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# Unveiling the Frames: Framing the Burqa Ban in Dutch Print Media

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## Citation

Borren, J. (2024). *Unveiling the Frames: Framing the Burqa Ban in Dutch Print Media*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



Universiteit  
Leiden

**Master Thesis**

**Middle-Eastern Studies**

By Judith Borren

Unveiling the Frames: Framing the Burqa Ban in Dutch Print Media

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the framing of the burqa ban in the Dutch media over the past decade, focusing on the divergence between left-wing (Volkskrant) and right-wing (Telegraaf) newspapers, potential polarizing frames, and the shifts in media narratives pre and post-implementation of the ban. The analysis is guided by framing theory, which shows the dominant frames visible in the newspapers and explores the dynamic interplay between media, public opinion, and politics. A framework of five frames, guided by Semetko and Valkenburg's frames, has been constructed for this research. These are the Moral, Political, Societal Impact, Policy Conflict, and Security frames. The Volkskrant is characterized as progressive and socially oriented. The dominant frame between 2012 and 2022 has been the Societal Impact frame, emphasizing the ban's consequences for society. In contrast, the Telegraaf, known for its activist and critical stance, used the Political Conflict frame the most often, focusing on discussions around implementing the ban. Contrary to expectations, the study has not identified a polarizing trend over time in the analysis. Moreover, it was concluded that the newspapers are growing convergent with their opinions concerning the burqa ban. When looking at the impact the implementation of the burqa ban has had on the dominant frames, a shift is visible post-implementation. Both newspapers have increased the use of the Societal Impact frame, increasing attention to the law's implications. Looking forward, this thesis suggests additional research, including an exploration of the beginning of the debate in 2005, the recent victory of Wilders' PVV, and other newspapers.

## **Keywords:**

Media framing, Burqa ban, Framing analysis, Dutch newspapers, Polarization.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Dutch media landscape is dynamic and constantly evolving in response to political and societal attitudes. A recent development has changed the discussion around Muslim women and the burqa in Dutch newspapers. The relatively new and controversial “partial ban on face covering” in Dutch, named "*gedeeltelijk verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding*" also called the burqa ban in the media, has stirred multiple debates on agency and religious freedom on the one hand and security and integration on the other hand. Against this background, I aim to shed light on an aspect of this discourse: the framing of the burqa ban in Dutch left-wing and right-wing newspapers and its reflection of societal polarization. This area of study is still largely missing from the academic literature.

While there is extensive research on media portrayal of Muslim women and the veil in various international contexts, there is a noticeable gap when it comes to an in-depth analysis of Dutch Media frames and the burqa ban. The law is relatively recent (2019), but it has significantly influenced the media milieu and has introduced new dynamics into the discussion. This research aims to provide insights into how the public discourse in the media surrounding the burqa ban has developed over time and precisely how this is reflected through frames in the past decade. Focusing on the burqa ban, I aim to provide insights into how Dutch left-wing and right-wing newspapers have presented the issue over the last decade and what frames they have used to discuss it.

It is important to emphasize that this research will only examine media portrayals within the Dutch context. I am not looking at how these frames have influenced the public discourse or Muslim women, for example. The scope of this research is dedicated to analyzing media framing from 2012 to 2022 to show the changing field. I will also not demonstrate how media framing could shape or influence polarization within Dutch society. Based on primary sources from the media, I will show that news coverage could reflect and potentially shape polarization.

In conclusion, the research gap concerning media coverage of the burqa ban and its reflection of polarization in Dutch society presents an opportunity to explore an evolving discourse. Through this research, I aim to deepen the knowledge of framing in the Dutch context and open the dialogue on the representation of Muslim women and the burqa ban in the Dutch media, a polarized topic.

## Significance

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it offers a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of the burqa ban discourse in Dutch media, addressing a gap in academic literature. While there has been extensive international research on media portrayals of Muslim women and the veil and or burqa, for example, the complete burqa ban in France or Denmark, in the Dutch context, this has remained largely unexamined. This study bridges the void, providing valuable insights into how Dutch newspapers frame this contentious issue. Comparable studies within the field of framing are needed. By using a modified version of predefined frames of Valkenburg and Semetko,<sup>1</sup> I aim to generate results that can be compared to other international contexts.

Furthermore, this study's focus on media framing is particularly relevant given the dynamic nature of the media landscape. The research aims to shed light on the various narratives and perspectives in the Dutch media. The study shows a more nuanced understanding of how different newspapers with different political backgrounds situate themselves in the debate on the burqa ban.

In Addition, this research challenges conventional assumptions about media influence. Instead of portraying the media as a one-way conveyor of information, it highlights the relationship between media frames, public opinion, and politics. This perspective is more nuanced than what is often expected, and it is thus essential to show the diversity of the interrelation between media, public opinion, and politics.

This topic is even more significant in line with the recent Dutch election results. Wilders' political stance, often characterized by a strong conservative and anti-immigration agenda, further emphasizes the relevance of understanding media discourse on issues like the burqa ban.

In conclusion, the significance of this research lies in its ability to close an academic gap in Dutch media coverage of the burqa ban to an extent. It will show the evolution of the narratives in the media over the past decade in covering the burqa ban. It aims to generate

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<sup>1</sup> Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 95, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x>.

comparable results and contribute to a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between the media, public opinion, and politics in the context of the burqa ban in Dutch media.

## **Research questions**

The main question in this research is:

*How have the dominant frames used in Dutch print media to discuss the burqa ban shifted across the past decade?*

Three sub-questions are formulated to help answer the main question:

1. Is there a difference visible in the use of frames on the subject of the burqa ban between left-wing and right-wing newspapers?
2. How does the content of the dominant frames vary in terms of its potential to polarize?
3. Has there been a shift in the use of frames after the law's implementation in 2019?

By including these three sub-questions, I aim to show the dominant frames used in the Dutch print media and their transformation over time.

## **Hypothesis**

I expect that, when looking at the Dutch media and the coverage of the burqa ban over time, there will be a shift in the narratives discussed by the articles in the past decade. Geiß, Weber, and Quiring have studied this. Frames change over time in response to external and internal influences.<sup>2</sup> They argue that key events influence frames. For example, the competition between frames can become more apparent; over time, the frames can relate or compete with one another more.<sup>3</sup> Geiß, Weber, and Quiring show that the media frames can change in response to key events. The implementation of the burqa ban on August 1st, 2019, serves as a significant milestone in influencing media discourse, contributing to a change in how the issue is discussed, portrayed, and framed.

I also argue that the Dutch newspapers, with distinct political backgrounds, namely the

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<sup>2</sup> Stefan Geiß, Mathias Weber, and Oliver Quiring, "Frame Competition after Key Events: A Longitudinal Study of Media Framing of Economic Policy after the Lehman Brothers Bankruptcy 2008–2009," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 29, no. 3 (May 16, 2016): 474, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edw001>.

<sup>3</sup> Geiß, Weber, and Quiring, "Frame Competition after Key Events: A Longitudinal Study of Media Framing of Economic Policy after the Lehman Brothers Bankruptcy 2008–2009.": 474

right-wing Telegraaf and the left-wing Volkskrant, show different evolving narratives using predominantly different frames. This is also demonstrated by Clyde Missier's research on how different news outlets can have different narratives when discussing the same issue.<sup>4</sup> According to Matthes, the key idea of framing is that journalists do not simply report the news. Still, contrastingly, they subject certain events or issues to their interpretation, and these frames are a selective view of an issue.<sup>5</sup> The understanding of polarization that might arise within this evolution of contrasting frames will also be addressed. As discussed by Harteveld, Dutch people have become more critical of their political opponents.<sup>6</sup> According to a study on polarized attitudes towards refugees and migrants, it was also confirmed that there are polarizing views present in Dutch society.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, polarization will become more evident towards the end of the defined period. While political orientation is a factor in the analysis, the primary focus of the study is to explore the dynamic changes in media discourse surrounding the burqa ban over time. I have divided this into three smaller hypotheses to reach the above sub-questions.

The first sub-hypothesis is that the frames within the print media differ across political lines between right-wing and left-wing. I expect that the right-wing newspaper Telegraaf will emphasize the necessity of the burqa ban because of the need for integration and national security, for example. On the other hand, I expect the Volkskrant to emphasize discussions about religious freedom and discrimination. These varying frames reflect broader social and political debate in the Netherlands.

The second sub-hypothesis explores the relationship between the different frames and their reflection on polarization. I expect that the discussion will intensify more toward 2022 and that more competing and less overlapping frames will be visible in the different newspapers.

And lastly, the third sub-hypothesis delves into the shift from before and after the law's implementation on August 1, 2019. I expect that the implementation has impacted the media

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<sup>4</sup> Clyde Anieldath Missier, "The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands," *SAGE Open* 12, no. 2 (April 1, 2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221099527>.

<sup>5</sup> Jörg Matthes, "Framing Politics," *American Behavioral Scientist* 56, no. 3 (December 15, 2011): 248, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211426324>.

<sup>6</sup> Eelco Harteveld, "Polarisatie in Nederland: hoe verdeeld zijn we?," Universiteit Van Amsterdam, February 22, 2022, <https://www.uva.nl/shared-content/faculteiten/nl/faculteit-der-maatschappij-en-gedragwetenschappen/nieuws/2022/02/polarisatie-in-nederland-hoe-verdeeld-zijn-we.html?cb&cb>.

<sup>7</sup> Katja Albada, Nina Hansen, and Sabine Otten, "Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 51, no. 3 (April 1, 2021): 638, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2766>.



narrative and shifted the narratives toward more conflicting stances. By comparing the pre and post-implementation narratives, I aim to show this shift.

The significance of this hypothesis lies in its capacity to shed light on the intricate interplay between media, politics, and public opinion. I will elaborate on this dynamic interrelation further in the theoretical framework. My research explores this interrelation through framing analysis, which aims to uncover the narratives used in the Dutch print media regarding the burqa ban. This hypothesis is the foundation for discussing the burqa ban in the Dutch media. The main aim is to investigate the changing dynamics of the Dutch media landscape concerning the burqa ban from 2012 to 2022. The sub-hypotheses emphasize different aspects of this investigation and will help conclude.

## Chapter 2 - Method and Methodology

The method chosen for this research is framing analysis. This is a well-suited method for researching how the media has discussed the burqa ban and how this has evolved over the last decade. To get a good image of the dominant frames in the Dutch media discussing the burqa ban, I have investigated eleven years of newspaper articles. I have selected two newspapers with a particular left-wing and right-wing political background: the *Volkskrant* and the *Telegraaf*. I have selected all the relevant articles concerning the burqa ban available from 2012 until 2022 from these newspapers. This will give me a good overview of the evolving discussion and provide me with insights into the changing debate. By examining headlines, captions, and texts, I will gain a good view of the frames present in the newspapers.

The method will be a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, as has been suggested by Van Gorp.<sup>8,9</sup> Textual content analysis is used to extract meanings and frames from newspaper articles. This is generally a qualitative method. However, because I also rely on a dataset with a larger number of newspaper articles, I will only look at the articles in-depth on some aspects and framing devices. Thus, the method will be a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches. I aim to improve data collection, interpretation, and analysis by combining the two approaches. This will help me get a more nuanced understanding of the texts.

The research will identify the key frames through which media narratives about the burqa ban are constructed. These frames will partly be borrowed from Valkenburg and Semetko,<sup>10</sup> which are identified as often recurring in the news. After looking at a sample of the news articles within the identified time frame to see if they can be applicable, I modified the frames by Semetko and Valkenburg slightly to make them fit to this research. The identified frames will serve as the foundation for analyzing media content. After identifying the frames, I analyzed the selected newspaper articles in-depth over the past eleven years. This has shown me how newspapers have discussed the burqa ban over the years. Additionally, this has shown me the notable shifts or changes in reporting on the burqa ban over the selected

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<sup>8</sup> Margaret Linström and Willemien Marais, "Qualitative News Frame Analysis: A Methodology," *Communitas* 17 (December 14, 2012): 27, <https://africaneditors.org/journal/COM/full-text-pdf/25829-37533>.

<sup>9</sup> Baldwin Van Gorp, "Het Reconstrueren van Frames via Inductieve Inhoudsanalyse: Uitgangspunten En Procedures," *KWALON* 12, no. 2 (June 1, 2007): 13, <https://doi.org/10.5117/2007.012.002.005>.

<sup>10</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," 95.

period.

The frames were constructed after repeatedly asking four questions when reading a newspaper article to a sample of twenty articles. These four questions are borrowed from Entman,<sup>11</sup> as described before. They were:

- What is the problem?
- Who is causing the problem?
- Who should be responsible for a solution to the problem?
- What should be done to solve the problem/What is being done to solve the problem?

After asking these questions to twenty newspaper articles, ten of both the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant, I could recognize the recurring frames and construct them further. This method requires some flexibility in constructing frames, and took some going back and forth.

## **Newspapers**

I have selected these particular newspapers because they have a right-wing and left-wing background. The Telegraaf is considered a right-wing newspaper. The Volkskrant is regarded as a left-wing newspaper. The Telegraaf is one of the most popular newspapers in the Netherlands, and the Volkskrant is described as the most significant quality left-wing newspaper.<sup>12</sup> Comparing the frames in these two newspapers, the shift over time and polarization could become the most evident. This will be discussed further in the introductory chapter, where I will elaborate on the background of the debate and the newspapers.

## **Timeline**

The research in question focuses on a timeline starting from a specific moment in 2012 when the Council of Ministers discussed the new law.<sup>13</sup> After the motion by Wilders, the matter was discussed in parliament multiple times but actually had an impact on policymaking since 2011. It was not until this discussion became public in 2012 that it was widely known and

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<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): 52, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>.

<sup>12</sup> Missier, "The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands," 8.

<sup>13</sup> "Kamerstuk 29754, nr. 91 | Overheid.nl > Officiële bekendmakingen," December 1, 2006, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-29754-91.html>.

discussed in the media.<sup>14</sup> From this point on, the discussion became more concrete and specific, with a greater focus on the implementation of the proposed law. This timeline was chosen for the research because it provides a clear starting point for the discussion and allows for a more detailed analysis of the events and actions that followed. By focusing on this specific timeline, the research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced the development and implementation of the new law.

The articles of the newspapers regarding the burqa ban are found in databases with Dutch newspapers and analyzed on the basis of headlines and text. The database 'Nexis Uni' provided me with the articles. In the database, I searched the keywords '*Boerkaverbod*' and '*Gedeeltelijk Verbod Gezichtsbedenkende Kleding*'. this provided me with a lot of newspaper articles, but after filtering them I selected the relevant news articles within the relevant time period. Coincidentally, in both newspapers, I found 84 articles to analyze. In order to get a good image of the transforming narratives in the timeline, I will analyze all 168 newspaper articles.

## **Analysis**

After looking at a sample from both newspapers, I identified the five frames. I analyzed each news article individually to see which of the defined frames were visible in the article. The results have been translated into percentages and graphs, which give an image of the dominant frames used in the Dutch media regarding the topic of the burqa ban, and its transformation over time. The selected articles will be from between January 2012 to December 2022.

When constructing the frames, I wanted to make sure they were all-encompassing. In the sample of newspaper articles I read from both newspapers, I saw a wide variety of themes, topics, and frames. I have used a partially inductive approach. Beginning by looking at a sample of 10 articles from both newspapers in the inductive phase as suggested by van Gorp.<sup>15</sup> After the identification of these frames, in the deductive phase, I conducted a quantitative analysis with the defined frames. Some flexibility with this process was necessary.

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<sup>14</sup> College voor de Rechten van de Mens and Jet Tigchelaar, "Een Intimiderend Wetsvoorstel. Het 'boerkaverbod' Beoordeeld," *College Voor De Rechten Van De Mens*, June 2018, 377.

<sup>15</sup> Van Gorp, "Het Reconstrueren van Frames via Inductieve Inhoudsanalyse: Uitgangspunten En Procedures." 13.

The coding process aims to identify in every article at least one of the defined frames. It is possible that two frames will be visible in an article. I will study the headlines and the text of the articles. The framing devices defined by Entman include looking at key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images.<sup>16</sup> To look at all of these framing devices will be outside of the scope of this research. Thus, I decided to focus solely on the headlines and the text to identify the frames within the analysis of the newspaper articles.

As mentioned above, the frames that have been identified are a modified version of the frames as defined by Valkenburg and Semetko. They have defined five frames, which are often found within the media. These are the conflict frame, the human-interest frame or the human impact frame, the economic consequences frame, the morality frame, and the responsibility frame.<sup>17</sup> Not all of these apply to this research; thus, to make these frames fitting to this research, I have modified them slightly to fit the research objective.

## **Frames**

The defined frames, which were constructed after a mix of inductive and deductive approaches to the newspaper articles, are:

### **1. Moral frame:**

The focus lies on examining the discussion through a moral lens. It involves ethical considerations and values associated with the burqa ban and addresses questions of individual rights and freedom of religion.

- The main problem discussed in the articles revolves around the ethical considerations of restricting individuals from wearing the burqa or the moral considerations against the burqa.
- Responsibility for this problem may be attributed to policymakers and politicians who have advocated for the implementation of the law. Also, society can have a collective responsibility for an open dialogue considering diverse perspectives.

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<sup>16</sup> Claes H. De Vreese and Sophie Lecheler, "News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments," in *SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks*, 2012, 292, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446201015.n24>.

<sup>17</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." 95.

- These policymakers and politicians should offer the solution. Still, society should address moral concerns and try to balance individual and religious rights and broader ethical values, such as women's emancipation.
- A moral evaluation involves considering the ethical implications of the burqa ban and emphasizing the need for open discourse, empathy, or a nuanced approach to preserve individual rights and freedom.

Semetko and Valkenburg: The morality frame puts the problem around ethical considerations regarding religious or moral descriptions.<sup>18</sup>

## **2. Political frame**

The focus lies on analyzing political dimensions that are involved. The frame aims to understand the actions and positions of the political actors and parties regarding the burqa ban. This frame explores how political interests and strategies shape the discourse.

- The main problem in the articles is the political discord surrounding the burqa ban, with differing interests and strategies among different political actors.
- The responsibility lies with the politicians, driven by their political agendas.
- The policymakers, political parties, and leaders should collaborate to navigate the political landscape and address the diverse interests that are involved.
- The treatment recommendation could vary from negotiations, and compromises could be made to find common ground in the differing political stances.

Semetko and Valkenburg: The responsibility frame attributes the responsibility for solving the problem to the government.<sup>19</sup>

## **3. Societal Impact frame**

Focuses on the impact of the burqa ban on communities and social dynamics. The frame aims to understand the influence of the burqa ban on citizens in the Netherlands from multiple points of view.

- The main problem in the article is the impact of the burqa ban on communities, individuals, dynamics, identity, or interaction among diverse groups.
- The society at large is responsible for the problem, including individuals, community leaders, and organizations.

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<sup>18</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." 96.

<sup>19</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." 96.

- - The individuals, communities, and leaders working together, or politicians could be responsible for solving the problem.
- A solution for the problem is promoting understanding, tolerance, and inclusivity.

Also, an open dialogue.

Semetko and Valkenburg: The consequences frame looks at the problem or issue in ways of consequences for a group or individuals.<sup>20</sup> The frame I have constructed for this research differs from Semetko and Valkenburg's definition because they lay emphasis on economics. I think that is not applicable to this research, but the consequences on society in other ways are relevant.

#### **4. Security frame**

The focus lies in assessing the burqa ban regarding public safety, national safety, or any perceived threats. This frame explores arguments related to identification, public order, and reinforcement of the burqa ban.

- The main problem in the article is about the security implications of the burqa ban, addressing issues of identification and public order.
- responsible for the problem are people not following the rules that relate to security. These people can be citizens or politicians.
- Policymakers, security experts, and relevant authorities related to security are responsible for solving the problem.
- The resolution could be a treatment recommendation where people should follow the rules. Potentially revise policies to enhance security.

No fitting frame was found in predefined frames by Valkenburg and Semetko. This frame was constructed after a close investigation of the articles.

#### **5. Policy Conflict frame**

The Policy Conflict frame focuses on disagreements and tensions concerning the burqa ban. It focuses on conflict related to specific policies and their implementation. It examines the divergent policy perspectives and debates about policy.

- The central problem in the article is the existence of conflict related to the burqa ban, specifically disagreements concerning ideology or policies (of law enforcement).

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<sup>20</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." 96.

- The responsibilities lie with the policymakers, activists, community members, or other parties involved in the conflict.
- The solution should lie, dependent on the conflict, with the involved parties, thus policymakers, politicians, and ideological advocates.
- A moral evaluation involves considering the values in ideological conflicts and proposing treatment that can foster more understanding and consensus. For policy conflicts, treatment entails practical solutions and compromises to resolve specific policy disagreements.

Semetko and Valkenburg: This Conflict frame emphasizes the conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions.

The last frame, described by Valkenburg and Semetko, is called the Human-Interest Frame. This frame does not apply to my research because it did not occur in the samples I have conducted on random news articles from the two different newspapers. The Security frame did not connect to the frames as constructed by Valkenburg and Semetko. I have constructed this myself after looking at the sample. If none of the five defined frames apply to an article, this will also be documented. Anomalies could also provide me with valuable insights.

### **Operationalization Polarization**

This research will also partly explore the relationship between the different frames and their reflection on a particular form of polarization. It is safe to say that the issue of the burqa ban is divided. Polarization is the presence of increasingly conflicting views over time, in this case, specifically regarding the issue of the burqa ban. It shows a (gradual) intensification of conflicting opinions regarding the burqa ban.

To show polarization, the analysis of the frames will show at least one frame per news article or more when applicable. Between the left-wing and right-wing newspapers, the overlap between the frames in the different newspapers will be shown over time. The overlap measurement serves as a quantifiable indicator of polarization. Minimal or absent overlap between the left-wing and right-wing newspapers signifies highly polarized and divergent perspectives. Conversely, extensive overlap indicates limited polarization and shared viewpoints. By considering all frames, I will understand how different aspects of the issue are



emphasized or downplayed in the different newspapers. This will be done in five periods to show the polarization process over eleven years.

### **Sources and Limitations**

It is essential to acknowledge my own bias when conducting framing analysis because it is sensitive to the subjectivity of the researcher when identifying frames. When conducting this research, I have to keep in mind that I need to stay objective. My political opinions should not have an influence on the outcomes when defining the frames. This is something that is difficult for me, and I have to keep reminding myself of it because I personally do not agree with the implementation of the law regarding the partial prohibition of the burqa. I aim to tackle this bias by using a modified version of previously defined frames by Valkenburg and Semetko.<sup>21</sup> This can be beneficial in multiple ways, namely fighting bias, but also trying to have continuity within the field of framing analysis. This is a critique of the method; results are too diverse to be comparable because frames differ from each other. Thus, by using a modified version of frames used in previous research, I hope to generate results that can be comparable to some extent and limit the influence of my own bias.

The selected newspapers may introduce selection bias. The newspapers do not fully represent the diversity of frames visible in the Dutch media landscape. Additionally, focusing on only two newspapers on the opposite side of the political spectrum can result in an oversimplification of the media landscape. However, I believe they can provide a glimpse of the different views regarding the burqa ban within the media landscape in the Netherlands. And offer the basis for further, more elaborate research on this topic. Thus, this research can set a basis for further research, including more newspapers.

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<sup>21</sup> Semetko and Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." 96.

## Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework

The main objective of this research is to show if and how the dominant frames in the news media have shifted in the past decade when discussing the burqa ban. To conduct this research, I must first identify the interrelationship between Dutch public opinion, the media, and politics. This is somewhat more nuanced than often assumed. This theoretical framework will focus on this interrelationship, and I will explain the role of the media in the Netherlands and how this relates to public opinion and politics. I will do this by including framing as a theory to show this interrelationship.

### Framing

“*News is anything but a true reflection of reality*” is said to be the main thought behind framing.<sup>22</sup> It is often assumed that the media directly influences the public's opinion, is often mindlessly followed, and that politicians use this portrayal of media in their decision-making process.<sup>23</sup> However, this process is more nuanced than often assumed. In this theoretical framework, I aim to emphasize an interplay between the three systems (politics, media, and public opinion).

Entman's definition of framing, which is widely accepted among scholars, is;

*“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”*<sup>24</sup>

This definition shows that a frame is a selected piece of someone's reality and is thus a subjective view of an issue. This is also the definition I will use in this thesis for two reasons. It is a clear and encompassing definition of the concept of framing, and second, other scholars have widely adopted this definition in their work or have made their own version of it. The four questions Entman describes in this definition guided the frame-building process of this research.

As Entman has described as well, communication is a dynamic process.<sup>25</sup> He explains that

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<sup>22</sup> Margaret Linström and Willemien Marais, “Qualitative News Frame Analysis: A Methodology,” *Communitas* 17 (December 14, 2012): 24.

<sup>23</sup> Matthes, “Framing Politics,” 250.

<sup>24</sup> Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.” 52.

<sup>25</sup> Claes H. De Vreese and Sophie Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” in *SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks*, 2012, 292.

frame-building and frame-setting are a part of this dynamic process. As De Vreese and Lecheler explain, frame building is the process of how a news frame emerges and the factors that influence this building.<sup>26</sup> This process can be influenced by the journalists and the news outlet they work for; they bring a certain subjectivity to the news item, which is often not unbiased; these are internal factors. But there are also external factors that can have an influence on frames, like political elites. Frame-setting is the interaction between the frames and the spectators or readers. According to research, audiences have reflected and mirrored the available frames. In this way, the media influences the individual; the media and frames can affect individuals by emphasizing certain aspects and ignoring others.<sup>27</sup> And they also shape on a societal level, decision-making, actions, and politics.<sup>28</sup>

However, there are still quite some unclarities about the frame-building process because most researchers focus more on the actual frames that we encounter in the media. Multiple scholars describe news framing as being influenced by individuals, social and organizational, or political factors. Shoemaker and Reese for example, have aimed to show what processes and factors influence the media.<sup>29</sup> Their argument is that the media is shaped by the personal attitudes and political orientations of the journalists.<sup>30</sup>

Journalists do not simply reflect political and social realities in their news items and articles. Matthes also argues that it is the opposite, that political background and social realities shape the journalist frames, which are thus highly influenced by personal attitudes.<sup>32</sup> He adds to this that politicians and lobbyists also develop frames, which they try to establish in the media, for the public to pick up.<sup>33</sup> This is a way in which politicians aim to influence the media to put their issues on the agenda. Because frames can shape the public dialogue about political issues, politicians need to get political issues on the media agenda.<sup>34</sup>

## **Dutch Media Landscape**

According to Bos, Kruijkemeier, and De Vreese, the primary function of mass media in The

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<sup>26</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, "News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments," 292.

<sup>27</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, "News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments," 294.

<sup>28</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, "News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments," 293.

<sup>29</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, 1995, 5, <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA18118988>.

<sup>30</sup> Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Matthes, "Framing Politics." 249.

<sup>33</sup> Matthes, "Framing Politics." 249.

<sup>34</sup> Matthes, "Framing Politics." 252.

Netherlands, from a democratic point of view, is informing the public of political developments.<sup>35</sup> Media is the central link between the public and politics. Bos, Kruikemeier, and De Vreese state that it is highly important to know which people consume which kind of political information.<sup>36</sup> And whether or not people are being exposed to competing political views other than their own. When the public gets one-sided information on political topics, it could be possible that a gap arises between the left and right political supporters, and this could lead to a situation similar to America, where the political reality of the two camps has little to no overlap anymore.<sup>37</sup> Bos et al. are looking at whether there are different worldviews within the Dutch media landscape.

A well-known theory is that people select their news outlets and sources that represent their worldviews, perspectives, and preferences.<sup>38</sup> Information that matches your preferred perspectives is then accepted and otherwise discarded.<sup>39</sup> This process is called selective exposure, where information is selected on the hand of sources that come from a corresponding background (e.g., left-wing or right-wing newspaper), and the information the sources contain is selected again on the hand corresponding to your opinion.<sup>40</sup> Selective exposure is a way of fortifying your own opinions and worldviews instead of getting a diverse set of information.<sup>41</sup> This process also leads to Political Selective Exposure, where people use media in relation to fortify their political views.<sup>42</sup>

Some trends in the Dutch media landscape according to Huysman and De Haan and Bos, Kruikemeier and De Vreese, are that the Dutch newspapers are often read by both highly and low-educated people. Most of these people are older, though. The youth use mostly the internet and social media as their source.<sup>43</sup> However the more ‘serious newspapers’ like the

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<sup>35</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 235.

<sup>36</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 235.

<sup>37</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 235.

<sup>38</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 236.

<sup>39</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 236.

<sup>40</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 236.

<sup>41</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 236.

<sup>42</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 236.

<sup>43</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 241.

Volkskrant are more often read by highly educated people, and lower educated people read the Telegraaf and other ‘popular’ newspapers.<sup>44</sup> Bos, Kruikemeier, and De Vreese have concluded that people with a more right-wing liberal political background (voters for the PVV and VVD) read the Telegraaf more often, and people with a more left-wing and progressive political background (PvdA), read the Volkskrant more often.<sup>45</sup>

The media in the Netherlands are characterized as of fairly high quality.<sup>46</sup> Most of the newspapers find their origin in the pillared background of the Netherlands. However, since the de-pillarization in the Netherlands, the media landscape has become very diverse.<sup>47</sup> This has made it easier to select certain political information or to avoid political information in its entirety. The Telegraaf for example comes from a liberal background, and the Volkskrant finds its origins in the Catholic pillar. Nowadays, this is more nuanced, and the Catholic background of the Volkskrant has shifted towards a more progressive left audience.<sup>48</sup>

This comprehensive theoretical framework shows the interrelationship between media, public opinion, and politics. Framing as a theory shows this complex dynamic. I recognize that media, politics, and public opinion are intricately connected and that this is more nuanced than often assumed. Media is not only an information-giving tool, or mindlessly followed. Frames are constructed by journalists, which are influenced by politics, and the public, and the other way around. Each factor can be influenced by another. When examining trends in the Dutch media landscape, we see that pillarization has made place for a diverse media landscape and that political background can influence the form of media that is consumed, and selective exposure plays a role here.

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<sup>44</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 243.

<sup>45</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 246.

<sup>46</sup> “journalistiek-medialandschap-nederland-vlaanderen,” Een Taal Meer Stemmen, March 12, 2018, <https://eentaalmeerstemmen.nl/medialandschap-nederland-en-vlaanderen/>.

<sup>47</sup> De Vreese and Lecheler, “News Framing Research: An Overview and New Developments,” chap. 10, 250

<sup>48</sup> Philippe Remarque and Frits Bolkestein, “Opinie: Remarque En Bolkestein Schrijven Elkaar: ‘Is de Volkskrant Te Links?’” *Volkskrant.Nl*, April 14, 2012, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/columns-opinie/remarque-en-bolkestein-schrijven-elkaar-is-de-volkskrant-te-links~b2623ef1/>.

## Chapter 4 - Literature review

A lot of research has been done on framing. The starting point of this literature review is Robert Entman's article on framing from 1993, where the basic idea of framing is explained. According to Entman, framing is present in every communicating text.<sup>49</sup> Analyzing frames gives us an insight into texts' influence on people. Entman adds to this that frames primarily define problems. He distinguishes between the individual and societal levels of framing, where societal-level framing shows the overall pattern visible in media discourse,<sup>50</sup> which will be the focus of this research. Paul D'Angelo and Jim Kuypers state that the news is the principal place where studies on farming are conducted.<sup>51</sup> Framing analysis often touches upon the connection between frames and public opinion. Brewer and Gross have emphasized that the presence of frames in a text does not necessarily mean that the frame influences a reader.<sup>52</sup> Their research claims that framing has a limited effect on public opinion.<sup>53</sup> Framing and its relation to public opinion have been elaborated in the theoretical framework.

In the Dutch context, much research has been done on media framing in newspapers, as well. There is a trend of decline in print newspaper circulation.<sup>54</sup> A tactic often seen in Dutch print media to counter this development, is the expansion of narrative journalism, as described by Van Krieken and Sanders, which engages the reader more than traditional journalism.<sup>55</sup> Within this writing style, journalists combine facts with narrative techniques which can have the capacity to increase engagement with the text and thus increase salience.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Dekker and Scholten have studied how media coverage of an issue has an influence on changes in the policy agenda. They use the Dutch immigration policies as an example,

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<sup>49</sup> Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." 52.

<sup>50</sup> Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." 52.

<sup>51</sup> Paul D'Angelo and Jim A. Kuypers, "Chapter 1: Introduction," *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, February 26, 2010, 17, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203864463-7>.

<sup>52</sup> Paul R. Brewer and Kimberly Gross, "Studying the Effects of Framing on Public Opinion about Policy Issues: Does What We See Depend on How We Look," in *Doing News Framing Analysis*, ed. Paul D'Angelo and Jim A. Kuypers (Routledge, 2010), 160, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315642239>.

<sup>53</sup> Brewer and Gross, "Studying the Effects of Framing on Public Opinion about Policy Issues: Does What We See Depend on How We Look," 161.

<sup>54</sup> Kobie Van Krieken and José Sanders, "Framing Narrative Journalism as a New Genre: A Case Study of the Netherlands," *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism* 18, no. 10 (September 26, 2016): 1365, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916671156>.

<sup>55</sup> Van Krieken and Sanders, "Framing Narrative Journalism as a New Genre: A Case Study of the Netherlands," 1365.

<sup>56</sup> Van Krieken and Sanders, "Framing Narrative Journalism as a New Genre: A Case Study of the Netherlands," 1365.

something that is often discussed in Dutch media.<sup>57</sup> They conclude that media coverage of a contested issue, like immigration, can inform policymakers on how issues are perceived by the public.<sup>58</sup> Which in turn can have an influence on policymaking.<sup>59</sup> Matthes adds to this that policymakers and other political actors can develop certain frames, and try to establish these in news media and public discourse.<sup>60</sup> Vliegenthart and Roggeband have also researched framing in the Netherlands. They have looked at immigration and integration, and the relationship between Dutch media and parliament.<sup>61</sup> They claim that the tone and focus in Dutch media regarding immigration and integration have changed after international developments like terrorist attacks in Western countries and also due to national political and social developments.<sup>62</sup> These developments have also had an influence on the parliament, altering the public and political debate significantly.<sup>63</sup>

According to Awad and Roth, the Dutch media policy has changed. There is more diversity visible and more focus on different social groups.<sup>64</sup> They claim that the visible diversity in the Dutch media is a reflection of Dutch society, with many multicultural groups present.<sup>65</sup> Awad and Roth argue that more media attention for minorities in the Netherlands must be understood in relation to the changing policies towards ethnic minorities in general.<sup>66</sup> But they claim that the change towards more media attention for minority groups does not reflect democratic inclusion for these minority groups.<sup>67</sup> Bergman has researched the Dutch media landscape and has concluded that there is a crisis in Dutch journalism. He argues that the media regularly represents minorities in a negative way, and that Dutch journalism is often

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<sup>57</sup> Rianne Dekker and Peter Scholten, "Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 22, no. 2 (February 12, 2017): 203, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216688323>.

<sup>58</sup> Dekker and Scholten, "Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda," 217.

<sup>59</sup> Dekker and Scholten, "Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda," 217.

<sup>60</sup> Matthes, "Framing Politics," 249.

<sup>61</sup> Rens Vliegenthart and Conny Roggeband, "Framing Immigration and Integration," *International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 3 (June 1, 2007): 295, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048507076582>.

<sup>62</sup> Vliegenthart and Roggeband, "Framing Immigration and Integration," 295.

<sup>63</sup> Vliegenthart and Roggeband, "Framing Immigration and Integration," 314.

<sup>64</sup> Isabel Awad and A. Roth, "From Minority to Cross-Cultural Programmes: Dutch Media Policy and the Politics of Integration," *International Communication Gazette* 73, no. 5 (August 1, 2011): 401, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048511405816>.

<sup>65</sup> Awad and Roth, "From Minority to Cross-Cultural Programmes: Dutch Media Policy and the Politics of Integration," 401.

<sup>66</sup> Awad and Roth, "From Minority to Cross-Cultural Programmes: Dutch Media Policy and the Politics of Integration," 401.

<sup>67</sup> Awad and Roth, "From Minority to Cross-Cultural Programmes: Dutch Media Policy and the Politics of Integration," 401.

“white”.<sup>68</sup> Shadid adds to this that the Western media contributes to a discriminating and stigmatizing image of Muslims and Islam.<sup>69</sup> This crisis in Dutch journalism is according to Bergman because of the commercial nature of the Dutch media, where the content in the media is in the interest of the political and corporate elite.<sup>70</sup> The main developments in the Dutch media landscape since the sixties, as described by Bergman, are “de-pillarization, commercialization, and professionalization”.<sup>71</sup>

Limited work was available on the framing of the burqa ban in the Netherlands. The article of Clyde Missier has perhaps come the closest to closing the research gap. He looks at how mainstream popular news (like the *Telegraaf*) and quality news media (like the *Volkskrant*) have been contributing to xenophobic rhetoric which is often found by right-wing nationalist parties.<sup>72</sup> He illustrates that the narrative of immigration is taken by the right-wing parties and results in this xenophobic rhetoric.<sup>73</sup> He does this with framing analysis. Missier concludes that the popular media are more supportive of the right-wing parties and have a more negative attitude towards the elites. In general, the quality news outlets are more supportive of the political elite.<sup>74</sup> This is interesting to keep in mind when looking at the right-wing versus left-wing investigation of the framing of the burqa ban. Lettinga and Saharso have researched the framing of headscarves in France, Germany, and the Netherlands in comparative research.<sup>75</sup> However, their research includes periods until 2007, and it discusses the headscarf instead of the burqa. This means it could give some information for my

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<sup>68</sup> Tabe Bergman, “The Dutch Media Monopoly: A Critical-Historical Analysis of Journalism in the Netherlands,” *Www.Academia.Edu*, January 1, 2013, 140, [https://www.academia.edu/84300477/The\\_Dutch\\_Media\\_Monopoly\\_A\\_critical\\_historical\\_analysis\\_of\\_journalism\\_in\\_the\\_Netherlands](https://www.academia.edu/84300477/The_Dutch_Media_Monopoly_A_critical_historical_analysis_of_journalism_in_the_Netherlands).

<sup>69</sup> W. Shadid, “Berichtgeving over Moslims En de Islam in de Westerse Media: Beeldvorming, Oorzaken En Alternatieve Strategieën / Muslims and Islam in Western Media,” *Tijdschrift Voor Communicatiewetenschappen* 33, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 330, <https://doi.org/10.5117/2005.033.004.330>.

<sup>70</sup> Bergman, “The Dutch Media Monopoly: A Critical-Historical Analysis of Journalism in the Netherlands,” 143.

<sup>71</sup> Bergman, “The Dutch Media Monopoly: A Critical-Historical Analysis of Journalism in the Netherlands,” 146.

<sup>72</sup> Missier, “The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands,” 1.

<sup>73</sup> Missier, “The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands,” 10.

<sup>74</sup> Missier, “The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands,” 8.

<sup>75</sup> Doutje Lettinga and Sawitri Saharso, “Outsiders within: Framing and Regulation of Headscarves in France, Germany and the Netherlands,” *Social Inclusion* 2, no. 3 (September 17, 2014): 29, <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v2i3.46>.



research, but it does not close the research gap. They argue that veiling in Western countries can evoke opposition because it can form a threat to notions of national identity.<sup>76</sup> Lettinga and Saharso have found trends towards increasingly restrictive rules towards the headscarves, and the debate is increasingly becoming more gendered.<sup>77</sup>

In a similar line of research, Gustavsson, Van der Noll, and Sundberg have investigated the association between liberalism and growing intolerance towards religion in the Netherlands and used the recent bans on veils in European countries as an example.<sup>78</sup> Their paper explores how discrimination is justified by the perception that Muslim practices, like veiling, can pose a threat to Western liberal values. Their research focuses on the public opinion of liberals towards Muslims and can provide valuable insights into the relationship between public opinion, liberalism, and attitudes toward Islam.<sup>79</sup> My research goes somewhat further, with the comparison between left-wing and right-wing in relation to framing of the burqa ban, but this research can provide more insights into the right-wing narratives of the past decade. Brünig and Fleischmann have conducted quantitative research to explore the factors influencing the veiling practices of Muslim women in the Netherlands.<sup>80</sup> The analysis of veiling as an Islamic religious practice aims to show and challenge stereotypes Dutch Muslim women often face.<sup>81</sup> While the article does not directly address media framing, it offers valuable background on stereotypes that may influence these frames and potentially contribute to discussions on polarization in the Dutch media landscape. Devroe has researched the media representation of minorities in Belgium. She discusses whether or not ethnic minorities only get media attention in relation to conflicts.<sup>82</sup> Devroe makes clear that

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<sup>76</sup> Lettinga and Saharso, “Outsiders within: Framing and Regulation of Headscarves in France, Germany and the Netherlands,” 29.

<sup>77</sup> Lettinga and Saharso, “Outsiders within: Framing and Regulation of Headscarves in France, Germany and the Netherlands,” 29.

<sup>78</sup> Gina Gustavsson, Jolanda Van Der Noll, and Ralph Sundberg, “Opposing the Veil in the Name of Liberalism: Popular Attitudes to Liberalism and Muslim Veiling in the Netherlands,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 10 (February 1, 2016): 1720, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1124126>.

<sup>79</sup> Gustavsson, Van Der Noll, and Sundberg, “Opposing the Veil in the Name of Liberalism: Popular Attitudes to Liberalism and Muslim Veiling in the Netherlands,” 1720.

<sup>80</sup> Bianca Brünig and Fenella Fleischmann, “Understanding the Veiling of Muslim Women in the Netherlands,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12166>.

<sup>81</sup> Brünig and Fleischmann, “Understanding the Veiling of Muslim Women in the Netherlands,” 21.

<sup>82</sup> Ilse Devroe, “Gekleurd Nieuws? De Voorstelling van Etnische Minderheden in Het Nieuws in Vlaanderen.: Context, Methodologische Aspecten En Onderzoeksresultaten,” *Universteit Gent*, January 1, 2007, 5, <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/483960/file/1879020.pdf>.

there is a lack of research when discussing minorities in media representation.<sup>83</sup> Her research could be seen in the same direction as this thesis, and towards closing the existing knowledge gap. However, her discussion of the media portrayal of ethnic minorities in Belgium is a lot broader.

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<sup>83</sup> Devroe, “Gekleurd Nieuws? De Voorstelling van Etnische Minderheden in Het Nieuws in Vlaanderen.: Context, Methodologische Aspecten En Onderzoeksresultaten,” 5.

## Chapter 5 - (Historical) Background

### Burqa Ban

On August 1st, 2019, the partial ban on face coverings (*gedeeltelijk verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding*) was implemented.<sup>84</sup> This law is not only limited to face-covering veils, like the burqa or the niqab but it is described as: ‘face coverings are items of clothing that completely cover a person’s face or only showing their eyes’.<sup>85</sup> So it also includes balaclavas and face-covering helmets. The ban is partial, this means that wearing face-covering clothing is prohibited in governmental buildings, educational and healthcare institutions, such as hospitals and schools, and on public transport. In other public spaces it is still permitted to wear face covering clothing. When someone wears a face covering in a place where it is not permitted, they first can be asked to remove it, and after that, a person could be fined by the police. The government prohibits the use of face-covering clothing in these specific places because public services take place here, and the identification of people is necessary, as is personal contact.<sup>86</sup>

### (Political) Debate

On June 26th, 2018, the Dutch senate voted in favor of the partial ban on wearing face coverings in the Netherlands,<sup>87</sup> which is usually called the ‘burqa ban’ in the media. This law was implemented in August 2019. However, the discussion about the new law dates back fourteen years.<sup>88</sup> In October 2005 Geert Wilders, a Dutch right-wing politician in the House of Representatives, submitted a motion about the prohibition of wearing Islamic face coverings, the burqa and niqab, in public places.

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<sup>84</sup> Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, “What Does the Partial Ban on Face Coverings Entail?,” Government.nl, July 19, 2022, <https://www.government.nl/topics/ban-on-face-coverings-referred-to-in-the-media-as-the-%E2%80%99burka-ban%E2%80%99/question-and-answer/what-does-the-partial-ban-on-face-coverings-entail>.

<sup>85</sup> Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, “What Does the Partial Ban on Face Coverings Entail?”

<sup>86</sup> Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, “What Does the Partial Ban on Face Coverings Entail?”

<sup>87</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding,” Eerste Kamer Der Staten-Generaal, June 12, 2018, [https://www.eerstekamer.nl/nieuws/20180612/debat\\_verbod\\_gezichtsbedekkende](https://www.eerstekamer.nl/nieuws/20180612/debat_verbod_gezichtsbedekkende).

<sup>88</sup> Peter Winterman, “Vier Vragen Beantwoord over Het Boerka-Verbod,” *AD*, July 31, 2019, <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/vier-vragen-beantwoord-over-het-boerka-verbod-br~a8b9ed9a/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>.

Three arguments were given for the request of the ban:<sup>89</sup>

1. The burqa and niqab are in direct contrast with modernity, and the opposite of and rejection of Western values. One of these values is the equality between men and women. The burqa and niqab are seen as a symbol of repression of women.
2. The burqa and niqab are an obstruction of the emancipation of women in Dutch society. Women in burqas and niqabs are less likely to make contact with their social environment. Related to that, women wearing full coverage are less likely to get job opportunities and education. A direct result is that they will depend on the state for their income.
3. The burqa and niqab result in safety risks. Many civilians view the coverage as threatening, and this results in feelings of insecurity of civilians. Besides that, it is dangerous when officials cannot identify a person, and using safety cameras is ineffective when a face is covered.

These were the three main arguments addressed by Geert Wilders, and some others were also discussed. However, it took a few years of debates and multiple motions before the new law was implemented in 2019. These three main arguments have been used repeatedly in a debate right before the new law was passed in 2018 and were thus still part of the main arguments as presented in 2005.<sup>90</sup> There are multiple reasons for the slow implementation of the law. I will discuss some of the counterarguments here.

Some reactions against the law came from within the Senate. A debate on the subject illustrates the divided opinions in the Senate. Certain members of the Senate have given arguments during a variety of debates. According to the D66, the new law can be seen as a symbolic law that does not aim to solve any real problems.<sup>91</sup> According to a party member, De Graaf, there are ways to ‘solve’ this problem in less drastic ways. On a smaller scale, educational systems can make rules about dress codes in schools, for example. According to De Graaf, there is no need for prosecution of women wearing face-covering veils.

GroenLinks senator Lintmeijer added that the new law would be ‘a limited solution to a limited problem’.<sup>92</sup> Meaning that the problem is not as urgent and the solution will be limited.

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<sup>89</sup> “Memorie van toelichting - Voorstel van de leden Wilders en Fritsma tot wijziging van het Wetboek van Strafrecht in verband met een verbod op het dragen van boerka’s of nikaabs in de openbare ruimte (boerkaverbod) - Parlementaire monitor,” March 13, 2009, <https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vi3bb8q67kxz>.

<sup>90</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding.”

<sup>91</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding.”

<sup>92</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding.”

Lintmeijer urges the chairman to look at the emancipation of women rather than prohibiting the use of the burqa.<sup>93</sup> Another argument in questioning the implementation of the law came from senator Köhler, from the SP. He claimed that the niqab or burqa is not a typical Islamic piece of clothing, because 99% of Islamic women do not wear one. He stated that most educational institutions for example already use certain dress codes. He expressed his worries that this ban would mean that women wearing the burqa would then not participate in vaccination campaigns. He states that this law does not fit into every sector, like healthcare.<sup>94</sup>

Arguments against the implementation of the law could also be found outside of the political debate. For example, Amnesty International expressed its clear opinion against the burqa ban. Amnesty argues that the new law is a direct threat to the right to freedom of religion.<sup>95</sup> They compare the right of women to wear every kind of veiling they prefer to the situation in Iran and Saudi Arabia, where women are forced to wear veiling by the government, which the human rights organization also condemns. They go on by stating that it is the obligation of the government to protect equality between men and women, but by banning the burqa, this is not achieved. An effect that the ban of the burqa and niqab could have is that women who are no longer allowed to wear the burqa in public, would be secluded from society even more. This law would not help them with their fight for emancipation, but they would be forced to stay inside, and this could worsen their situations.<sup>96</sup> The argument of security is also challenged by Amnesty, by saying that there is no demonstrable connection between the lack of safety and face veils.<sup>97</sup> Also, the argument of the veil challenging European values and culture is touched upon by Amnesty. They refute this argument by saying that the discomfort of people, even the majority, cannot be the reason for a restriction on someone's right to freedom of religion. They even go further by saying that the attitude of different countries that have implemented the burqa ban, partially or fully, show a shift in the attitude towards human rights. These rights are designed to protect people, also in a minority, and when the rights are subordinate to the opinion of the majority, the rights cease to exist.<sup>98</sup>

Something that is striking, is that the political debate surrounding this law, for the past ten

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<sup>93</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding,”

<sup>94</sup> “Debat verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding,”

<sup>95</sup> “Eerste Kamer: Beperkt boerkaverbod in Nederland,” Amnesty International, June 26, 2018, <https://www.amnesty.nl/wat-we-doen/themas/discriminatie/waarom-amnesty-een-algemeen-boerkaverbod-afwijst#:~:text=Op%2026%20juni%202018%20stemde,vervoer%2C%20ziekenhuizen%20en%20in%20overheidsgebouwen.>

<sup>96</sup> “Eerste Kamer: Beperkt boerkaverbod in Nederland,”

<sup>97</sup> “Eerste Kamer: Beperkt boerkaverbod in Nederland,”

<sup>98</sup> “Eerste Kamer: Beperkt boerkaverbod in Nederland,”

years, has been growing substantially. However, the amount of women wearing face coverings in the Netherlands is estimated around 400 women in total according to professor Moors of the university of Amsterdam.<sup>99</sup> This number was from 2009 but is nowadays estimated the same, or even lower.<sup>100</sup> According to Adriaan Overbeeke, the growing debate over the years has its roots in the general debate on Islam and radical Islam.<sup>101</sup> He states that the concern of the burqa is an illustration of the bigger concern of Islam in the Netherlands, concerning for example integration and national identity.<sup>102</sup> This concern is widely spread across the Netherlands. In 2011, 83 percent voted in favor of a general burqa ban, where in 2007 this number was around 66 percent.<sup>103</sup> This shows that the societal concerns towards Islam and burqas specifically, have increased in the last years.

### **Newspapers: Telegraaf and Volkskrant**

The Volkskrant began in 1919 as a newspaper for Catholic workers. It held on to this Catholic image for about forty years, and in the middle of the 1960's, the newspaper lost its Catholic character completely.<sup>104</sup> After the de-pillarization in the Netherlands the Volkskrant started to become more progressive and thus targeted the young population mostly.<sup>105</sup> It grew into one of the most popular and most influential newspapers in the Netherlands.<sup>106</sup> The Volkskrant was critical towards the government and promoted democratization of the Netherlands, and focused on societal change, showing its progressive character. The targeted audience of the Volkskrant are described as being open to objective news, and able to construct opinions through given information.<sup>107</sup> Currently, most readers of the Volkskrant identify as left-wing

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<sup>99</sup> A.J. Overbeeke, "Chapter 7: Introducing a General Burqa Ban in the Netherlands," *The Burqa Affair Across Europe: Between Public and Private Space*, January 1, 2013, 104, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315614229-12>.

<sup>100</sup> Parool, "Politie cijfers: Na Jaar Slechts Vier Waarschuwingen Voor Dragen Boerka," *Parool*, October 21, 2020, <https://www.parool.nl/nederland/politiecijfers-na-jaar-slechts-vier-waarschuwingen-en-geen-boetes-vo-or-dragen-boerka~b8828f55/>.

<sup>101</sup> Overbeeke, "Chapter 7: Introducing a General Burqa Ban in the Netherlands." 104.

<sup>102</sup> Overbeeke, "Chapter 7: Introducing a General Burqa Ban in the Netherlands." 104.

<sup>103</sup> Overbeeke, "Chapter 7: Introducing a General Burqa Ban in the Netherlands." 104.

<sup>104</sup> "Geschiedenis van de Volkskrant," *IsGeschiedenis*, October 9, 2020, <https://isgeschiedenis.nl/nieuws/geschiedenis-van-de-volkskrant>.

<sup>105</sup> "De Geschiedenis van de Volkskrant," n.d., <https://volkskrant-archieff.nl/de-geschiedenis-van-de-volkskrant>.

<sup>106</sup> Jaap Groenendijk, "De Volkskrant: Een Korte Beschrijving van Een Lange Geschiedenis," *Abonnement.nl*, April 14, 2023, <https://www.abonnement.nl/artikel/de-volkskrant-geschiedenis/>.

<sup>107</sup> One Media, "Adverteren Volkskrant | Kosten & Tarieven 2024 | One Media," November 19, 2021, <https://onemedia.nl/adverteren-volkskrant/#:~:text=De%20doelgroep%20van%20de%20Volkskrant,is%20serius%20en%20maatschappelijk%20betrokken>.

and are usually higher educated.<sup>108</sup><sup>109</sup> With the Telegraaf and AD in first and second place, the Volkskrant is the third biggest newspaper in the Netherlands.

The biggest newspaper in the Netherlands is the Telegraaf.<sup>110</sup> Born from a social-liberal background in 1892, the Telegraaf was at first a ‘well behaved’ and ‘modest’ newspaper, with 40% business and finance reports.<sup>111</sup> In 1926, the newspaper was already one of the biggest in Europe.<sup>112</sup> They started to target people with a low income. During the second world war the Telegraaf printed pro-German articles, and after the war was over they had to close the newspaper for a period of time. This image is difficult to shake for the newspaper. Today, the Telegraaf is known to have confrontations with all kinds of organizations, parties and the government. Opinions are quite obvious in the newspaper.<sup>113</sup> According to Piet Bakker, a journalist lecturer in Utrecht, the Telegraaf is mostly known for its activist nature.<sup>114</sup> They are also seen as the voice of the common people, which ‘is rarely heard’.<sup>115</sup> The Telegraaf is described to be the opposite of the Volkskrant and finds its background in the right-wing political landscape.<sup>116</sup>

It is clear that these two newspapers are quite the opposite of each other. The Telegraaf is seen as an activist, the voice of the common people and opinionated. The Volkskrant is for higher educated people with a higher income and is described as rational and progressive.

## **Polarization**

According to political scientist Eelco Harteveld, there has been an increasing trend of polarization in Dutch society.<sup>117</sup> With polarization is meant ‘The presence of separated groups in society with opposing attitudes’<sup>118</sup> Harteveld states that the Dutch people have

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<sup>108</sup> upstreamads.com, “Adverteren op VOLKSKRANT.NL,” UpstreamAds, n.d., <https://upstreamads.com/nl/adverteren/volkskrant.nl>.

<sup>109</sup> Remarque and Bolkestein, “Opinie: Remarque En Bolkestein Schrijven Elkaar: ‘Is de Volkskrant Te Links?’”

<sup>110</sup> Mediahuis, “De Telegraaf - Mediahuis,” September 26, 2023, <https://www.mediahuis.nl/merken/de-telegraaf/>.

<sup>111</sup> “De Geschiedenis van de Telegraaf | Telegraaf Archief,” n.d., <https://telegraaf-archief.nl/geschiedenis-van-de-telegraaf.php>.

<sup>112</sup> “De Geschiedenis van de Telegraaf | Telegraaf Archief.”

<sup>113</sup> “De Geschiedenis van de Telegraaf | Telegraaf Archief.”

<sup>114</sup> NOS, “125 jaar De Telegraaf: ‘Je bent ervoor of ertegen,’” NOS, January 2, 2018, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2210217-125-jaar-de-telegraaf-je-bent-ervoor-of-ertegen>.

<sup>115</sup> NOS, “125 jaar De Telegraaf: ‘Je bent ervoor of ertegen.’”

<sup>116</sup> NOS, “125 jaar De Telegraaf: ‘Je bent ervoor of ertegen.’”

<sup>117</sup> Harteveld, “Polarisatie in Nederland: hoe verdeeld zijn we?”

<sup>118</sup> Harteveld, “Polarisatie in Nederland: hoe verdeeld zijn we?”

become more critical towards their political opponent in the last few years on multiple subjects like immigration, climate, and gender.<sup>119</sup> He gives a few reasons for this increasing polarization. Radicalization of political parties and (social) media can give us one-sided information that consolidates our opinion, and the political discussions are intensifying.<sup>120</sup> According to Bruno Castanho Silva, this polarization has intensified after radical right figures such as Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders became public and political actors.<sup>121</sup> Wilders contributed to polarization, with his stance on immigration and anti-Islamic ideas. Before Fortuyn and Wilders, the issue of immigration was barely a topic of political disagreement.<sup>107</sup> Castanho Silva concluded from his statistical research that there has indeed been more polarization in the Netherlands since the rise of right populist parties, especially on immigration issues.<sup>122</sup>

Polarization is often characterized as a negative phenomenon. Still, it is important to state that every society has certain forms of polarization, which should not always be perceived as negative.<sup>123</sup> Polarization could also encourage people to participate in discussion and political engagement, which could contribute to social change.<sup>124</sup> In countries where no polarization is visible, there is often no room for differing views for citizens. However, there are also negative effects of polarization, namely the stigmatization of minorities, segregation, and it could cause people to avoid conflicting opinions and information.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Hartevelde, “Polarisatie in Nederland: hoe verdeeld zijn we?”

<sup>120</sup> Hartevelde, “Polarisatie in Nederland: hoe verdeeld zijn we?”

<sup>121</sup> Bruno Castanho Silva, “Populist Radical Right Parties and Mass Polarization in the Netherlands,” *European Political Science Review* 10, no. 2 (March 21, 2017): 219, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1755773917000066>.

<sup>122</sup> Silva, “Populist Radical Right Parties and Mass Polarization in the Netherlands,” 219.

<sup>123</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, “Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands,” 627.

<sup>124</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, “Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands,” 627.

<sup>125</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, “Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands,” 627.



## Chapter 6 - Right-wing Versus Left-wing

This chapter discusses the sub-question: *Is there a difference visible in the use of frames on the subject of the burqa ban between left-wing and right-wing newspapers in the last decade?*

To answer this question, I have analyzed the frames visible in the right-wing and left-wing newspapers over the last decade, in the Telegraaf (right-wing) and the Volkskrant (left-wing). First, I will present the results in graphs and tables, discuss them further, compare them, and answer the sub-question.

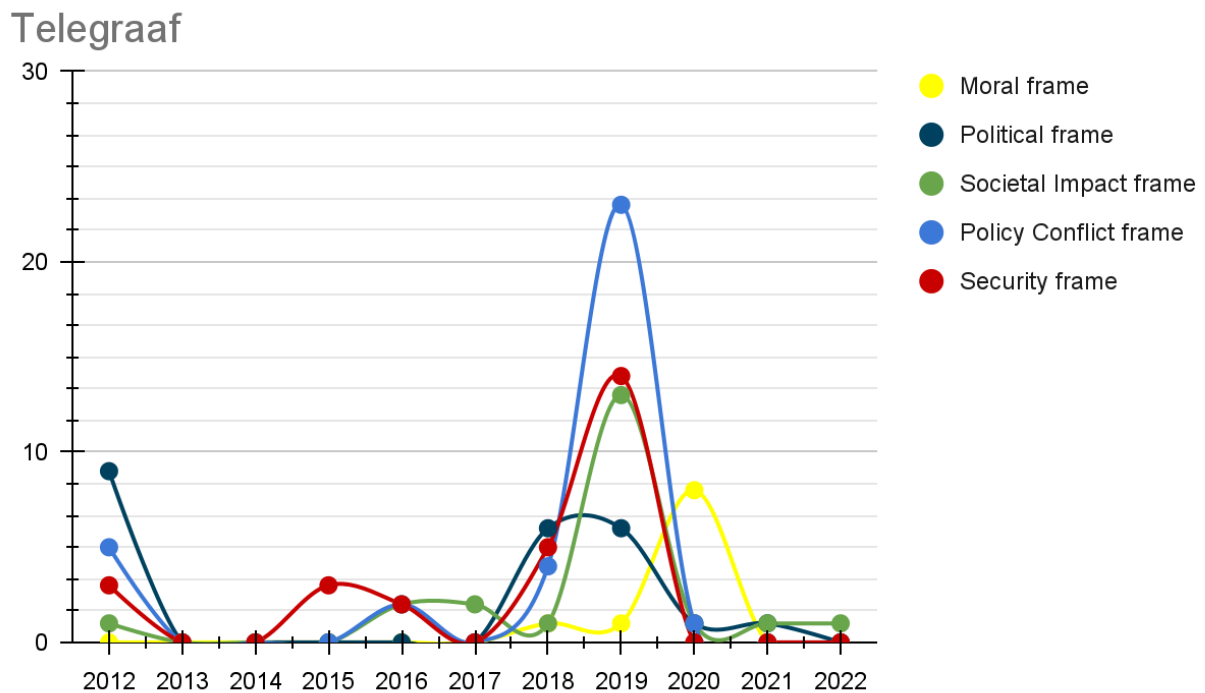
First, I will discuss some general information about the analysis. In total, I analyzed 168 articles. Coincidence has it that 84 were found in the Telegraaf, and the other half, also 84, were found in the Volkskrant. The timeline for the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant is between 2012 to 2022. The frames that could be attributed to the articles are the Moral, Political, Societal Impact, Policy Conflict, and Security frames. To keep it clear, I attributed a maximum of two frames to an article. Some articles also had small elements of a particular frame, but the one or two dominant frames are used as results in this analysis. I could not find a dominant frame in a few articles; thus, these results were inconclusive. This was only the case in the Telegraaf; in the Volkskrant, a clear frame was visible in all the articles.

The articles used for the analysis consisted of multiple sections from the newspapers. There are three categories. Some of the articles were from journalists reporting on the matter; these are journalists whose primary profession is to write articles to report the news. The second category is articles from columnists, weekly or bi-weekly writers for the newspapers, but not necessarily journalists, who primarily give their personal opinions on a matter in the news. The last category is articles in the submitted section, where the readers can give their personal opinions on a matter or react to an article written by a journalist of the paper or a columnist. This is where the interconnection between media, politics and public opinion becomes clear. The information found in the newspaper (media) is influenced by public opinion.

### **Results Telegraaf**

As described in Chapter 5, the Telegraaf is considered a right-wing popular liberal newspaper. The newspaper is said to be for the ‘common people’ and has stances that are often provocative or controversial. The newspaper describes itself as activist, with clear opinions. For this analysis I have looked at the occurrence of the five different frames each

year. In total I have attributed to the Telegraaf 118 frames to 84 articles over 11 years. As mentioned above, in some articles, multiple dominant frames were visible. In Graph 1 and Table 1, the analysis results are visible; they are expressed in numbers and respectively percentages. Because the ‘inconclusive’ frame only appeared twice in the Telegraaf and not once in the Volkskrant, I have not taken this into the analysis. This amount is too small to draw conclusions from it.



Graph 1: *Frames over the past decade in the Telegraaf*

What we see in Graph 1 is the distribution of the occurrence of the frames over the past decade. The analysis was done from 2012 until 2022 and thus includes 11 years. As becomes clear from this graph, the distribution is not even, meaning that the frames are not used constantly. Mainly between 2018 and 2020, the most frames have been used, and the most articles were published.

This graph shows that there have been no publications about the burqa ban in 2013 and 2014, and only 3 in 2015. In this period, little attention was paid to the burqa ban in the Telegraaf. The opposite is the case from 2018 until 2020. This has been the year where the most articles have been published on the burqa ban in the Telegraaf. 67% of the Policy Conflict frame was seen in 2019, occurring 23 out of 34 times in 2019. 59% of the Societal Impact frame occurred in 2019, 13 out of 22 times. Roughly 52% of the Security frame occurred in 2019,

15 out of 27 times. The relation of these numbers to the implementation of the burqa ban will be discussed in Chapter 4. After 2020 the amount of publications diminishes, with little to no articles and frames visible in this period.

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total appearance (n=118)</b>
Moral Frame	8.5%	10x
Political frame	19.5%	23x
Societal Impact frame	18.6%	22x
Policy Conflict frame	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>34x</b>
Security frame	22.9%	27x
Inconclusive	1.7%	2x

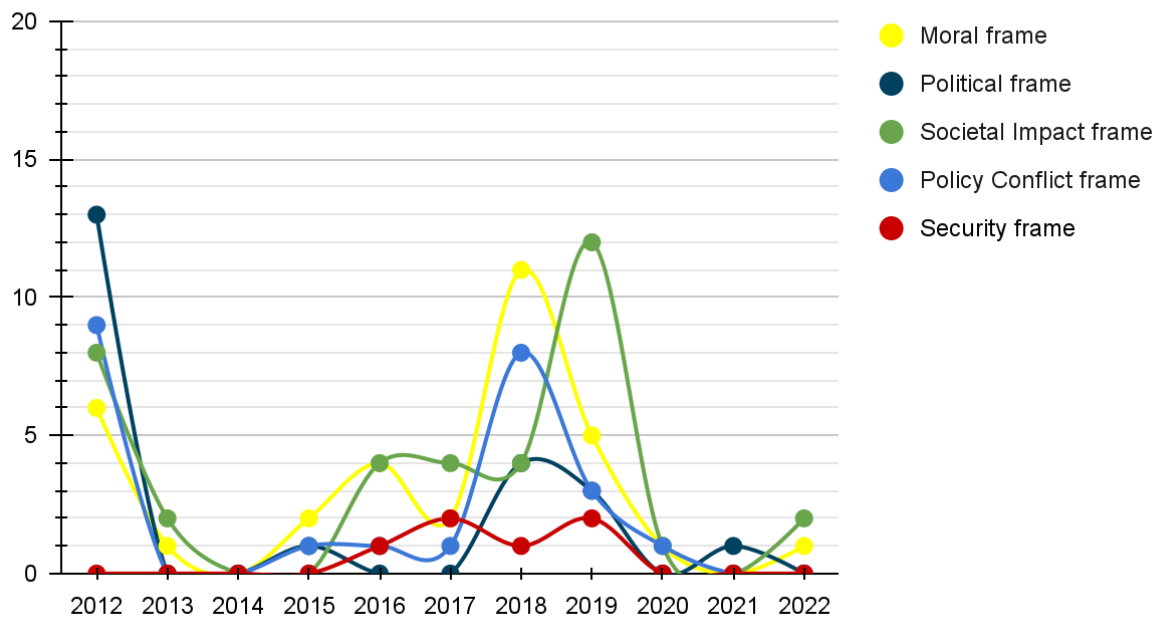
Table 1. *The overall occurrence of frames in the Telegraaf 2012-2022*

What becomes clear from Table 1 is that the overall dominant frame in the Telegraaf is the Policy Conflict frame, with the primary occurrence in 2019. The Security frame was the second most dominant frame in the Telegraaf, with again the main occurrence in 2019. The Moral frame occurred the least in these 11 years, with the peak in 2020. Two articles were inconclusive.

### **Results Volkskrant**

The Volkskrant is described as a left-wing newspaper that is open to objective news and is read mostly by highly educated people. It focuses on societal change and has a progressive character. I have attributed 122 frames to 84 articles over the 11 years. As mentioned above, in some articles, multiple dominant frames were visible. In Graph 2 and Table 2, the analysis results are visible.

## Volkskrant



Graph 2: *Frames over the past decade in the Volkskrant*

Graph 2 shows the distribution of the occurring frames from 2012 until 2022 in numbers. Here again, the occurrence of the frames is not divided evenly per frame or throughout the 11 years. In 2012, 4 out of 5 frames were visible, with the Political frame as the dominant frame. From 2013 until 2015, the frames occurred a small number of times, with the Security frame as an exception, which occurred for the first time in 2016. There is also a considerable decline in publications on the burqa ban from 2013 until 2015. In 2014, no articles were published. Most articles were found in the period between 2016 and 2020.

The Moral frame occurred most often in 2018, with about 33%. The Political frame peaked in 2012, when almost 60% occurred, and diminished significantly after that, with a minor exception between 2018 and 2019. The Societal Impact frame is the most dominant in the Volkskrant throughout the 11 years. Through the years, it fluctuated with the peak in 2019. The Policy Conflict frame peaked in 2012; after that, it was nearly absent from 2013 until 2017. It peaked again in 2018 and declined slowly after that. Lastly, the Security frame occurred only six times between 2016 and 2019. This was about 5% of the total (counted six times).

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total appearance (n=122)</b>
Moral Frame	27.1%	33x
Political frame	18.0%	22x
Societal Impact frame	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>37x</b>
Policy Conflict frame	19.7 %	24x
Security frame	4.9 %	6x
inconclusive	0%	0x

Table 2: *Frames in the Volkskrant*

Evident here is that the Societal Impact frame is most dominant in the articles discussing the burqa ban in the Volkskrant, with 30.3% which had its peak in 2019. A close second is the Moral frame, with 27.1%. The least dominant frame in the Volkskrant is the Security frame, with 4.9%. In the middle, we can see the Political frame with 18.0% and the Policy Conflict frame with 19.7%. In the Volkskrant, no inconclusive articles appeared.

*Example of framing between left and right:*

I have encountered an example that illustrates the different use of frames in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant. Below are two fragments of an article discussing the same incident in August 2019. The articles are about the enforcement of the law in public transportation in the province of Limburg. A woman wearing a niqab was refused on the bus, and the police were called when she refused to remove her niqab.

*‘‘Een buschauffeur van Arriva die de politie inschakelde nadat een niqaabdraagster had geweigerd de bus te verlaten, kreeg een tik op de vingers van zijn werkgever. Dit terwijl de man precies handelde zoals de politie adviseert bij het handhaven van de wet, die per 1 augustus het dragen van gezichtsbedekkende kleding in onder andere het openbaar vervoer verbiedt. Arriva weigert het verbod echter te handhaven.’’*<sup>126</sup> (Telegraaf, 26 August 2019)

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<sup>126</sup> ‘‘Arriva Zit Fout,’’ *De Telegraaf*, August 26, 2019, sec. Binnenland, accessed November 3, 2023.

In this short passage from an article from the Telegraaf, the bus driver is described as following the rules and abiding by the law but being wrongfully reprimanded for this. The transport company Arriva is described as being in the wrong by not implementing the law in their public transport. The emphasis in the article lies on Arriva and its conflict with the policy implementation. The Policy Conflict frame is visible here.

*“De Limburgse politie heeft de vrouw geen boete opgelegd om de zaak niet op de spits te rijden. Volgens de politie stond het belang van deëscalatie voorop. Arriva laat weten dat de buschauffeur niet helemaal volgens de richtlijnen heeft gehandeld. Hij heeft er goed aan gedaan de politie te bellen. Maar hij had niet mogen weigeren verder te rijden toen de vrouw niet wilde uitstappen. Door de bus stil te zetten, is de dienstregeling in gevaar gekomen. Arriva zal de regels intern nog een keer goed onder de aandacht van zijn medewerkers brengen.”<sup>127</sup> (Volkskrant 21 August 2019)*

In this article from the Volkskrant, the focus lies on the bus driver being in the wrong by not accepting the woman on the bus and disrupting the bus timetable. For this, he is being reprimanded by Arriva. According to them, the driver should not have refused the woman. The Societal Impact frame is visible. The focus lies on the societal implications of the burqa ban.

The division between the two newspapers is visible here when reporting on the same issue, and the concept of framing is illustrated in these passages. The Telegraaf stands up for the bus driver, who is reprimanded for following the rules, and ‘blames’ Arriva for not implementing policy correctly. On the other hand, the Volkskrant seems to ‘side with’ the Arriva, showing the social implications of the burqa ban with a focus on de-escalation.

## **Conclusion**

When framing the burqa ban in Dutch newspapers, the observable difference between left and right becomes visible. In this chapter, the question *Is there a difference visible in the use of frames on the subject of the burqa ban between left-wing and right-wing newspapers in the last decade?* was posed. The scope of this research was too small to get an indefinite answer to this question; however, the findings offer valuable insights, which could be deepened by further research.

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<sup>127</sup> Peter De Graaf, “Vrouw Met Nikab Uit Bus Gezet,” *Volkskrant*, August 21, 2019, sec. Binnenland, accessed November 3, 2023.

The right-wing Telegraaf, known for its activist and provocative approach at times, primarily relies on the Policy Conflict frame, which is most present in 2019. This emphasis on conflict aligns with the newspaper's activist character. Notably, the Societal Impact, Security, and Policy Conflict frames had a high peak in 2019. Additionally, the Moral frame is almost absent in the Telegraaf, with only ten occurrences in the 11 years, peaking in 2020. This is in contrast with the Volkskrant.

The left-wing Volkskrant, characterized as a progressive newspaper, has predominantly used the Societal Impact frame over the past decade. This frame emphasizes the consequences of the burqa ban on various aspects of society. The appearance of the frame peaked in 2019. Also, the Moral frame has a significant presence of 27.1% of the total frames within the Volkskrant, with its peak in 2018. The appearance of Political and Policy Conflict frames has been fluctuating, with the Policy Conflict frame absent between 2013 and 2017.

In conclusion, the results reveal a notable difference in the framing of the burqa ban between left-wing and right-wing newspapers in its publications over the past decade. The left-wing Volkskrant predominantly uses the Societal Impact frame and the Moral frames, emphasizing societal change in relation to the burqa ban. The Telegraaf, on the other hand, the Policy Conflict appears as the dominant frame, with a significant presence of the Security frame, especially in 2019, as well. The Security and Moral frames have shown the most prominent difference within the newspapers. This chapter sheds light on distinctive framing patterns, contributing to a nuanced understanding of media discourse surrounding the burqa ban in the Netherlands.

## Chapter 7 - Polarization

In this chapter, I will discuss the third sub-question: *How does the content of the dominant frames vary in terms of its potential to polarize?* As described in the method, this analysis will be done on the hand of the amount of overlap of frames between the newspapers. This analysis extends the previous chapter, in which the dominant frames and the division between left-wing and right-wing are presented. In this chapter, I look at the frames' potential to polarize. 'Potential to polarize' means it does not necessarily have to be a polarizing frame. For this, more research has to be conducted. That is why the potential is discussed, meaning the frames could lead to more polarization between left and right. First, I will describe the method used, then present the results in graphs and tables, give a description, and finally answer the sub-question.

### **Method**

The timeline from 2012 until 2022 was divided into five periods. Period 1 (2012 & 2013), Period 2 (2014 & 2015), Period 3 (2016 & 2017), Period 4 (2018 & 2019), and Period 5 (2020-2022). Each frame was analyzed per period in both the Volkskrant and the Telegraaf. This was translated into percentages. For example, in Period 1, the Political frame occurred 22 times. 59% of this was seen in the Volkskrant and 41% in the Telegraaf. This means that the difference (delta) is 18%. This is expressed as  $\Delta=18$ . For each frame in each period, the delta will be determined. The delta will be analyzed to show the polarization process over the 11 years of analysis. If the delta becomes smaller (meaning that the overlap will become bigger) over time, the newspapers will converge toward each other, meaning there is no potential for polarization.

Conversely, if the delta becomes more significant over time (meaning less overlap), the newspapers will diverge, indicating a form of polarization. Table 3 will show the results of the overlap between the newspapers. The numbers are the percentage of overlap between the newspapers. A delta of 100% means that the frame has not occurred in one newspaper, and all notations were seen in the other. A delta of 0% means that the frame is evenly divided between both newspapers in that period, indicating a lot of overlap.



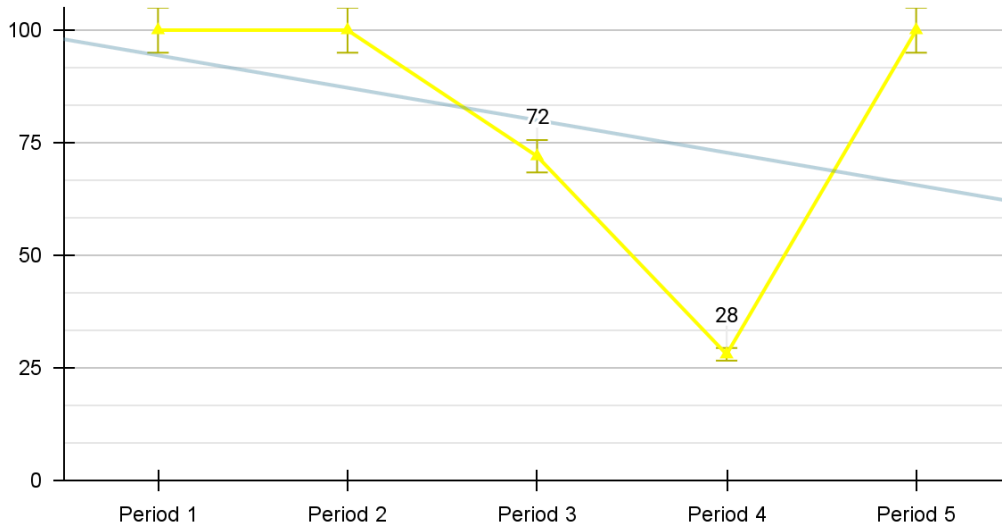
## Results

In Period 2, there were few publications, with a total of seven frames found. As is visible in the table, the results seem drastic; however, this is the result of little overlap and a few publications. This method of analysis has been developed specifically for this sub-question. This means it does not generate comparable results in the end yet. For actual conclusions about polarization, more research must be done, and more results must be generated to say something about polarization in the Dutch print media, specifically in the Telegraaf and Volkskrant. Other issues and subjects must be researched to be able actually to say anything about polarization in these newspapers. However, it is a start, and I will carefully answer this sub-question using this method and the data set available to me. In Graphs 3 to 7, I present the individual results of the development of the Delta throughout the periods and briefly describe these results. A trendline is added to each graph to show the general trend.

	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>	<b>Period 4</b>	<b>Period 5</b>
<b>Moral frame <math>\Delta</math></b>	100	100	72	28	100
<b>Political frame <math>\Delta</math></b>	18	100	0	26	34
<b>Societal Impact frame <math>\Delta</math></b>	82	0	34	6	0
<b>Policy Conflict frame <math>\Delta</math></b>	28	100	34	42	0
<b>Security frame <math>\Delta</math></b>	100	100	20	72	0

Table 3: delta in the Telegraaf and Volkskrant

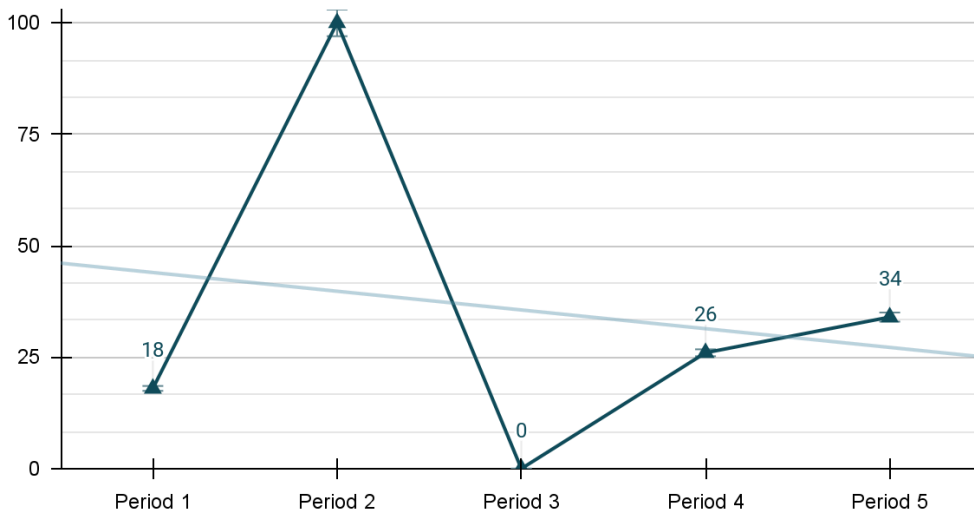
### Delta Moral frame



Graph 3: *Delta Moral frame*

In Graph 3, the results of the Moral frame are presented. In Periods 3 and 4, the graph shows a more convergent trend with a smaller delta. This means that from 2014 until 2017, the difference between the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant was smaller than before and after these years. However, the other Periods have a delta of 100, meaning clear diverging views. Overall, the views in the Moral frame are becoming more convergent.

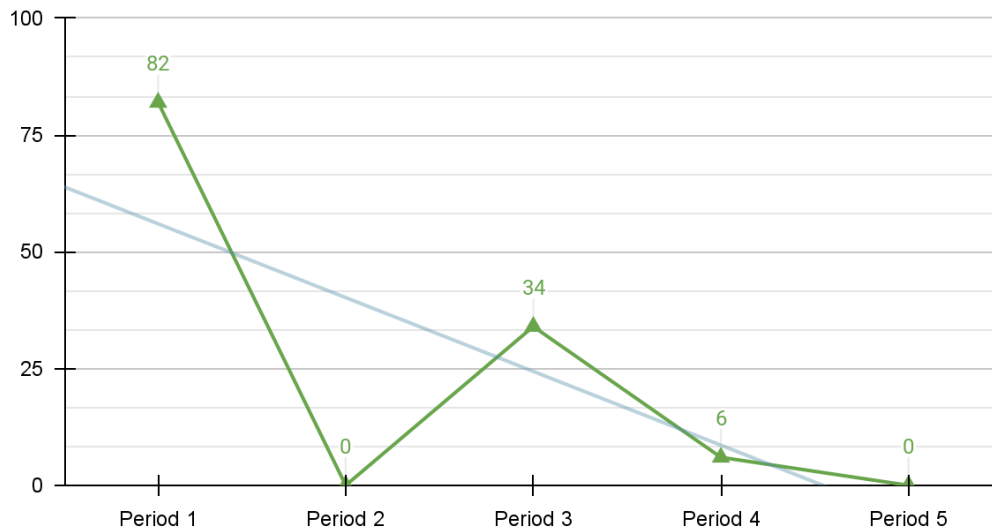
### Delta Political frame



Graph 4: *Delta Political frame*

The Political frame (in Graph 4) also shows a declining trendline. In Period 2 the newspapers were most divergent. Before and after that period, the deltas were significantly lower. However, because of the high peak in Period 2, the trendline is not declining as steeply as with the other frames. Thus, the Political frame in the Telegraaf and Volkskrant is convergent. The overlap between the newspapers is becoming more evident.

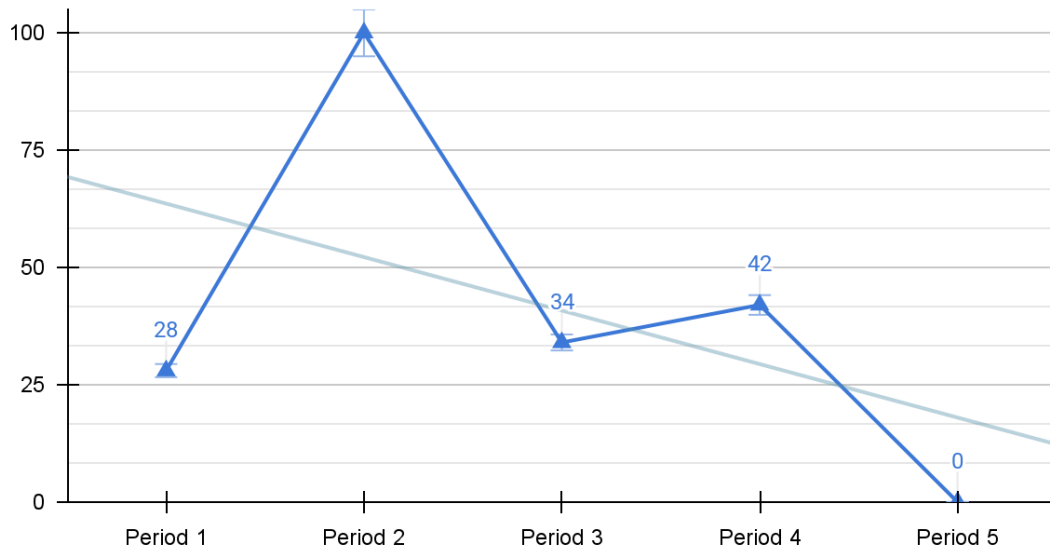
### Delta Societal Impact Frame



Graph 5: *Delta Societal Impact frame*

The Societal Impact frame is the only frame that has no delta of 100. In the graph, a declining trendline is visible. Period 1 has a high delta, meaning diverging views between the Telegraaf and Volkskrant. After that, however, the delta diminishes significantly. From this, we can see that the overlap is becoming bigger between the two newspapers, and thus, the views are converging.

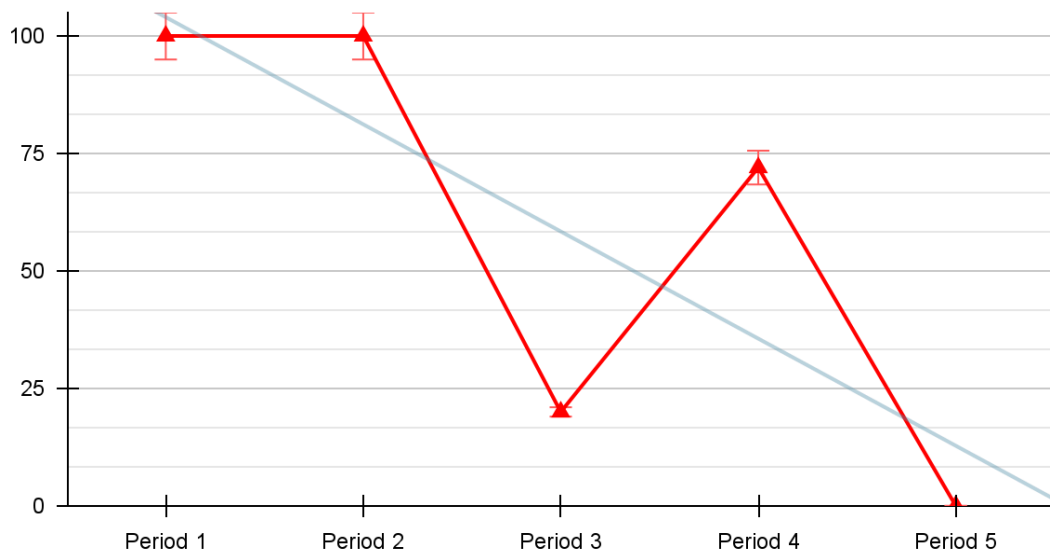
### Delta Policy Conflict Frame



Graph 6: *Delta Political Conflict frame*

In Graph 6, a predominantly declining delta is visible, except in Period 2. The trendline shows this as well. Thus, converging views are occurring more. Therefore, the frames in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant overlap more throughout the past decade.

### Delta Security frame



Graph 7: *Delta Security Frame*

Lastly, the Security frame shows a steep declining trend line in Graph 7. The delta is becoming smaller, meaning there is more overlap in the two newspapers with the Security frame towards the end of the timeline. This frame has a growing convergence throughout the periods.

It instantly becomes clear that all the frames are becoming more convergent in the two newspapers. The overlap becomes bigger, some more drastically than others. So, there is a clear trend of converging frames visible. This means there is no visible potential for polarization in the last decade, and even the opposite could be stated: the newspapers are growing more towards each other in the use of the dominant frames. However, the trendline does not show the whole picture. For example, in the Moral frame there are clear diverging numbers shown. The delta 100 appears in three periods. This means that in three of the five periods, the Moral frame occurred in 100% of the cases in one newspaper.

Something that is striking is that there are few publications or articles on the burqa ban in Period 2, and the deltas are very high. You could then conclude that this is because of the few publications and the period paints a distorted picture. However, in Period 5, there also have been few publications, but significantly more overlap is visible here, with a lower delta. Thus, few publications do not necessarily mean a high delta.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the analysis delves into the third sub-question: *How does the content of the dominant frames vary in terms of its potential to polarize?* The exploration involves assessing the degree of overlap of frames between the left-wing Volkskrant and the right-wing Telegraaf. Five periods were analyzed, from 2012 to 2022. The method shows with the delta the difference in the percentage distribution of frames between the two newspapers. By conducting a detailed analysis of the frames' appearances in the Telegraaf and Volkskrant, I aimed to identify the potentially polarizing frames by assessing the level of overlap and divergence between the two newspapers.

By determining the delta of each frame in each period, I got a detailed overview of the results presented in the graphs. By adding a trendline to the graphs, I was also able to document the trends visible in terms of divergence or convergence between the two newspapers. A high

delta means a small amount of overlap, and a small delta means considerable overlap.

What has become apparent from the analysis is that none of the frames have a polarizing potential. All of the trendlines were declining. This means there is relatively more overlap towards 2022 compared to 2012 and a pattern of growing convergence in the use of frames. There are some differences in the trendlines, however. For example, the Security frame has the steepest declining line. This means that the difference is declining the fastest in the Security frame. The opposite is the case for the Political frame, where the trendline is the least steep. This indicates that the difference in overlap between 2012 and 2022 is the smallest. However, some nuance has to be considered when looking at these results because the graphs do not show the complex dynamics of framing. Also, it has to be acknowledged that this analysis is based on the limited data available to me. For more conclusive results, additional research is necessary.

The recent victory of Geert Wilders and the PVV in the parliament elections introduces a potential shift in the media narratives surrounding the burqa ban. Given Wilders' strong position regarding Islam and immigration, there is a likelihood of increased emphasis on specific frames within the media discourse. This development also highlights the dynamic nature of political influence on media narratives. Further research could show changing political landscapes can shape public perceptions and discussions surrounding the burqa ban.

## Chapter 8 - Pre and post-implementation Burqa Ban.

In this chapter, I aim to answer the sub-question: *Has there been a shift in the use of frames after the law's implementation in 2019?* To answer this question, I have analyzed the dominant frames used in both the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant before the implementation of the burqa ban and the dominant frames after the implementation. First, I will present the empirical results gathered, then interpret them and answer this sub-question.

### **Results Telegraaf**

For this analysis, I have first looked at articles from January 30th, 2012, until July 31st, 2019, and from August 1st, 2019, until November 2022. I have analyzed the articles and their occurring frames during these separate periods. The periods are divided from before the implementation of the law until July 31st, 2019 (Period 1), and from the implementation of the law (August 1st, 2019) until the end of 2022 (Period 2). The number of frames present in Period 1 is 74 in 55 articles. In Period 2 there were 44 frames present in 29 articles. The results are presented in Figure 1 and are expressed in percentages.

What becomes clear in Figure 1 is that the dominant frame in Period 1 is the Security frame, with over 30%. This shifts in Period 2, where this frame occurs in less than 10% of the articles. The Societal Impact frame is the other way around; in Period 1, almost half the percentage is visible compared to Period 2. The Policy Conflict frame is comparable in both periods, with a slight majority in Period 2. The Moral frame was dominant in Period 2. And lastly, the Political frame is also comparable in both periods, with a slight majority in Period 1.

## Telegraaf

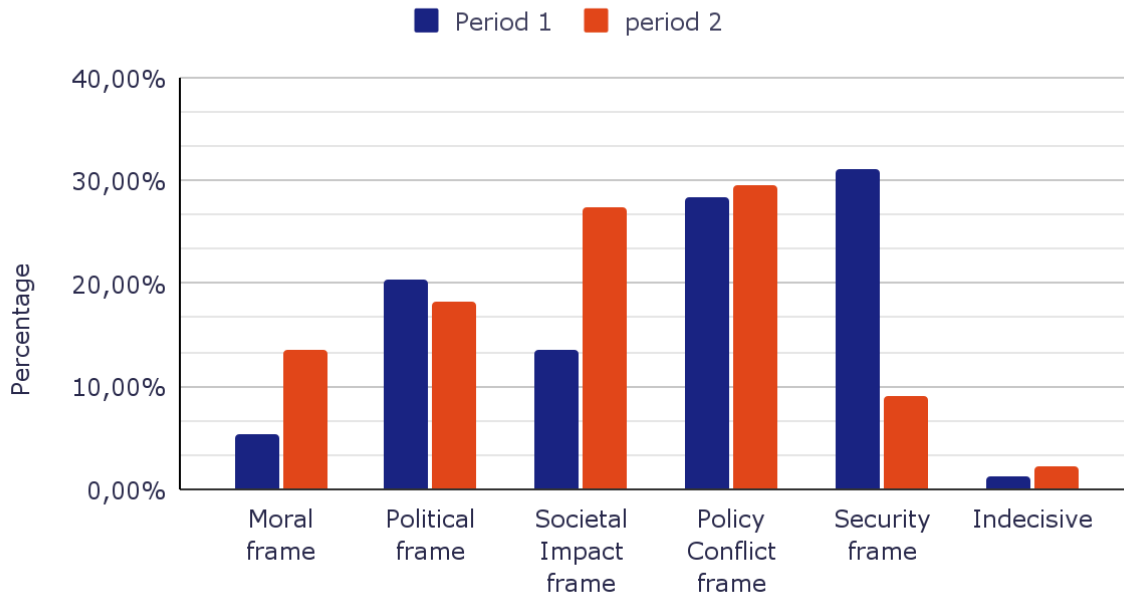


Figure 1: *Telegraaf* before and after implementation of the burqa ban

In Chapter 6, it became clear that the Policy Conflict frame was most dominant in the *Telegraaf*. Looking at Figure 1, it becomes clear that this frame is not over or under-presented in either of the periods. The Policy Conflict frame has been used constantly over the past ten years. This frame was used most often to express dissatisfaction with how specific issues were handled by the (local) government, the police, or other officials. The Policy Conflict frame was encountered most with the issue of the enforcement of the law. I encountered many articles where the journalists, columnists, or readers were quite displeased by the lack of enforcement by the police or the unwillingness of the mayors of the big cities to prioritize or enforce the law.

Something striking from these results is that the Security frame has diminished quite drastically after implementing the burqa ban. In Period 1, the frame was present 23 times, translating into 31.1%. It was the dominant frame in Period 1. In Period 2, after implementing the burqa ban, it appeared only four times, translating into 9.1%. From this, we can conclude that after the implementation of the burqa ban, the articles with emphasis on security and safety were less prominent.



On the other hand, the Societal Impact frame became more dominant in Period 2 compared to Period 1. This means that the Telegraaf focused more on articles where the Societal Impact was emphasized. This was usually about the lack of implementation of the burqa ban and the impact of this on society. Also, the societal reactions to the burqa ban were discussed, with stories of women who are directly affected by the burqa ban.

The last thing worth mentioning from this figure is that the Moral frame is more prominently present in Period 2 compared to Period 1. This is 5.4% in Period 1 compared to 13.6% in Period 2. This means that after the implementation of the burqa ban, the number of articles with a Moral frame increased. The moral arguments used in these articles are primarily concerning women's emancipation and expressing concern about women's freedom. However, the Moral frame is barely visible in the readers sections of the newspapers in Period 2.

### **Results Volkskrant**

For this analysis, I have looked at articles from January 13th, 2012, until July 20th, 2019, and from August 1st, 2019, until October 21st, 2022. I have analyzed the recurring dominant frames separately per period for the Volkskrant in these periods. Comparable to the Telegraaf, I have added the detailed numbers and tables in the appendix. Period 1 is again the period up to the implementation of the burqa ban, and Period 2 is from August 1st up to the end of 2022. The number of frames I encountered in Period 1 was 96 in 62 articles; in Period 2, this was significantly less, namely 27 in 22 articles. The results are presented in Figure 2 and expressed in percentages.

One thing that instantly becomes clear is that the Societal Impact frame is most dominant in Period 2. The Moral frame is quite similar in both periods, and the Political frame is represented more in Period 1 than in Period 2. This is also the case for the Policy Conflict frame, although this difference is smaller here. Lastly, the Security frame is not detected at all in Period 2.

## Volkskrant

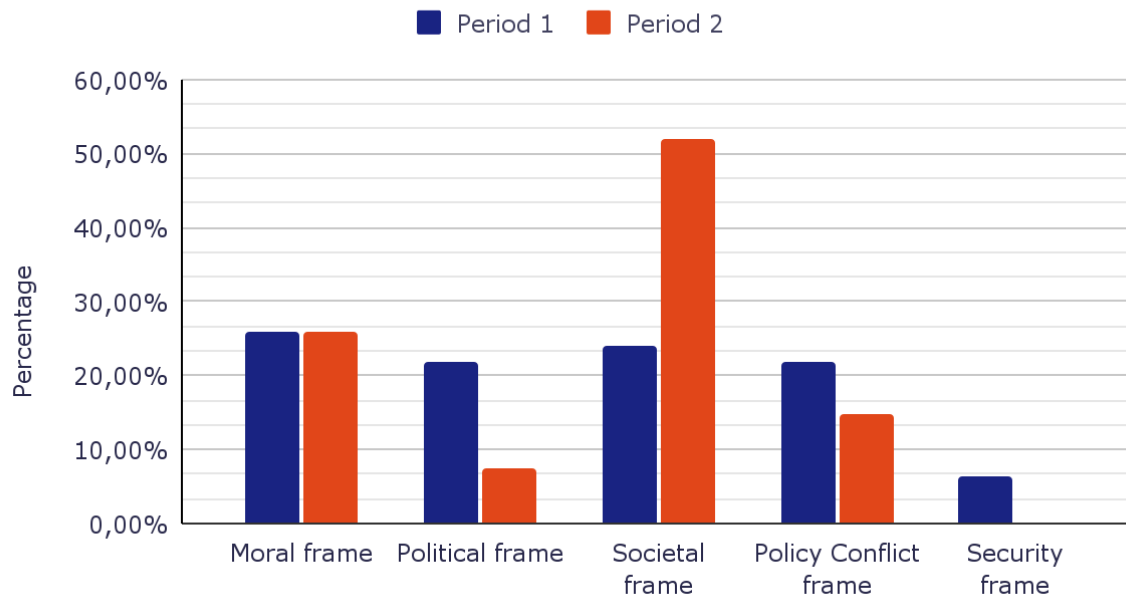


Figure 2: *Volkskrant* before and after implementation of the burqa ban

The first thing that should be addressed is the difference in the number of articles in Period 1 and Period 2. It becomes clear that the *Volkskrant* has reported less on the burqa ban issue after the law's implementation. The difference, 96 in Period 1 and 27 in Period 2, is significant. Additional research should be conducted to explain this decrease in reporting on the issue of the burqa ban.

The main thing striking from these results, as evident in Figure 1, is the difference between Period 1 and 2 for the Societal Impact frame. In Period 1, this frame is found 23.9% of the time. In Period 2, this is 51.9%. This means that more than half of the frames in Period 2 are the Societal Impact frame. The *Volkskrant* thus highly emphasizes the burqa ban's impact on society in Period 2. This is done by discussing the burqa ban in a societal context, like showing the implications of the burqa ban and the effect it has on individuals.

An example of this is an article on the consequences of the law a year after the implementation of the burqa ban. The article discusses that there have 'only' been four warnings thus far. A recurring subject in Period 1 (pre-implementation) has been the limited number of women wearing a burqa or niqab in the Netherlands, thus rejecting the burqa ban because the burqa is a 'limited problem.' This article from Period 2 could be seen as a

reaction to this trend, perhaps even as an “I told you so” towards the government.

The Security frame is completely missing in Period 2. In the previous chapter, it became clear that this frame does not appear often in the Volkskrant. After implementing the burqa ban, it has not been used once. Because the Societal Impact frame is this dominant after implementing the burqa ban, the other frames are naturally less visible. This is also visible for the Political and Policy Conflict frames, which are used less often in Period 2 than in Period 1.

An explanation for the Political frame being less prominent after the implementation of the burqa ban is that the political debate about the new law has diminished with the commencement of the law. The political debate in the newspaper has made way for the societal debate.

The Moral frame is almost the same in both periods —26.1% in Period 1 versus 25.9% in Period 2. In Chapter 7, we saw that the Moral and Societal Impact frames were dominant overall in the Volkskrant. This is also the case in the analysis of the period before and after the implementation of the burqa ban.

## **Conclusion**

To answer the sub-question, *Has there been a shift in the use of frames after the law's implementation in 2019?* I have examined the two periods before and after implementing the burqa ban in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant. The results are presented in Figures 1 and 2 and analyzed in the chapter. It must be added that it is impossible to dedicate the reasons for the shifts directly to implementing the burqa ban. Additional research is needed for these kinds of conclusions. Other events or issues could have influenced the shift. However, we can conclude that there has been a visible shift in the reporting of the burqa ban in both the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant.

As described in detail in the analysis of this chapter, the Societal Impact frame in both newspapers is dominant in Period 2. In the Telegraaf, this difference is quite significant between Periods 1 and 2. However, in the Volkskrant, this difference is more than doubled in Period 2 compared to Period 1. The reason for this could be that the newspapers are discussing the new law's impact on society since its implication and giving examples of stories of citizens or law enforcers and the implications of the law. Also, the Security frame is

shifting in both newspapers. In Period 1, the frame is more prevalent in both the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant. This is significantly less in Period 2. This is especially striking for the Telegraaf, where the Security frame is its second most dominant overall. In the Volkskrant, the Security frame does not appear in Period 2. A few explanations could be given for this, but again, further research is necessary to make conclusions.

In conclusion, based on the results presented in this chapter, there has indeed been a shift in reporting and conversation in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant after the law's implementation in August 2019. This shift is most significant within the Societal Impact and Security frames, and visible in both newspapers. Small shifts have also been detected in the Moral, Political, and Policy Conflict frames.

## Chapter 9 - Discussion

In this discussion, I will look back on the results. A set of hypotheses drove this study. The key findings will be presented, and the hypotheses will be evaluated. First, I have looked into the potential differences in dominant frames in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant. Secondly, I have examined the potential polarizing frames within the context of the burqa ban. Lastly, I have explored the shifts in conversation before and after the implementation of the burqa ban. These three sub-questions have guided the analysis, shedding light on the dynamics of media framing around the burqa ban in the past decade.

### Results

In Chapter 6, I examined the different frames in the left-wing and right-wing newspapers from 2012 to 2022. From the analysis results, I concluded that there has been a notable difference in reporting between right-wing and left-wing newspapers in the Dutch media in the past decade. This is in line with the expectations from the hypothesis. According to Matthes, one of the key ideas behind framing is that frames are subjective views of issues and events. The selection and interpretation of a journalist or newspaper influence frames. The right-wing and left-wing backgrounds became visible from the analysis. This difference in the use of frames between right and left-wing newspapers could also be explained by Tewksbury's idea that framing is instead a message construction rather than a media effect.<sup>128</sup> This was also illustrated in Chapter 6 with an example where the same event was reported in two different ways. Thus, the same message was constructed in two different ways.

The Volkskrant is a progressive and socially oriented newspaper.<sup>129</sup> The dominant frame has been the Societal Impact frame, with its peak in 2019, discussing the impact of the burqa ban on society. The society-oriented background of the newspaper could cause the frequent use of the Societal Impact frame. A frame that is almost absent in the Volkskrant (counted in total six times) is the Security frame. It occurred only between 2016 and 2020. The Moral frame is the second most dominant frame in the Volkskrant.

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<sup>128</sup> Dietram A. Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (November 9, 2006): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x>.

<sup>129</sup> Remarque and Bolkestein, "Opinie: Remarque En Bolkestein Schrijven Elkaar: 'Is de Volkskrant Te Links?'"

The Telegraaf has been described as a popular newspaper with an activist background. The dominant frame in the last decade in the Telegraaf has been the Policy Conflict frame. This is in line with the newspaper's background. Missier has described Dutch popular news media to be critical and negative towards the elite, with sometimes even an aggressive approach.<sup>130</sup> This has become clear from the analysis. Often the tone in the articles discussing the political elites or policy, were critical and negative towards the political elite or law enforcers.

The analysis also showed that the newspapers differ primarily in using the Security and Moral frame. The Security frame is used predominantly in the Telegraaf, and the Moral frame in the Volkskrant. We could conclude that Wilders' argument that the burqa is a security threat is the basis for the frequent use of the Security frame in the Telegraaf.<sup>131</sup> Maurice Vergeer has described that the Telegraaf has associated ethnic minorities often as threatening or in relation to crime.<sup>132</sup> This is not the case for the Volkskrant.<sup>133</sup>

The Moral frame shows an interesting trend. It occurs only ten times in the Telegraaf, peaking in 2020. This could be ascribed to the implementation of the law. In the Volkskrant, the Moral frame occurs quite frequently throughout the defined period, peaking in 2018. Something that has been striking with the Moral frame is that within the Volkskrant it was used both in favor of and against the burqa ban. This became mostly visible in the columnist and readers opinion section, where most articles were in favor of the burqa ban. In the Telegraaf there were no articles being morally against the ban. It could be stated that it is not surprising that the moral arguments were often in favor of the burqa ban in the public opinion sections, because according to a study, 8 out of 10 Dutch people are in favor of the burqa ban.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Missier, "The Making of the Licitness of Right-Wing Rhetoric: A Case Study of Digital Media in the Netherlands," 8.

<sup>131</sup> "Memorie van toelichting - Voorstel van de leden Wilders en Fritsma tot wijziging van het Wetboek van Strafrecht in verband met een verbod op het dragen van boerka's of nikaabs in de openbare ruimte (boerkaverbod) - Parlementaire monitor."

<sup>132</sup> Maurice Vergeer, Marcel Lubbers, and P.L.H. Scheepers, "Exposure to Newspapers and Attitudes toward Ethnic Minorities: A Longitudinal Analysis," *Howard Journal of Communications* 11, no. 2 (April 1, 2000): 131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/106461700246661>.

<sup>133</sup> Vergeer, Lubbers, and Scheepers, "Exposure to Newspapers and Attitudes toward Ethnic Minorities: A Longitudinal Analysis," 131.

<sup>134</sup> S. Wahedi, "Een Boerkaverbod. Waar Is Dat Op Gebaseerd," *Nederlands Juristenblad*, January 1, 2012, 1576, <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/1874/275433/1/Wahedi%20-%20Een%20boerkaverbod%20-%202012.pdf>.

This hypothesis found partial support within the analysis. The dominant frames visible in the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant were different. Where the Policy Conflict frame was dominant in the Telegraaf, this was the Societal Impact frame in the Volkskrant. However, The Political, Policy Conflict, and Societal Impact frames have high recurrence percentages in both newspapers over the defined time period. This means that the difference primarily lies with the Security and Moral frames. Thus, not all the frames differ significantly across political lines between right-wing and left-wing newspapers.

In Chapter 7, I discussed the polarizing potential of the frames. In the third hypothesis, I expected that the different newspapers had polarizing views and that particular polarizing views would emerge from the analysis. This is an extension of the previous chapter. Where the Moral and Security frames were addressed as being most different in both newspapers, it was also expected that they had the most potential to polarize. The analysis was done by looking at the overlap between the newspapers and the use of the frames. Per frame, the delta per period showed if the newspapers would become more divergent or convergent over time, indicating polarization or not.

Something that was against my expectations was that none of the frames had the potential to polarize in this analysis. All of the trendlines were declining. Some at faster rates than others, but no frame became increasingly polarized. Because there is a growing trend of polarization overall in the Netherlands,<sup>135</sup> I expected this to also become visible in this research. A study on polarization in the Netherlands towards migrants and refugees has also shown that there is increasing polarization regarding this subject. However, they have also concluded that a majority in the Netherlands is concerned with the impact of refugees and migrants and its consequences on Dutch society.<sup>136</sup> This could be why the limited polarization is visible in the newspapers because of the growing trend where Dutch society is critical towards migrants and refugees in varying degrees. Migrants wearing a burqa or niqab could be seen as a threat to someone's position in society.<sup>137</sup> This could also be the reason why 8 out of 10 people in

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<sup>135</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, "Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands," 633.

<sup>136</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, "Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands," 636.

<sup>137</sup> Albada, Hansen, and Otten, "Polarization in Attitudes towards Refugees and Migrants in the Netherlands," 636.

the Netherlands are in favor of the burqa ban. Therefore, I can conclude that the research did not support this hypothesis, and even the opposite could be stated, where the Netherlands is becoming less polarized concerning the burqa ban.

In Chapter 8, I discussed the implementation of the burqa ban and its impact on the media narratives, showing a shift in pre and post-implementation. The hypothesis was confirmed after conducting the analysis. This was done by examining the shifts in reporting on both the *Telegraaf* and the *Volkskrant* after the law was implemented in 2019. The observed changes aligned with the hypothesis, especially in the use of the Societal Impact frame and the Security frame a noticeable shift was visible. This indicates that the implementation of the burqa ban has actually had an impact on the media discourse thus the hypothesis was supported.

As researched by Geiß, Weber and Quiring, and Van Gorp,<sup>138</sup> key events can have an impact on framing.<sup>139</sup> They state that usually this change happens gradually, but certain prominent events can have an influence on the framing process.<sup>140</sup> This has become clear from this analysis. The implementation of the burqa ban on August 1st 2019 has caused a shift in framing on the issue. This shift was mostly seen with the use of the Societal Impact, and Security frame. The visible shift in the use of the Societal Impact frame can tell us something about the impact of the burqa ban on the narratives. Both the *Telegraaf* and *Volkskrant* have used the Society Impact frame more after implementing the law. This can be ascribed to the urge to report more on the law's consequences and show its impact on society. According to Razack, 'anti-Muslim' laws, like the Dutch burqa ban, have had a negative impact on anti-Islam tendencies, sometimes even inciting violence.<sup>141</sup> The implementation of the law could have led to more appearance of the Security frame, portraying the burqa as a threat to national safety.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Baldwin Van Gorp, "The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00329.x>.

<sup>139</sup> Geiß, Weber, and Quiring, "Frame Competition after Key Events: A Longitudinal Study of Media Framing of Economic Policy after the Lehman Brothers Bankruptcy 2008–2009," 471.

<sup>140</sup> Geiß, Weber, and Quiring, "Frame Competition after Key Events: A Longitudinal Study of Media Framing of Economic Policy after the Lehman Brothers Bankruptcy 2008–2009," 474.

<sup>141</sup> Sherene H. Razack, "A Site/Sight We Cannot Bear: The Racial/Spatial Politics of Banning the Muslim Woman's Niqab," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 30, no. 1 (March 1, 2018): 172, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjwl.30.1.1>

<sup>142</sup> Razack, "A Site/Sight We Cannot Bear: The Racial/Spatial Politics of Banning the Muslim Woman's Niqab," 172.



## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used for this research serves as a guiding lens to explore the intricate interplay between the media, public opinion, and politics in the context of the discourse of the burqa ban. As articulated by Entman, framing theory is instrumental in understanding how media constructs and influences public opinion. The selected definition of framing, which emphasized a news item's selection and problem definition, has guided the identification and analysis of dominant frames in the print media.

The dynamic nature of communication, as highlighted by Entman, is crucial in framing analysis. Frame-building, influenced by internal factors such as journalists and external factors like political elites, shapes the narrative presented in the media. This aligns also with the research by Shoemaker and Reese, emphasizing the role of journalists' personal attitudes and political orientations in shaping news frames. This has become evident during the analysis; the writers' personal opinions and the newspaper's political background highly influence the news items. This research's interconnectedness of media, politics, and public opinion is a central theme. Matthes' statement that political background and social realities shape journalist frames also shows this connection. By the presence of the Political frame, it is acknowledged that politicians actively influence media discourse, which adds nuance to understanding this dynamic relationship. Also, the analysis of the personal opinion sections in the newspapers has shown, to an extent, the public opinion and its influence on the frames.

In conclusion, this theoretical framework enriches the analysis by showing the complexities of the media-politics-public opinion relationship. It shows a more nuanced picture of the media, where the public is not simply influenced by what it produces. These nuances contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how media narratives on the burqa ban have evolved and interacted with public opinion and political dynamics over the past decade.

## **Future Research Directions**

Future studies could explore the long-term evolution of media frames in discussing the burqa ban in the Dutch media. This could include the beginning of the debate, back to 2005 when Geert Wilders brought the burqa ban up for the first time, until the current discussion. During this research, the party of Geert Wilders, the PVV, has won the national elections for the parliament. The party is known for its anti-Islam discourse, which could influence the media

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in many ways. Unfortunately, it was impossible to include this event in the research and its influence on the dominant frames in the print media. However, the victory of the PVV could influence the dominant frames in the media. So, to include the whole specific timeframe regarding the burqa ban, additional research could provide us with new insights. This political shift could also impact further polarization in Dutch society.

When looking at the shift in narrative that took place after the implementation of the burqa ban, I was unable to be sure if this shift could be attributed to the law's implementation. Additional research is necessary to make these conclusions and decide the reasons behind the shift. Additionally, to generate trustworthy results, more data must be analyzed. The conclusions reached in this research are based on 168 analyzed articles. Even though this was all the data I could gather on the burqa ban in the predefined period, more trustworthy conclusions could be made with more data. More newspapers could be included in the research, for example.

## Conclusion

Analyzing the newspaper articles led me to construct frames and analyze the content. Framing theory, guided by the work of Entman, Matthes, Shoemaker, and Reese, among others, has served as the foundation for understanding the dynamics of media, public opinion, and politics. The preceding chapters have shown the nuances of media representation, providing more understanding of how the burqa ban is portrayed, discussed, and framed within Dutch print media over time.

To answer the main question, ‘*How have the dominant frames used in Dutch print media to discuss the burqa ban shifted across the past decade?*’ an in-depth analysis of articles discussing the burqa ban in both Telegraaf and the Volkskrant has been conducted. Entman’s definition of framing, in combination with Semetko and Valkenburg’s often-found frames, helped construct the frames used for this analysis. After the study, it has become clear that the dominant frames used in Dutch print media to discuss the burqa ban have undergone notable shifts in both newspapers. When looking at the results, it becomes clear that the frames were not used constantly between 2012 and 2022. Over time, the Policy Conflict frame in the Telegraaf becomes dominant, and this is also the case for the Societal Impact frame in the Volkskrant. Implementing the burqa ban in 2019 has marked a significant turning point, influencing the narrative and leading to a shift in the use of frames. This temporal shift reflects the dynamic nature of media discourse surrounding the burqa ban in the Dutch media landscape.

This research aimed to shed light on the various narratives and perspectives visible in the Dutch media regarding the burqa ban. This is particularly relevant given the dynamic nature of the media landscape. The research has shown a more nuanced understanding of how different newspapers with different political backgrounds have situated themselves in the debate on the burqa ban in the past decade. It has aimed to close the academic gap in Dutch media coverage of the burqa ban and the framing of this issue, and it has shown the dominant frames visible in the two newspapers over the past decade.

The analysis of the Volkskrant and Telegraaf has revealed differences between the two newspapers regarding framing the burqa ban. The Volkskrant, as a progressive left-wing newspaper, has overall prioritized the Societal Impact frame in the past 11 years, emphasizing the consequences of the burqa ban on society. In contrast, the right-wing Telegraaf, known for its activist stance, dominantly relied on the Policy Conflict frame, reflecting its critical

approach towards political elites. This has been in line with expectations. However, contrary to expectations, the analysis did not identify frames with significant polarizing potential. The decline of the trendlines for all frames suggests a convergence rather than a polarization of views between the newspapers. This unexpected outcome could be explained by the broader societal trend in the Netherlands, where concerns about the impact of migrants and refugees, including those wearing a burqa, are shared by a majority. Both newspapers have shown a shift in framing after implementing the burqa ban on August 1, 2019. The hypothesis expected this. Especially the use of the Societal Impact and Security frame has demonstrated the effect of implementing the law on reporting the burqa ban. This shift has shown the influence of significant events on framing, as observed as well by Geiß et al. and Van Gorp regarding the impact of key events on framing.

The theoretical framework employed in this research has enriched our understanding of the complexities within the media-politics-public opinion dynamics. Entman's framing theory, emphasizing the dynamic nature of communication and the influence of internal and external factors on frame-building, proved useful, and his theory was also used for constructing the frames. Shoemaker and Reese's emphasis on the role of personal attitudes and political orientations of journalists further illuminated the nuances present in media narratives. This interconnectedness of media, politics and public opinion was evident through the analysis, with political and societal backgrounds shaping journalist frames.

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the changing dynamics of media framing around the burqa ban in the Netherlands in the past decade. The nuanced differences between left-wing and right-wing newspapers, the unexpected absence of polarization, and the confirmed impact of the law's implementation emphasize the complexity of the media landscape. This work contributes valuable insights to the broader scholarly conversation on media, politics, and framing.

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## Appendix

For a list of the articles used from in Nexis-Uni See added pdf files.

PDF file 1 : Telegraaf articles

PDF file 2 : Volkskrant articles