only articles published within the second and the third day after the attacks have occurred are analyzed.
2. Only articles directly related to the attacks are coded.
3. Categories are coded as many as apply.
4. If more categories are identified in the process of data collection, the codebook will be adjusted.
5. Only articles composed of at least 2 paragraphs will be selected.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

In the case of manifest content, it is realistic to expect objectivity. “In content analysis, reproducibility is arguably the most important interpretation of reliability” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 414). Nevertheless, when the researcher decides on a latent content, the coders might encounter issues of subjectivity during the process (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 265). For example, a critical factor regarding reliability revolves around the ability of the researcher to “formulate categories and present to competent judges’ definitions of the categories so they will agree on which items of a certain population belong in a category and which do not” (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 14). The subjectivity of the researcher must be minimized in order to attain a “systematic, objective description of the communications content” (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 13). Nevertheless, White and Marsh (2006) argue that “qualitative content analysis focuses on creating a picture of a given phenomenon that is always embedded within a particular context, not on describing reality objectively” (p. 38).

When looking into coder bias, particularly, concept operationalization raises questions regarding “variable measurement levels and justifiable assumptions in selecting quantitative
analytic techniques” (Woodrum, 1984, p. 7). In addition, sampling principles might be obscured in relation to considerations of units of analysis. (Woodrum, 1984, p. 7). As the purpose of qualitative analysis is not generalizability but transferability, “sampling does not need to ensure that all objects being analyzed have an equal or predictable probability of being included in the sample” (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 35). Transferability means that findings from one context can be applied to another (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 35). As opposed to quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis does not generally present its findings through inferential statistics, while the results might be presented quantitatively, through numbers and percentages (White and Marsh, 2006, pp. 36-37). As transferability is an important factor regarding the applicability of the results from one context to another, a qualitative researcher collects data on “a single factor” or “question aspects” from a number of sources so that “findings based on multiple data sources can be transferred with greater confidence”. (White and Marsh, 2006, p. 38). The findings from a qualitative research are confirmed by checking whether the data support the conclusions and not “numeric correspondence between coders” (White and Marsh, 2006, pp. 38-39). In this sense, Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999, pp. 258-259) argue that if the researcher is clear on the nature of the content that they will analyze and the role of theory in their study, the challenges of achieving validity and reliability become more manageable.

Therefore, to conclude this chapter, latent content analysis will be used in order to conduct this study. As previously stated, a mixed method of both the quantitative and qualitative approach will be applied in the following analysis chapters. As this is an inductive research, even though the final versions of the codebooks have been presented in this section, the tables have been adjusted according to the new categories that emerged during the coding process.
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS: HOW ARE TERRORIST ACTS PORTRAYED IN THE MEDIA?

This chapter has the goal to present the results of how the British news media (the BBC and the Guardian) portrayed terrorist events that have occurred on national and foreign ground. This first step of categorizing the data was essential in order to establish how the information that was published in the aftermath of the attacks has been distributed. An additional coding book has been developed by recoding the data that was attributed to the Victim category, which will be presented in more detail in the next chapter.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, a general overview of the first part of the findings will be presented and charts will be used for a visual explanation of the results. The graphs have been developed so that the data could be analyzed from multiple angles. In this sense, the four subsequent charts present how the information was distributed by category, case, case and news outlet, and by news outlet. This will be followed by separate discussions on each category that has been identified. Any found similarity or dissimilarity between how the Manchester attack, Barcelona attacks, Brussels attacks and Paris attacks have been portrayed by the British media, will be pointed out.

4.1 News Content Categorization

A total of 197 articles have been selected in order to be analyzed for this thesis. As stated in the previous chapter, only articles that have been published during the second and the third day after the four attacks have occurred, have been analyzed. At the beginning of the coding process, four categories have been established (Victims, Attackers, Terrorist Incident, Police Activities). During the coding procedure, three other categories have emerged, which, in turn, led to the distribution of the news content into seven categories (Victim, Suspect, Terrorist Incident, Security, National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents, Terrorist Organization).
Even though, as seen on Chart 1, the last three categories (National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents and Terrorist Organization) were not attributed as much content in comparison to the other four, it is important to distinguish them in order to better understand how the text published by news media in the aftermath of terrorist attacks is distributed. Understanding the general categorization of all the content is an essential step before the identification and description of how victims from terrorist attacks that took place on local and foreign ground have been portrayed by the British media.

As presented in the literature review section of this thesis, the concept of proximity shows how close are the journalists to a news event (Zhong et al., 2011, p. 37). According to Nevalsky (2015), a study conducted in the American news media concluded that more attention was attributed to the Paris attacks as opposed to those that took place in Borno, even though all of them occurred during the same month: January, 2015 (p. 470). A similar conclusion was drawn for a study of how Swedish newspapers covered the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, as well as those in Madrid, 2004, which resulted in a significantly more attention being given to the Madrid attack (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 73). With this in mind, the concept of proximity can be translated into the cases that were studied for this thesis as well. For example, it can be observed that while the BBC and the Guardian published 66 articles related to the Manchester attack in the period that was selected to be analyzed, there were 37 articles for the Barcelona attacks, 41 for the Brussels attacks and 53 for the Paris attacks. According to the second hypothesis, the victims of the Manchester bombing were supposed to receive more coverage than the victims of other attacks. As it can be seen on Chart 2, what stands out for the Manchester bombing is that the Victim and Security categories have been allocated the highest percentage of the text of 36% and 22%, respectively. The second highest ranked percentages are at a difference of 4% for each category.
It is also interesting to observe that overall, the BBC and the Guardian have a similar discourse. Also, as the first of the two hypothesis predicted, the Victim category received the highest percentage of the content, compared to other categories. Nevertheless, there are several discrepancies visible on Chart 3 in the way that the two outlets present information (the most noticeable being the way that victims of the Brussels attacks were portrayed: while the Guardian allocated 38% of its content to the Victims, the BBC designated only 23% to the same category). Nevertheless, as seen on Chart 4, both the BBC and the Guardian categorize the texts in a similar way, with a difference that varies from 4% to nothing.

4.2 Portrayal of terrorist attacks by categories

4.2.1 Victim

What can be clearly observed on Chart 1 is that the Victim category has received the highest percentage of the content for all the four cases that were analyzed, with the exception of how the victims of the Brussels attacks were portrayed by the BBC, which attributed the same proportion as it did to the Security category (23% of the data).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that, even though the highest percentage of the content dedicated to the victims was registered in the news published by the Guardian on the Brussels attacks, on average, the victims received more coverage in the aftermath of the Manchester attack, which is another supporting argument that the concept of proximity is applied when journalists cover events that occurred in their home country.
The content published by both the BBC and the Guardian for all the attacks was similar. Updates regarding the state of health of those who were injured were repeatedly made for all the attacks. For example, quotes such as: “the wounded are being treated at eight hospitals around the city, with 12 children under the age of 16 among them” (BBC, May/23/2017), were attributed to the Manchester bombing; “People from 34 different countries were injured or killed” (BBC, Aug/18/2017-a) to the Barcelona attacks; “More than 30 people have been killed and around 250 more injured in explosions” (BBC, Mar/23/2016-a) to the Brussels attacks; and “at least 129 people were killed and 352 more injured – including 90 critically” (Henley, Nov/14/2015) were published after the Paris attacks. There were also many statements made by people who witnessed the attacks. They presented vivid descriptions of what they remembered: “‘I had only walked 10 seconds ahead and next thing I heard a crash. I heard screams and I turned around and looked and people were running in their hundreds’. ” (BBC, Aug/18/2017-b) - stated a witness of the Las Ramblas attack. Similarly, a survivor of the Brussels attacks said that: “‘We didn't see anything just all the people coming running out and we followed them. After that we saw the fire brigade and emergency arriving. We knew it was something serious’” (BBC, Mar/23/2016-b). There were also statements regarding the names and other personal details of those who went missing or vigils which were organized shortly after the attacks have occurred. In addition, both the BBC and the Guardian published the life stories of some of the people who died in the terrorist events. Examples of such quotes are: “Jordan Howe confirmed his stepmother had died. ‘She was amazing to us all x love you loads Alison Howe,’ he wrote on Facebook.” (Siddique et al., May/24/2017) – Manchester; “On Saturday night Alexander’s family issued a statement confirming that the 36-year-old from Colchester had been killed – the first Briton to be named among the Paris dead. ‘It is with huge sorrow that we can confirm that our beloved Nick lost his life at the Bataclan last night,’ the Alexander family’s statement said. ‘Nick was not just our brother, son and uncle, he was everyone’s best friend – generous, funny and fiercely loyal’.” (Graham-Harrison and Tapper, Nov/14/2015).

A more in-depth analysis on how the victims were portrayed will be made in the next chapter after a second round of coding will be made.

4.2.2 Suspect

In regards to the Suspect category, there was an equal amount of 21% allocated by the two analyzed news outlets for the Paris and Brussels attacks. In the case of the Barcelona attacks, 18% of the content was directed to information regarding the suspects while there was less
attention (13% of the content) given to the suspects for the Manchester attacks. This category was dedicated to content related to the people or organizations suspected to be involved in the planning of the attacks and those who participated in the terror acts. On several occasions, there were statements made by family members regarding the actions that the perpetrators took or additional information with reference to the background of the attackers.

Iqbal (2017) suggests that as domestic terrorism, in particular, is considered to be threatening the social order, journalists are more inclined to not remain completely impartial (p. 463). It was then expected that the concept of proximity would be confirmed for this category as well, even if the numbers in Chart 1 show that there was not as much attention given to the Suspect in the Manchester bombing as the British media did for the other terrorist events. Denton (2004), for example, indicates that in the aftermath of 9/11, journalists were debating whether to address the attackers as “terrorists” or “freedom fighters”. In that case, Reuters, for example agreed to precede it with “so-called” (p. 13). In the cases that were analyzed, however, after some of the attackers have been confirmed as terrorists, there was no evident difference in how they were portrayed by the British media, with journalists addressing them as “perpetrators, suicide bombers, attackers” or other similar terms. This observation, however, is made only for the articles published in the aftermath of the attacks, when not much information was available about the perpetrators and it does not exclude the possibility that the discourse might have changed for the whole period of coverage.

4.2.3 Terrorist Incident
There was not much difference on the proportion of content allocated to the Terrorist Incident for the four analyzed cases. It ranged from 16%, for the Manchester bombing to 22%, for the Brussels attacks. In terms of language, however, the level of similarity between how the attacks were interpreted, differs. The previously mentioned study that looked into how the Swedish media presented the Madrid attacks in comparison to how the Kenya and Tanzania bombings were portrayed, concluded that not only that Madrid received more coverage, but it was differently interpreted as well (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 73). While the attacks from the African countries were described as a tragedy and crime, Madrid was a “moral outrage everyone should care about” (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 73). For the events analyzed for this thesis, the British media used a more descriptive language when referring to the Manchester bombing in comparison to the other three attacks. The illustration of the wording used to describe the attacks can be seen in Table 3. It can be observed that the British news outlets use a larger vocabulary when they refer to the Manchester attack, compared to other
terrorist events. It is important to note, however, that many of the descriptive words were selected from quotes given by politicians or celebrities. Nevertheless, Nossek (2008) argues that the level of attachment that journalists have to a certain news event, the less “professional” their reporting would be (p. 318). In other words, the enlarged vocabulary used for describing an attack that took place on national ground, might indicate the emotional attachment that journalists have with the incident.

Table 3 – Descriptive Language of Terrorist Attacks

| Manchester attack | attack, blast, explosion, bombing, terror event, suicide bombing, suicide attack, barbaric, bomb attack, senseless, act of sickening cowardice, terrifying, sickening, callous, terrible, tragic event, horrible, appalling, deplorable, carnage, terror attack, horrific, bombing, deadly attack, act of violence, abominable crime, the most cowardly terrorism, vile acts, shocking, brutal, callous, evil act, atrocity, horrendous events, barbaric, act of barbarity, appalling, sickening cowardice, bang. |
| Barcelona attacks | jihadist attack, explosion, terror attack, cowardly attack, horrific, mindless, crash, atrocity, barbaric, blast, carnage, terror attack, horrific, brutal, cowardly, atrocity, |
| Brussels attacks | attack, blast, explosion, bombing, suicide bombing, suicide attack, bomb attack, horrible, terror attack, deadly attack, atrocity, barbaric act, bomb attack, carnage, horrific. |
| Paris attacks | shooting, attack, blast, explosion, bombing, suicide bombing, barbaric act, bomb attack, carnage, terror attack, horrific, atrocity, suicide attack, cowardly, senseless violence, horrible, carnage, terrible assault., heinous, evil, vile, assault on humanity, atrocity. |

4.2.4 Security

Alongside victims, the Security aspect has received the highest attention from journalists in the articles published on the Manchester attacks. Therefore, 22% of the content published on the Manchester terrorist events was allocated to Security. In the case of the Paris attacks, 18% of the information, was distributed to the same category, 17% for the Barcelona attacks, and 13% for the Brussels attacks.
This category mainly consists of details regarding the state of the investigations, arrests, police raids, cancelling of events or emergency response. In addition, an important aspect was the framing of security measures taken by governmental forces both intended to have a short or an undetermined duration. The literature already states that at times like these, the media displays the causes of terrorisms and covers the response given by the government which is intended to combat it (Barnett and Reynolds, 2009, p. 171). In support to what was stated above, examples of actions taken for a short period of time include: “On Friday night, Hollande ordered the closing of the country’s borders and authorities warned residents to stay inside” (Phipps and Rawlinson, Nov/14/2015) – after the Paris attacks; or “A Foreign Office spokeswoman said it had ‘deployed additional staff to Barcelona’ and ‘offered support to the Spanish authorities’.” (BBC, Aug/18/2017-c) – after the Barcelona attacks. Those that were adopted for an undetermined period of time were, in most cases, related to the threat level: “The UK terror threat level is now up to its highest level of ‘critical’, meaning more attacks may be imminent” (BBC, May/24/2017-a) – in the case of the Manchester bombing; or “Belgium has raised its terrorism alert to its highest level.” (BBC, Mar/23/2016-c) – after the Brussels attacks.

In addition, alongside the mobilization of “the patriotic stance of the society”, news media also legitimizes the actions taken by governments as a response to attacks (Nossek, 2008, p. 315), which is why it is no surprise that the security aspect was given more importance when covering national terrorist events.

4.2.5 National/International Reactions

Generally, neither the national nor the international reactions were considered as relevant as other aspects were, in the stories published in the aftermath of the four selected attacks, with the exception of the Manchester attacks, where it can be observed that 11% of the content was allotted to this category. Nevertheless, the numbers are much smaller in the cases of the Barcelona attacks (8%), Brussels attacks (6%), while there were only 3% of the content dedicate to the reactions to the Paris attacks.

This category consists of reactions expressed by politicians and celebrities regardless of their nationality or country of residence. In most cases, the reactions consist of condolences or messages of encouragement directed towards the families of the victims and those which entail the condemnation of the attacks.
4.2.6 Previous Terrorist Incidents

Comparison to previous terrorist incidents was not made as often as presumed in the beginning of the coding process. The allotted content differed from 2% for the Manchester and Barcelona attacks to 3% for the Brussels attacks and the highest proportion, of 5%, was observed for the Paris attacks.

What is interesting to note is, however, that most of the terrorist attacks referred in the media have occurred in Western countries, with few other examples. This observation comes in support to what scholars have previously reported. In this sense, Hafez (1999) argued that the coverage is inclined towards Western news stories due to the fact that Western media conglomerates control the global news market. In the articles studied for this thesis, most of the attacks that were referred to were the London, Madrid, Glasgow or Nice attacks. The only terrorist events that occurred in non-Western countries that the British media mentioned, were the Mumbai attacks from 2008 and the Nairobi attacks that occurred in 2013.

4.2.7 Terrorist Organization

This category consists of text that mentions an existing terrorist organization or suggests a connection to behavior associated to a terrorist organization. As seen in Chart 1, the content related to Terrorist Organizations was not of primary concern, with a proportion that varies from 1% to 6% dedicated to it in the articles that were examined. An important observation is, however, that both the BBC and the Guardian published articles for each of the four attacks that mentioned the fact that ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks, even though, as it was indicated in the text, the information was not confirmed by authorities at that time. In this sense, Iqbal (2017) stated that generally, immediately after the occurrence of a terrorist incident, not many explanations are made available regarding the attackers. This is why journalists usually rely on the information they receive via official sources (p. 463). As it was the case with the London attacks in 2005, in the immediate aftermath of the event the media, similarly, reinforced the understanding that al-Qaeda was the only responsible (Iqbal, 2017, p. 463). In time, in order to minimize the influence that terrorists have through the media, measures that include reducing or censoring certain aspects of the broadcasting on terrorist acts, have been adopted (Weimann, 2005, p. 380). This, however, does not seem to apply at this case, as, without exception, each of the 8 article threads did not ignore the statements made by ISIS through their own channels.

This is a good example that illustrates the dilemma that journalists often face on how much information should the public be exposed to (Keinan et al., 2003, p. 151). On the one
hand, the audience has the right to know, on the other hand, publishing such information that is unconfirmed, could, in fact, play out in the benefit of terrorist organizations.

4.3 Conclusion
The findings presented at this stage of the thesis answered sub-question 1 and showed that both hypotheses were proved to be valid. Therefore, the sub-question 1 presented in the Introduction chapter is: What aspects have been emphasized in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media? As the data shows, there are 7 aspects that have been identified in the portrayal of terrorist attacks in the British media: Victim, Suspect, Terrorist Incident, Security, National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents, Terrorist Organization.

According to the first hypothesis, the Victim aspect was predicted to be assigned the highest percentage of the content amidst the 7 categories that were previously enumerated. As the data from Chart 4 shows, the Victim aspect was indeed assigned the highest ratio of content (30% by the BBC and 34% by the Guardian).

The second hypothesis anticipated that the Victim narrative was supposed to be more predominantly used when the terrorist attack takes place on national ground. This, too, was validated by the data. In this sense, as shown in Chart 2, the Victim, alongside the Security aspect were assigned 4% more content in the articles that were published on the Manchester bombing by the two British news outlets.

During the process of analyzing the data, other findings have emerged. For example, it has been observed that the Manchester bombing has been covered more extensively, with 66 articles related to the terrorist event published during the second and the third day after the attack, while, during the same time period, there were 37 articles for the Barcelona attacks, 41 for the Brussels attacks and 53 for the Paris attacks. Second, a more extensive vocabulary was identified in the way the Manchester attacks were portrayed in the British media, compared to the other terrorist acts that were covered by the Guardian and the BBC. These results hint to the fact that the Victim and Security aspects are emphasized when issue specific frames are used in the media for terrorist attacks that took place on national ground.

Even though the last two categories (Previous Terrorist Incidents and Terrorist Organization) did not receive as much content as the other groups, there have emerged two essential observations on how the British media portrays terrorist attacks. First, when articles mentioned terrorist attacks different than those that were covered, in most cases, events of terrorist nature that took place in other Western countries were referred (Nice, London, Madrid, Glasgow). The only named attacks that did not occur in Western countries, were the Mumbai
and Nairobi attacks. Second, in the Terrorist Organization category it was noticed that both the BBC and the Guardian included in their texts that ISIS claimed responsibility in all the four cases that were examined, even though it was indicated that authorities did not confirm this information.

Generally, the narrative adopted by the BBC and the Guardian was similar, nevertheless, there can be seen some discrepancies in Chart 3 in the way the media portrayed the events. The most noticeable is the 15% difference of content attributed to the victims of the Brussels attacks: while the BBC allotted 23% of the information to the Victim aspects, the Guardian directed 38% to the same category. This aspect will be taken into account in the next chapter, that will be dedicated to how the victims of terrorist attacks have been portrayed by the British media.
CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS: HOW ARE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS PORTRAYED IN THE MEDIA?

The goal of this chapter is to explore how the British online media portrayed victims of terrorist attacks in the aftermath of the events. This section will be structured as follows. First, an overview of the results of the second part of the content analysis will be presented. The findings will be illustrated with charts for a better understanding of the data. Second, while the previous chapter was divided into discussions on each of the categories that were identified in the coding process, this section of the thesis will be designed slightly differently. This part will present how the victims were portrayed in the British media for each of the attacks individually. Two graphs will be presented for each of the four attacks analyzed for this thesis: the Manchester attack, the Barcelona attacks, the Brussels attacks, and the Paris attacks. The first chart will illustrate how the news content was categorized per news outlet for the discussed attack while the second one is a visualization of the general overview of the British news outlets on the way that the victims of the terror acts have been portrayed for that specific attack. A conclusion of the findings will be presented at the end of the chapter.

5.1 Categorization of the Victim Related Content

Various studies have previously concluded that victims of terrorist attacks are randomly targeted in order to gain the attention of authorities and instill fear (Powell, 2011; Altheide, 2006; Vigilant and Williamson, 2003; Keinan et al., 2003). This is why the victim narrative plays a significant role in how terrorist events are framed by the media. The goal of this study is to establish how victims of terrorist attacks are portrayed in the media and determine whether this aspect is framed differently when the act of terror takes place on national ground.

Therefore, after categorizing the information published by the BBC and the Guardian on the Manchester, Barcelona, Brussels and Paris attacks, the text distributed into the Victim section on the coding sheet was selected for a more thorough analysis.

According to Schmid and de Graaf (1982, p. 75) the media centers the narrative on “the ‘good’ (heroes), the ‘bad’ (villains), and the ‘spectacular’ (as cited in Weimann, 1987, p. 28). In the portrayal of terrorism, the villain is played by the terrorists while the impersonation of the good is played by the victim alongside their families and the “heroic antiterrorist fighters” (Weimann, 1987, p. 28). When looking through the data, it was curious to observe how the media addressed victims. While existing literature assigns the victim status not only to people but to nations as well (Çelik, 2013, p. 15), the language used in the articles that were studied
pointed to people only. Nevertheless, it was sometimes unclear on who should be considered as a victim. Dictionaries define a victim as “someone or something that has been hurt, damaged, or killed or has suffered, either because of the actions of someone or something else, or because of illness or chance;” (Cambridge Dict. n. d.) or “a person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action” (Oxford Dict., n. d.) Nevertheless, on several instances, journalists gave a more restricted sense to the term Victim, referring to it as a replacement for “casualty”. Such examples include: “A woman confirmed to be one of the victims of the Manchester terror attack shielded her niece from the blast, her family have said.” (BBC, May/24/2017-a); “The first victim of the Barcelona attack was named as Italian father-of-two, Bruno Gulotta.” (Slawson and Phipps, 2017); “The victims and the injured had all been located, they said.” (BBC, Aug/19/2017). While for the first two citations the context clarifies which group is considered as victims by the media, the third example makes a clear distinction between casualties and other people affected by the terrorist attacks. This logic, however, does not apply to how the coding books were developed for this thesis. As stated in the Literature Review and the Methodology chapter, the Victim category consists of a broader meaning and is assigned to people affected by terrorism in more ways than death. After carefully looking through the text that was previously distributed to the Victim group, seven new categories have emerged: casualties, injured, missing, survivors, tribute, reactions, community.

Chart 5 is a graphic representation on how the victim narrative was overall portrayed in the BBC and the Guardian for the four selected terrorist attacks.

Therefore, as it can be observed in Chart 5, the highest ratio of the content dedicated to victims (27%) was attributed to casualties. This category contains text that mentions the number of people who lost their lives in the attacks, their names, life stories, as well as how their families, friends, coworkers or classmates reacted to their death.

The deceased were not presented only in numbers or names. Sometimes, portraits and backstories of people who died were published in the articles: “Nick was not just our brother, son and uncle, he was everyone’s best friend – generous, funny and fiercely loyal” (Graham-Harrison and Tapper, 2015); “Jared Tucker leaves behind three teenage daughters” (BBC, Aug/18/2017-d). This type of portrayal is not uncommon. Portraits, biographies of the victims
are meant to show the readers that those who lost their lives are real people, with passions, families and friends (Marthoz, 2017, p. 52). This was not only valid for Casualties. Such details and statements are also included in the Injured and Missing categories.

The second ranked on Chart 5 was the Survivors category with 25% of the content dedicated to it. This group includes statements of the people who witnessed and provided vivid and detailed description on how the event occurred. It also consists on their thoughts and reactions to the attacks.

The Injured and Survivors, even though similar at a first glance, are separate categories in the codebook designed for this part of the study. While the Survivors, as previously mentioned are people who witnessed the event and share their experiences during the attacks, the Injured category, that contains 20% of the content, is related to the state of health of the people affected. This group consists of statements made by individuals who received injuries, by their coworkers and by their families. In addition, characterization of people who were described as wounded by other witnesses are also included in this category.

The Tribute classification received 11% of the content. It consists of spontaneous vigils, minutes of silence and mentions of mourning period. It is not uncommon for spontaneous memorials to be organized in the immediate aftermath of a tragic event. They are usually held closely to the place the incident has occurred (Milošević, 2017, p. 54). Most of the times, they are coordinated by the survivors, friends and families of the victims as well as other residents (Milošević, 2017, p. 54). This does not only occur in the country where the event took place, more often than not, communities who did not suffer trauma or loss in a direct manner, organized spontaneous memorials in the memory of the victims (Milošević, 2017, p. 56). For example, he main place used for memorialization of the victims in the case of the Brussels Attacks, was the city’s central square, Place de la Bourse.

The Missing and Reactions categories were both attributed 7% of the content. The Missing aspects include details on the number and specific individuals that were not accounted for in the aftermath of the terror acts. As it was the case of other mentioned sections, this category includes biographical details about the people who were being looked for.

The Reactions category is similarly constructed as in the codebook for the first part of the study. This section, however, only includes statements made by public figures that are solely directed to the victims of the attacks.

The amount of content directed to the Community aspect varied from nothing to 10% per case, with an overall ratio of 3%. Nevertheless, this aspect is important to be mentioned as it is used to emphasize the way that communities react in order to help those in need in moments
of desperation. Therefore, this section is constituted by mentions of donations of blood, clothes, toys and money to the victims and their families. Also included are initiatives to take care of people affected by the attacks immediately after the events occurred with actions such as opening their doors to strangers, giving them a ride, helping the children find their parents or looking after the wounded until the arrival of emergency services.

5.2 The Victim Narrative
As it can be observed in Chart 6A and Chart 6B, there is not an identifiable pattern in how the victims are portrayed by the BBC and the Guardian. While the data shows that Casualties, Survivors and Injured are the categories which are contributed the highest ratio of content, the priorities are not the same for each of the cases that were analyzed. Even though the British media does tend to grant more attention to the victim narrative when the attacks have occurred on national ground, the data does not reflect the same thing in terms of the manner that victims are portrayed.

5.2.1 The Manchester Attack
It can be observed in Chart 7a that the BBC and the Guardian victim narrative was differently presented to the audience. The highest discrepancies have been identified in the portrayal of Casualties and Survivors. While the BBC directed 33% of the victim related content to Casualties and 11% to Survivors, the Guardian allocated 17% of the victim related information to the first category while 26% were allotted to the latter.

A synchronicity regarding the manner that the two news outlets discussed the victims, was the fact that both of them directed on average 10% of the content to the Community aspect. It is curious however that in none of the other cases was attributed as much attention to how the community reacted to the attacks and the actions that they took to help those who needed assistance or guidance. As seen on Chart 7b, this aspect was, on average, considered more important than the memorials of the victims of the attacks. This finding was not expected when this study commenced. This does not mean, however, that similar actions did not take place in other cases as well, nevertheless, the British media gave little to no priority to this aspect.

### 5.2.2 The Barcelona Attacks

In the case of the Barcelona attacks, as it can be seen on Chart 8a, there was more agreement between how both news outlets decided to portray the victims, compared to the Manchester attack. This time, the highest discrepancy was registered in the Survivors category, to which the BBC allotted 40% of the content, compared to 31% dedicated by the Guardian. This makes the Survivors group, the most used category, with an average of 36% for the Barcelona attacks. In other words, both news outlets centered their attention to the description of the attacks, provided by those who lived the terror events. The Casualties and Injured did not receive as much consideration, with an average of 23% and 21% of the victim related content being directed to them.
5.2.3 The Brussels Attacks

Unlike previous cases, the BBC and the Guardian attributed the highest ratio of the victim related content to the Injured. The Guardian directed 40% of the information to that category, while the BBC allotted 30%, which is still a higher ratio than any of the attacks that were previously discussed. One of the reason for this number is a photograph that went viral of one of the people who were wounded: “A wounded Jet Airways crew member pictured in the immediate aftermath of the explosion in her torn and bloodied yellow uniform has been named as Nidhi Chaphekar.” (Phipps, 2016). Her story was repeatedly published after Ketevan Kardava, a journalist with the Georgian Public Broadcaster network, took her photo (BBC, Mar/24/2016). This proves to be a good example on how journalists approach victims immediately after attacks occur in order to take photos of them, as the victims receive central attention in these situations (Marthoz, 2017, p.50).

What is also specific for the Brussels attack, is that the Community aspect received no attention when the event was covered in neither of the two news outlets. Indeed, the Barcelona attacks received only 1%, which is definitely not considered as a high ratio, nevertheless, in this case, there was no mention of the unity and help provided by residents of Brussels and Belgium as a whole.
5.2.4 The Paris Attacks

The victim narrative for the Paris attacks shows a surprising agreement between the BBC and the Guardian on the priorities of the two news outlets. In charts 10a and 10b it is observed that an average of 33% of the victim related content was attributed to Casualties and Survivors, while all the other categories received between 2% and 12% of the content. In this sense, presenting the stories of people who lost their lives and the description of the attacks by those who survived the atrocities was considered equally important.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an answer for the second sub-question stated in the beginning of this thesis: What features of the victim aspect received more attention in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media? In consequence, the findings show that the most common themes the victim narrative after the occurrence of a terrorist attack are: Casualties, Injured, Missing, Survivors, Tribute, Reactions and Community. In most cases, the Casualties, Survivors and Injured groups received more content compared to other categories, both for terror acts that took place on national ground and in a foreign country. Nevertheless, no specific pattern on the portrayal of victim related content has been identified. According to the results, there are some differences in how the Victim aspect was addressed by the media not only when the attacks were compared, but significant discrepancies were also found between the two British news outlets. Even though the results of this study do not show a pattern in the way that victims of terrorist attacks have been portrayed by the British media, there have been some aspects that differentiate the victim narrative when the terror acts took place on national or foreign ground.
For example, it is interesting that the Community aspect was hardly mentioned in some cases, while in the stories published for the Manchester attack it received 10% of the victim related content. The information distributed to this group promotes a feeling of unity, empathy and compassion that fall under the emotional specter. Nevertheless, this is not enough to conclude whether these discrepancies are connected to the emotional attachment of the journalists to the news events or the existence of other factors such as the editorial policy, the date and time of the attacks or even the political context at the time.
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION: THE ROLE OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE MEDIA

The goal of this section is to assess what are the consequences of the portrayal of victims of terrorist attacks by the media. This will be established by looking into the data that was obtained in the previous chapters of this thesis.

6.1 The Impact of Victims of Terrorist Attacks on the Audience

As discussed in the literature, there is a symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorist organizations (Wilkinson, 1997; Tuman, 2009). As previously stated, frames highlight features of complex issues, in order to make it possible for the audience to establish “why an issue is important, who is responsible, and what might be the consequences” (Dirikx and Gelders, 2010, p. 732). Thus, in order to frame a message, it is necessary for the message to be developed in a specific way so that it would contain certain associations rather than others (Simon and Xenos, 2000, p. 367).

It has been previously established that immediate victims of terrorist attacks are not the real targets of the perpetrators (Vigilant and Williamsons, 2003; Keinan et al., 2003; Marthoz, 2017). With this in mind, in the coverage of the terrorist events, the British news media outlets used many portraits and personal stories of the victims and their families. This approach is rather recent and was used in order to present the victims as real people. It changed from reporting military aspects to coverage that is focused on people (Höijer, 2004, p. 516). Nevertheless, while, on many occasions, both the BBC and the Guardian portray individual stories of direct or indirect victims, the effect of the coverage leads to collective victimhood that impacts the audience as well, by transmitting emotions of empathy, grief and fear.

Generally, the ideal victim is stereotypically perceived by society as “innocent, vulnerable, very young/old and a good citizen, who has been attacked by a bad offender who is a stranger” (Moffet, 2016, p. 149). In this sense, Powell (2011) identified three prevalent themes in how the victims are portrayed in the media: the victims - labeled as heroes; the victims as good and innocent and third, the victims as spiritual, usually Christian, and the terrorist as Muslims (p. 103). Looking through the content, it was discovered that the first two points were applied in particular to the Manchester attack, and not as much for the other events.

By applying these themes into the data that was collected, the following has been established. First, the “hero” theme has been highlighted in the coverage of the Manchester attack: “Meanwhile, more than £30,000 has been raised for a homeless man who has been
declared a hero after helping victims of the attack” (BBC, May/24/2017-a); “A medic named on Twitter only as Tariq, an A&E doctor at the MRI, tweeted his praise for the “absolute heroes” he had worked with overnight on Monday.” (Campbell and Marsh, 2017). This, however, was not present as well for the attacks in Spain, Belgium or France.

According to the second theme, the victims are good and innocent. This is because, in particular, the audience perceives children, women and the elderly to be ideal victims who are entitled to compassion (Höijer, 2004, p. 521). This can be identified as well in the analyzed articles. For example, the youngest victim of the Manchester bombing was mentioned in both the BBC and the Guardian: “Saffie Roussos, from Leyland, at eight is the youngest person known to have died in the explosion so far”(BBC, May/24/2017-d); “The youngest victim of Abedi’s attack was Saffie Rose Roussos, eight...Her school, Tarleton community primary, described her as “a beautiful little girl in every aspect of the word”(Booth et al., 2017). Mentions of a “youngest victim” was made for the Barcelona terrorist attacks and the Paris attacks as well: “The youngest victim of the attacks was thought to be a three-year-old girl, who died shortly after being taken to hospital”(Siddique et al., 2017). “Lucie Dira, 12 years old,” said one simply, above the pensive face of a pre-teen girl, one of the youngest missing” (Graham-Harrison & Tapper, 2015). Nevertheless, there was not much attention to the “youngest victim” directed in the other analyzed cases.

As for the third theme, indeed, the perpetrators have been aligned to the Muslim community by the media. In terms of victims, however, the religion of directly affected victims has not been mentioned. Nevertheless, the Us vs. Them mentality is still present in the discourse, even though it is presented in another form: “Members of the city's Muslim community joined the vigil and addressed the crowd” (BBC, May/24/2017-c) ;“But I’m not here as a person with brown skin or a Muslim background. I’m here as a Mancunian” (Pidd, 2017); “Some Muslims in the crowd worried they would become targets of anger in their own city… “We are all Belgian. I am Belgian,” she said as one of her children drew a chalk message ‘Je suis Bruxelles’ on the ground. “This is our sadness.” (Rankin and Neslen, 2016) ““We aren't like them,” says Jamal, 44, of the attackers. "We have nothing to do with them. We are disgusted” (Longman, 2015). Even though these captions have an apparent message of inclusion, the media paints the Muslim community as separate and it is not immediately assumed that they are part of the communal grief. A similar approach has been identified for the four cases that were analyzed.

The results of the study show that for all the terrorist events that have been analyzed for this thesis, the British media attributed the highest amount of content to the Victim category,
even though it has not been established a pattern in the way that victims are portrayed. By looking at the charts presented in the previous chapters and the content of the news articles, it can be observed that the coverage of the Manchester attack has been slightly different compared to the coverage of the other three terrorist events. For example, more content was published on the Manchester attack, a more descriptive language on the terrorist attack was used, the highest percentage of content attributed to the Security category was identified on the coverage of the same event, or more information related to the Community aspect was published in the articles on the Manchester error act. Nevertheless, as the information was intended for the British audience, the general approach from both news media outlets was similar. In other words, even though the message directed to the British audience was not as emotional, elements of news media framing were present in a comparable manner.

Even though the media might intend to present reality as closely as possible, the presentation of events in a particular frame might lead to changing behavior and even attitudes, such as perception of the enemy and stereotypes (Shoshani and Slone, 2008, p. 630). In other words, the coverage of a story can impact the attention given to certain beliefs, including forming new beliefs, influencing behavior, it contributes to the formation of public opinion or influence political attitudes of individuals (Weimann, 1983; Gartner, 2004; Linström and Marais, 2012; Nevalsky, 2015). Argomaniz and Lynch (2018) explain that victim recognition depends on different factors such as an individual’s personal history, as well as the political or social context that the violent act occurs in. In this sense, the context in which the violent act occurs is significant to understand how people react to this (p. 493). Including whether this means that individuals participate in political activism, peace movements or get involved in efforts of counter radicalization. This being said, there has been an increase in the number of terrorist attacks in Europe since 2014 (European Parliament, 2018) and authorities have been interested in taking different security measure for response and prevention.

Victims play the role of messengers; however, they are not only directed towards the authorities, but towards the audience as well. One of the consequences of the way that terrorist attacks are covered by the media is that people from the audience are afraid of being a prospective victim for a terrorist attack in the future (Altheide, 2006, p. 432). In this sense, authorities have the possibility to make use of the situation created. Crelinsten (2005, p. 76) argues that during events such as armed insurgency, violent protest or terrorism, authorities tend to justify different measures by making use of the victims that suffered from a violent occurrence that was previously named. In this sense, it establishes a national affront and it can mobilize the patriotic stance of the society that strengthens public solidarity and legitimizes
different actions taken by the government. The United Kingdom, for example, raised the threat level to “critical” after the Manchester attack which led to the presence of armed forces on the street. Additional security has been deployed to high-profile buildings and to events that were supposed to attract a great number of people. In this sense, reinforcements have been deployed at the airport as well as at events such as the Great Manchester run and some people have reported to feel safer with them present (Lazaro, 2017).

Such actions can lead to people being more eager to give up privacy in exchange for security. For example, UK’s home secretary stated in 2018 that authorities “have updated our counter-terrorism strategy, introduced new legislation to allow threats to be disrupted earlier and have increased information sharing with local authorities. We are also ensuring technology companies play their part by stopping terrorists from exploiting their platforms” (Grierson, 2018). In addition, the highest amount of information distributed in the Security category was on the Manchester attack. The emergency services were often praised as well as was the general response to the attack. This, in turn, leads to an increase in trust towards authorities.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, victims are not only used as messengers from terrorist organizations to authorities. The intensive portrayal of victims of terrorist attacks in the media has several consequences on the audience as well. By portraying innocent, in this case, very young victims and extensive portraits of the victims, people from the audience are fearful of becoming potential victims of future terrorist attacks. In addition, repetitive praise of how the emergency services reacted to the attack increases the level of trust between the people and authorities. Also, by using the Us vs. Them mentality when publishing stories related to the Muslim community and isolating them from the collective grieving process can affect the audience.

In the short and long term, these aspects lead to individuals being more malleable towards actions taken by authorities as long as they are directed to their protection. This ranges from people being more comfortable in an environment with hardened security to being more prone to give up certain privacy rights in exchange for security.
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Research Question and Sub-questions

In order to answer to the Research Question presented in the beginning of this study, specifically: *What has been the role of victims of terrorist attacks in the British media?* it is important to evaluate whether the analysis chapters have provided answers to the two sub-questions from the first chapter.

In this sense, chapter 4 has provided an answer to sub-question 1: What aspects have been emphasized in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media? According to the findings for this study, 7 aspects have been identified in the portrayal of terrorist events by the British media: Victim, Suspect, Terrorist Incident, Security, National/International Reactions, Previous Terrorist Incidents, Terrorist Organization.

The findings also show that both hypotheses, stated in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, have been proven to be valid. According to the first hypothesis, the Victim aspect was supposed to be attributed the highest percentage amongst the 7 identified categories. As the data from Chart 4 shows, the Victim aspect was indeed assigned the highest ratio of content (30% by the BBC and 34% by the Guardian).

The second hypothesis from the beginning of this research stated that the Victim narrative was supposed to be more predominantly used when the terrorist attack takes place on national ground. This, too, was validated by the data. In this sense, as shown in Chart 2, the Victim, alongside the Security aspect were assigned 4% more content in the articles that were published on the Manchester bombing by the two British news outlets.

As the data was analyzed, more findings need to be mentioned, even though they were not necessarily expected in the beginning of this study. First, the literature already stated that terrorist events that occur on national ground receive different coverage if compared to those that took place in other countries (Matthews, 2016, p. 14). This was true for the articles that were analyzed as well. While during the second and the third day after the attacks, there were 37 articles published for the Barcelona attacks, 41 for the Brussels attacks and 53 for the Paris attacks, the highest amount of 66 articles were published on the Manchester attack. In relation to the same theoretical ground, it was found that a broader vocabulary was used to illustrate the Manchester attack that it was the case with the other three events. It was also interesting to observe the fact that ISIS was mentioned in the coverage of all the 4 attacks by both news outlets, even though it was indicated that there was no proof at that moment that would confirm such information. These findings indicate that issue frames are used when terrorist events are
covered. Another finding points to the fact that, in most instances, the media referred to attacks that occurred in Western countries as examples of other terrorist events. Therefore, such frames can be found both at a national and at a regional level. In this sense, starting with these findings, a more thorough analysis could be conducted.

The discussion from chapter 5 provided an answer to sub-question 2: What features of the victim aspect received more attention in the portrayal of terrorist attacks by the British media? Therefore, there were 7 themes that were identified in the analysis of the victim related content: Casualties, Injured, Missing, Survivors, Tribute, Reactions and Community. Casualties, Survivors and Injured were the categories that were assigned more content compared to the other groups.

It was interesting to observe that the Community aspect was hardly or not at all mentioned in the Barcelona, Paris and Brussels attacks. However, the BBC and the Guardian allotted an average of 10% of the victim related content to this category in the coverage of the Manchester attack. As stated in the conclusions for chapter 5, the information distributed to this group promotes a feeling of unity, empathy and compassion that fall under the emotional specter. As mentions of this theme have been made for other attacks as well, it means that the initiatives that pertain to the Community group, were not specific to the Manchester case alone, even though not much attention was given when it occurred during other attacks.

Nevertheless, as opposed to the findings from the first part of the analysis, the results from chapter 5 do not show the existence of a pattern in this sense. Not only that charts show discrepancies between how the four cases have been portrayed, with few exceptions, significant differences in the discourse regarding the victim aspect have been identified between news outlets as well. Therefore, there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that the media assigns more attention to the Community aspect when terrorist attacks occur on national ground.

As stated earlier, different elements support the argument that there was a difference in the way that the terror act that occurred on national ground has been portrayed by the British media, as it centered its attention towards the Victim aspect. However, as the BBC and the Guardian directed the content towards the British audience, elements of framing have been identified in all cases. In other words, overall, the portrayal of the victims of terrorist attacks have consequences on the audience. As terrorist organizations and the media have a symbiotic relationship, victims, or unintended targets, are used in order to send the desired message to authorities. Nevertheless, the extensive portrayal of victims by the media affects the audience as well.
For example, by portraying direct victims of terrorist events as ideal, mainly innocent and young individuals to the audience, members of the community are afraid that they, or their loved ones could become victims of future terrorist attacks. By presenting repetitive praises directed towards the emergency services, a higher level of trust could be formed between the community and the government. Also, by isolating the Muslim community from the collective process of grieving when publishing apparent inclusive messages, the audience can be impacted negatively as they would see this information through the Us vs. Them lenses. In the context of the international battle against Isis, all the mentioned aspects can have an effect on the audience. In the short and long term, these aspects lead to individuals being more malleable towards actions taken by authorities as long as they are directed to their protection. This ranges from people being more comfortable in an environment with increased security to individuals being more likely to give up certain privacy rights in exchange for security.

This study concludes that when following news media articles, terrorism revolves around victims. A high amount of information is directed to them both in articles published on attacks that occurred in the home country of journalists as well as on foreign ground. As the second part of the analysis showed, there are 7 main Victim related aspects that are identified in the coverage of terrorist attacks: Casualties, Injured, Missing, Survivors, Tribute, Reactions and Community. As there has not been identified a pattern on the amount of attention that journalists give to certain categories, further research is needed to assess what factors contribute to the emphasis of the aspects of the victim related content. However, the high amount of content dedicated to the Victim category, as well as the use of news media framing on other aspects in the portrayal of terrorist attacks, has the power to influence the audience to accept temporary or long-term security measures adopted by their government that would appear extraordinary in other contexts.

7.2 Limitations
There is a number of limitations to this study that need to be mentioned. One of the limitations of content analysis as a methodology is that the results do not provide information regarding causal connections between variables under study. Meaning that even though it is a good method to observe and prove the changing trends in the analyzed content, it cannot provide an explanation to why these changes occur (Prasad, 2008, p. 190). This is applied to the current study as well, meaning that patterns that have been identified in the results or the lack of them cannot be developed nor explained in this thesis. Another limitation is the small sample of selected articles and news outlets to be analyzed due to lack of necessary time to complete this
research. In addition, there have been observed some differences in how the two selected news outlets, the BBC and the Guardian, addressed certain aspects in the coverage of the terrorist attacks. This means that there is the possibility for slightly different results if the same logic and methodology would be applied to other news outlets.

7.3 Implications and Future Research
The results of this study add to the existing knowledge on the Victim aspect in the portrayal of terrorist events in the media by emphasizing the importance of the victims in the coverage of terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, due to the mentioned limitations, further research is needed in order to explore this area. As previously stated, content analysis as a methodology does not offer the possibility to examine the causality of the results, therefore, it is advised to adopt other qualitative methods that could look into the reasoning behind the attention that journalists give to victims in their reporting of terrorist events. The findings from the first part of the study supported the argument that the concept of proximity is applied in the coverage of attacks that occur on national ground. However, the second part did not provide enough evidence in favor of the same concept. Furthermore, this study did not find a pattern in the portrayal of victims of terrorist attacks and observed that the media prioritized different victim related aspects for different events. Therefore, additional research is needed as well to establish the context that influenced the change in emphasis of the victim related content.
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