Media and its portrayal of terrorism

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the influence of media

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Abstract

The power of media in the formation of opinion is well documented. We use the information that surrounds us to form our own opinion, but how is it that opinion can become “public”? How susceptible are we to influences of prejudice and pre-constructed elements in media? The principle interest of this study is to examine how media coverage can differ between news outlets; are there, in fact, traces of opinion altering the content in mass media?

By using a methodological framework based on the theories of Critical Discourse Analysis, this thesis sets out to determine the difference in the broadcasting of opinion between two British newspapers. By looking at differences in how Muslims and Islam are portrayed in the media, in connection with acts of terrorism on European soil, the thesis will draw conclusions concerning both how perpetrators and innocent are depicted and also how concepts as fear and dread are incorporated into the news.

*Keywords*: Terrorism, Islam, Media, Critical Discourse Analysis, United Kingdom
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1 Introduction

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Desperate acts, atrocious crimes, heinous misdeeds… Most of us would argue that when a person crosses a certain line, his action can no longer be defended. When someone steps over the threshold of morale and ethics and into a domain where acts are committed without concern of those they affect the reactions will be rather direct. Most of the times, the person will be shunned by society and his/her closest friends may even turn their backs on them as what the person has done is impossible to comprehend and has crossed the line of sanity. Of course, that line we draw on an individual basis, what is considered unforgivable by one might not be to the other. But when a person commits a crime and claims to do so as a representative of a larger group. Can we apply the same judgment to that community, as we do with that individual, even if he/her was never elected as a representative of that group?

As human beings, we all have our own values and we create our own pathos or ethics around them. However, there is also the “common sense”, a concept often used to describe how to act or how to reason, but at the same time, it can also be applied to the collective mind. Individual reasoning has its limitations and most of us tend to take the easy way out when it comes to creating our views and opinion, hardly put – by generalization. When we generalize we chose to take the understanding of a certain individualized matter and apply it to the larger population by assuming that patterns repeat themselves and that which one does, the other will also do. In other words – prejudice. Pensée unique – the French way of describing the concept of mainstream – one thought, is exactly what defines generalization, there is one way to think. But, the funny thing with generalizing is that in order to do so we need a point of departure – a pensée originale (pardon the French) – or an original line of reasoning. So, where does it come from? If most human beings have a tendency to think in similar patterns, where do those patterns originate from?

Between years 2000 and 2008 the prominence of news hooks in UK media on the topics Religious cultural issues and Muslim extremism surged from 20% to 32% and from 3% to 10%, respectively. At the same time, the percentage of Violence and attacks against Muslims declined from 10% to 1% of coverage (Petley et al. 2011: 49). The numbers show a
pattern in the outlining of the public media discourse, a bias towards that which is Muslim in a negative sense, mainly issues, and extremism where Muslims are portrayed as perpetrators while stories on the Muslims that are targets of violence are not a prioritized news hook. So, is it possible to relate this to the spread of prejudice, or even Islamophobia, in the UK? It might be difficult to connect this framing of the research at hand to any profound form of academic research, but by readily comparing the index of news hooks to that of anti-Muslim attacks on Muslims in the UK between 2010 and 2014 (Aftab 2015), it becomes clear that this just might be the case.

Getting to the point

The idea with this thesis is to perform a research slightly based on Lewis, Mason & Moore´s analysis ‘‘Islamic Terrorism’’ and the Repression of the Political’’ (Marsden et al. 2009), which depicts the tendency of UK national press to focus on religion, in this case Islam, often choosing to account for religious aspects rather than the political ventures of terrorist acts (2009: 34). Incidents as the one in Woolwich, where a British soldier was brutally murder in the light of day, have brought the threat of terror close to British home and it is easy to understand the anguish of the British citizens (BBC 2013). However, when Islamophobia starts to spread at such an alarming rate, it cannot solemnly be fear of terror that is at play. This is where media comes onto the scene, seeing the above samples of how news hooks on Muslims are represented in the press, media´s role as a provider of stereotypes is in many ways unrepresented.

Emotions are the most powerful of tools when it comes to forming opinion, the associations we make and their visual manifestations. The influential nature of our emotional susceptibility towards stereotypes and prejudice also makes us vulnerable to manipulations and none more powerful than those that play on our insecurities and uneasiness. Pictures on Instagram, videos on Youtube, tabloids or the evening news before the weekend movie on the commercial TV channel all of the powerful conduits in projecting perceptions and ideas. How do nationalism, right-wing extremism, and xenophobia become a trend in today´s Western Europe, if not through the media we consume?

The goal of this study is to have a closer look at the bonds between public opinion and media coverage. The method will consist of a critical discourse analysis of popular mainstream media, comparing differences between news agencies´ coverage of religious terrorism on European soil. It is worth mentioning that, to this research, the concept of
terrorism is solely a referral to violent attacks on civilians, carried out by perpetrators with political or religious motifs.

1.1 Hypothesis and research question

Brigitte L. Nacos, in her 2002 book “Mass-mediated terrorism”, raises an intriguing notion of mass media’s role as a communication tool between the public and the government by showing how the massive reach of media can be used to form opinion (2002: 11). This is especially interesting when trying to discern if media can play a role in the spread of Islamophobia. For the sake of continuity, and in the interest of moving along to the next step of this thesis, a hypothesis will be defined in order to help in the formulation of the analytical framework.

\[ H1 \quad \text{Tendencies in mass media are a powerful factor in the formation of public opinion, or even, prejudiced and xenophobic ideas.} \]

My hypothesis is based on the idea that some newspapers have biased views, creating a space where the words of a few help feed the narrow-mindedness of the public with seemingly valid arguments of their standpoint. Further continuing in this line of reasoning, a research question will help to center the analysis on this theme by having the results of the analysis summed up into answering this question. The relevance of the results of this research is thus determined by the ability to answer the following question.

\[ \text{Can the way perpetrators of violent acts, and their background, are pictured play into our perception of a larger group?} \]

The above research question is intended to encompass the reach of media in the formation of public opinion and prejudice views. Hopefully, by answering the question, this research will gain further insights into the way media works in articulating the generalization of viewpoints.

1.2 Thesis disposition
The thesis will start by giving a brief background to the events that are connected to the writing of the articles that are to be analyzed. Here a timeline will also be described in order to better place the articles in a correct chorographical order.

In the following chapter, the Newspapers and their articles are presented, giving a brief introduction and summary of the articles. This way, a better notion of the news that the articles report on is given.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology that will be used in the thesis, starting with giving a theoretical description of Critical Discourse Analysis and then defining the operationalization of the method to be used in the analysis of the Newspaper articles. This is followed by the Analysis of said articles, where each of the articles is put through the analytical framework described in chapter 4.

Finally, the results of the analysis are presented together with a statement of final conclusions that are reverted back to the original hypothesis and research question.
2 Background

The chapter aims at providing a brief historical background, a short account of the events that will be used as the chronological points of departure for this research. Although the time span between the two is not that great, the socio-cultural development should be larger. A third event of great importance that is not accounted for below is the Paris attacks in the Bataclan Theater that occurred in November 2015. The choice of not including articles directly related to that event is the chronological proximity to the events in Brussels, making an analysis of articles from the Paris attacks superfluous in regards to socio-cultural development as they can also be a factor that is accounted for after the events in Brussels.

The articles chosen for analysis are not direct accounts of the events but rather articles discussing the aftermaths and possible repercussions of them. The reason for this is to allow for an article with a more open, deliberate, approach to the events. For the same reason, articles where personal opinions of the author are stressed have also been given preference.

2.1 Events

2.1.1 Charlie Hebdo

At 11:30 local time on Wednesday 7 January a car drove up to an office in the Saint-Ambroise neighborhood of the 11th arrondissement of central Paris. As the 2 men left the car, they entered the building to locate the Charlie Hebdo cartoon magazine offices and once inside started a killing spree, primarily targeting the magazine’s editor and lead cartoonists. The following police chase was not successful and the perpetrators got away and were held up at a printing facility surrounded by police. At this time, another shooting by a single gunman was reported, from the southern Paris suburb of Montrouge were two people, including a policewoman, seemingly randomly, were killed. The gunman fled the scene. Later, he entered a kosher supermarket at Porte de Vincennes in the east of Paris, taking hostages and killing more people before the police managed to enter the supermarket and subdue him. Although the events were initially thought disconnected, it later showed that the attacks indeed were
coordinated. The total death toll caused by the assailants amounted to 12 people, over the lapse of three days. The gunmen from the attack identified themselves as belonging to a Yemen branch of Al-Qaeda, which later also took responsibility for the attack (BBC 2015).

2.1.2 Brussels airport

On March 22 more than 30 people lost their lives when coordinated attacks were carried out in Brussels. What started with two blasts at the Zaventem airport terminal, killing 11 people and wounding 81, was followed by an explosion at the Maelbeek metro station little more than an hour after the first to bombs were set off. An estimated 20 people were killed in the explosion in the metro station and about 100 injured, only a few blocks away from the EU Headquarters. Accounts say that firearms were heard before the two detonations at the airport, a total of three assailants of whom two were killed themselves in the explosions. Fortunately, the third bomb did not go off and police later managed to detain the threat of another explosion. In the aftermaths of the events in Brussels, the Islamic State has announced that they are responsible for the attacks and as the perpetrators were identified it was determined that they were all raised in Belgium and that one of the suspects was the brother of one of the attackers at the Bataclan theater in Paris in 2015 (BBC 2016a).
3 The Newspapers

The newspaper articles were chosen out of two factors. Primarily, based on their political viewpoint, and secondly, their popularity. Having chosen twoBritish and a Middle-Eastern media outlets reporting on events in other European countries might seem odd at first glance. However, by being strategic in the choice of newspapers, the thesis will benefit both from the escape from the language barrier, as well of conducting the research in a country where symptoms of Islamophobia are well documented. The Guardian and the Daily Mail will serve as political opposites, hopefully providing a broader field of analysis, at least from a political perspective. The idea is that the newspapers will serve as interesting counterweights in the analysis, both politically and socio-culturally. All articles have been written in English.

Effectively, the method for searching for articles suitable for analysis was to entering the search terms “Charlie Hebdo terrorism” and “Brussels airport terrorism” on each of the chosen newspapers websites, respectively. This way, the search results yielded articles both containing information on the specific events as well as the use of the terminology “terrorism”, guaranteeing a focus on that specific nomination of the events by all three newspapers.

By limiting the search to not more than two weeks after each attack, the search results became narrower. Furthermore, a collateral effect is that the articles will still be “fresh” due to the proximity in time to the events. The type of article that was of most interest was those discussing the events in more generalized terms, however. This in order to get a wider scope of expression and deliberation from the authors of the articles, whom many times are not actual reporters at the newspapers

3.1 The Guardian

Although having faltered for a few years, the traditionally Labour the Guardian is back to its origins as a supporter of the central-left in British politics. By flagging support for Labour the Guardian hopes to take a stance against cuts in the social security system, the editorial says:
“For those people [disabled and poor], and for many others, a Labour government can make a very big difference.” (Croucher 2015).

3.1.1 Charlie Hebdo: Now is the time to uphold freedoms and not give in to fear

Written on the same day as the horrific events that started at Charlie Hebdo´s offices in Paris, Simon Jenkins´ article are his thoughts on what was still occurring in Paris, as the attacks were carried out over the course of three days.

The article raises Jenkins´ personal opinions on matters relating to the event, such as political outrage, democracy, freedom of speech, terrorism, Islam in Western society and British citizens suspected of terrorism. It is interesting due to its, in time, close proximity to the attacks. This makes Jenkins´ thoughts emotional but resolute, which is especially valuable for this research. The wide array of topics treated in the relatively short article brings further caliber to the analysis.

3.1.2 The lesson of Brussels: jihadi terrorism crosses borders

Natalie Nougayrède wrote her article on 1 April, less than two weeks after the devastating explosions at Brussels airport. The article focuses on the national policy work to combat terrorism and political or religious extremism, especially the social integration of young Muslims. It makes comparisons between the political consequences after the attacks in Belgium and France respectively. Socio-cultural aspects to the problem are also highlighted, such as the cultural segregation in European major cities.

3.2 The Daily mail

International Business Times says: “The Daily Mail is the tabloid for the traditionalist, conservative middle classes.” Having a history of supporting the Conservatives and fighting the Labours want of social reforms, the Daily mail, and its sister paper the Sunday mail has said the following: “A vote for a Labour-SNP pact would empower a cabal of nationalists and socialists who together want to break up the country and reverse five years of hard-fought economic renewal.” (Croucher 2015)
3.2.1 Growing anger across Muslim world over Charlie Hebdo magazine

The full name of this article is in fact: “Growing anger across [the] Muslim world over Charlie Hebdo magazine as hundreds of thousands march in Chechnya and Iranians chant ‘Death to France’ (but Pakistanis mistakenly burn the wrong flag)”. However with the intent to make the handling of the article smoother, I have chosen to shorten it and call it simply: “Growing anger across Muslim world over Charlie Hebdo magazine”

The article was written on 19 January 2015, 12 days after the Charlie Hebdo events. Ted Thornhill and Steph Cockroft have written the account of large protests that broke out in many cities across the world as a response to Charlie Hebdo’s the main market square in the city of Bannu, Pakistan. Reportedly, “hundreds of thousands” of protesters in countries with a large Muslim population gathered in protest of the magazine’s publications of satirical cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed. The publication was the magazine’s first after the attack at their Paris offices on 7 January.

The most interesting fact with this article lies in the portrayal of the individuals that partook in the protests. In the analysis, a focus will lie on how they are portrayed, how their nationalities and cultural background is described, together with how their religious beliefs are highlighted.

3.2.2 Staggering’ number of European jihadis

The article from the Daily Mail, picked to represent the aftermaths of the Brussels bombings, is a short account of the threat from “potential terrorists” crossing European borders. The article is interesting due to its nomination of refugees, as “threats” and the debate it raises on European border policies. Published 14 days after the events in Brussels, the article’s full name is “Staggering' number of European jihadis: EU’s own border agency admits terrorists are exploiting refugee crisis and lax controls - but has no idea how many illegal immigrants there are” but, for handling purposes, it has been renamed to “Staggering' number of European jihadis”.

The article is an account from Daily Mail representative James Slack and gives a personal angle of the situation of the many refugees crossing European borders and the security threat this fact poses. The article is interesting due to the many references to refugees, as well as their religious preferences.
CDA, or Critical Discourse Analysis, is in its nature critical, meaning that it looks beyond the mere methodological aspect of analysis and incorporates an aspect of the social theory. Norman Fairclough, one of the most prominent figures of CDA, points out the dynamics of power relations and with a background in (neo-) Marxism, his own discourse is salted with viewpoints on class differences and social inequalities. Accounting for struggles within society, of power and the exertion of power, it becomes a powerful analytical tool for power structures (e.g. relationships between groups as majority vs. minority). Most importantly, Fairclough recognizes discourse as an acting power, meaning that in using language one also exerts power. Furthermore, its methodological approach for the analysis of text is systematic and straightforward (Wagenaar 2011:158). This thesis will make an effort in proving the existence of unequal power relations by depicting the linear information flow, newspapers to public and thus presenting evidence of idealistic indoctrination (Fairclough 2010: 63).

A criticism many times directed towards discourse analysis, is the discrepancy between the written word and real life practice. CDA accounts for that discrepancy, an account that can be found in its disposition, as described by Fairclough. By structuring the overall analysis in three dimensions it provides a holistic analytical framework that allows the researcher to look into details that could be overseen in a purely textual analysis. What makes CDA especially pragmatic is this methodological disposition. Fairclough divides the dimension in the text, discursive practice and social practice (Fairclough 2010: 133). The former of the three the analysis of text itself, accounting for vocabulary and semantic structures used in text in order to convey certain subtleties towards the reader, the second a link of intertextuality between the text and other discourse, and last the socio-cultural influence of the world in which the text was produced (Fairclough 2010: 94,132). Written language together with its interpretation is the backbone of the theoretical approach in this thesis. Understanding the effect that discourse has on society’s creation of concepts is vital in discovering how the two are connected. Discourse affects society and, in the spirit of Fairclough, society also affects discourse (Wodak & Meyer 2009: 17).

Comparing a number of news agencies with different political viewpoints, the broader analysis will prove fruitful in means of diversifying its results. Through a comparison of the
news agencies coverage of terrorism at specific points of time, the analysis will benefit from a wider scope. The diversification of objects of analysis will provide grounds for identifying traits of “labeling”, which reoccur in different articles. Furthermore, differences in the labeling between the news agencies, depending on their political standpoint, can be put against each other for further analysis. By choosing a qualitative analytical approach much freedom of subjectivity is granted, thus making a careful description of the analytical framework imperative. Reproduction and social and cultural change are influenced by the linguistic-discursive dimension, and thus, speech, and how it is produced and consumed, is an important part of social practice. Speech shapes society while it is affected by it (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 61-2). CDA uses a concrete linguistic textual analysis of the use of language in social interaction: this is one of the things that separates CDA from other forms of discourse analysis. In the analysis, CDA proposes that the power between different social groups is uneven and that the discourse contributes to both the creation and the maintenance of this social order (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 63). CDA is not politically neutral and its critical endeavors in order to detect and change the social inequalities. Norman Fairclough states that it is imperative to look at the use of text and discourse within our social relations. However, the approach is geared towards text and aims to simplify the analysis by determining three dimensions of analysis.
4.1 The textual, discursive and social dimensions

As earlier mentioned, the CDA of Norman Fairclough defines three interconnecting dimensions of discourse: the object that is being analyzed (be it verbal, visual or written expressions of discourse), the production process of said discourse (how it was produced and the influences behind this process), and last but not least, the social context that surrounded the object at the time of its production (consisting of historical and sociological factors). Although all part of the same process of analysis, below an account of each dimension is given to further explain the specific traits of each one of them, as well as how they are interrelated.

Text

It works in a “transdisciplinary” not just “interdisciplinary” (or even “postdisciplinary”) way: it aims to develop theoretically and methodologically in dialogue with other areas of social theory and research.” (Fairclough 2010: 418)
Analyzing text is the pursuit of meaning; the aim of that pursuit is to reach a broader understanding of the ideological sentiment that gave birth to the text. Fairclough would define text as the written form of language spoken in a discursive event. Three divisions in text analysis can be discerned through Fairclough’s accounts: the composition of text, grammatical structure and vocabulary (Fairclough 2010: 73, 94-5). In this analysis, the focus of the analysis will be directed towards vocabulary. By using set definitions of what we are looking for in the texts analyzed, the operationalization of CDA will be easier to carry out and, hopefully, also easier to comprehend. The main source of methodology used will be the multimodal definitions of CDA by Machin & Mayr, from their 2012 book “How to do Critical Discourse Analysis”. The book concretizes linguistic strategies aimed at portraying people and how semiotic choices reflect the way that we identify the person depicted in the text. Machin & Mayr refer to these choices as representational strategies (2012: 77) and they are determined by how people are represented, the words that are used to compose the sentence depicting a person. By classifying social actors by different techniques, you can either personalize or impersonalize that person by either referring to him/her directly or by referring to an institution or group that the person represents. Another way of classification within the same genre is individualization or collectivization, in the same manner of referral you can broaden the scope of the social agents acts by implying that they representative for the larger group (e.g. the Muslim community). Other techniques could be specification and genericisation, where some are either presented as a specific individual or as a generic type. This is used in order to highlight, religious, ethnical or other generalizing factors (2012: 80-1). Nomination and functionalization look at how dehumanization is used/not used in order to either personify someone or instead highlighting their role, thus dehumanizing them. (2012: 79-85). Another strategy that will be taken into consideration is aggregation, used determine if people are quantified and turned into statistics but without actually determining the exact quantity, this way the reader is left only with the suggestion of many or a few but not able to associate this to a specific number (Ibid. 84). Suppression is another strategy that is likely to arise in the articles. The manner in which agents can be omitted from sentences in order to create a sense of inevitability, when the agent is missing the concept becomes the acting agent giving it a life of its own rather than appointing the responsible agents as the cause behind the phenomena (e.g. cultural segregation) (Ibid. 85). Finally, a strategy important for highlighting either the distancing or reinforcing of responsibility or moral issues is the use of objectivation. Here objects are used as representatives instead of the direct terminology (e.g. the bringers of horror, instead of terrorists) (Ibid. 83).
Also incorporated into the analysis will be the modals of *Nominalisation* and *Presupposition*. Machin & Mayr describes Nominalization as relying on agency and responsibility through the use of noun construction as a manner of pointing out responsibility (2012: 137). This is done by replacing the verb process with a noun construction to obscure the responsibility for an action, why it happened or at what time it took place (2002: 137). This is portrayed by Fairclough with the modality of transitivity (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 83). Presupposition implies meaning and already pre-constructed elements or rather the implication of meaning or pre-constructed elements (Machin & Mayr 2012: 153). By analyzing assumptions made in texts, one looks at the stating of facts or the implication of meaning. As this analysis will try to uncover pre-constructed agendas in news articles, through CDA it should be possible to uncover traits of generalization and construction of stereotypes by media. This way, we should be able to see if an author deems the religious or cultural background of a perpetrator more important than socio-economic segregation.

Through the above-described criteria, the textual analysis will thus contain the following characteristics:

- **nominalization & presupposition** (noun construction & construction of facts)

- **representational strategies** (e.g. personalization/individualization or impersonalization/collectivization)

By adopting these elements into the textual analysis, a clear-cut framework is outlined, to be applied to the objects of analysis. Worth noting is that, although outlined in the analytical framework above, the use of all of the strategies in the analysis of each of the articles is not always applicable. Instead, the strategies will be highlighted thought to be when encountered. Of course, this entails that perhaps not all of the strategies at work in an article will be accounted for, however, this is part of some of the subjectivity that CDA entails.

**Discursive practice**

When a text is produced, it is based on something. This something is the idea that the writer thought of when producing the text. All texts are created with a purpose, and depending on the nature of the text, that purpose can differentiate, along with the author's original idea. Fairclough speaks of intertextual relations, between the discursive process and social practice. When we look at the discursive practice, the focus is in the way the text was produced and the
way it is consumed. The interpretive process operates in seeking suggestions from the social practice of the text or of the production process (Fairclough et al 2010: 94). If we can identify the source of the ideas of a text, then we can come to a greater understanding of its real meaning. As in the case of intertextuality, the intention is to understand underlying concepts of text (Fairclough 2010: 93).

Are we able to distinguish an order or ranking, of discourse in a text? As texts tend to emphasize speeches in different ways, there are levels of the discourse of variable order. Analyzing the literary meaning of the content of the text, its concept, and how it is built, the illustrations of previous concepts are also considered (Fairclough 2010: 93-6). The discursive practice analysis will look for traces of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. With the intent to reveal connections between the articles, but also to other works and discourses. If possible, an attempt with the intent to establish an order of discourse will also be carried out. The order of discourse, or rank, or hierarchy can be a determining factor in the production of discourse. As text is produced, it will be done with a set idea of the order as to where in the order this precise discourse will take place (Fairclough 2010:93-6). This way, discourse already has a meaning, or a purpose, if you will, even before it is manufactured.

The relationship between the discursive practice and the social practice is linear. An author will take ideas with him into the process of production of discourse. Fairclough speaks of this phenomenon as the manifestation of the social practice within the discursive one (2010:94). By seeking for interdiscursivity one is able to find common ideas between apparently different discourses. Fairclough’s definition of intertextuality (2010:93) embarks on this line of thought with the search for discourse within texts, looking to find common traits with that which could have influenced the author in the chain of production.

Social practice

The analysis of social practice will contextualize the articles, looking at how they affect or are affected by the society in which they appear. Text as a product has the property of absorbing the characteristics of the social environment from which it was produced. As the social context changes over time, the discourse follows the same change. The importance of this type of analysis is observed in the timeline of our study. For example, texts produced at the beginning of the line may have been exposed to completely different influences than the texts produced at the end of the timeline (Fairclough 2010: 173).
Just as people, texts have the behavior of picking up traits from their environment. Discourse adapts and is adapted, to/by the context which it figures in. Depending on where, when and under which circumstances discourse is produced, its characteristics will be different. This way, the social context becomes an important factor in our analysis. Fairclough states that neither authors nor their texts are protected from the impact of that which surrounds them (2010:173). War, peace, or economic development care all factors that could make the contents of discourse shift immensely. A discourse set on one side of a timeline ridden of such events will differ a great deal from one set on the other end. For this study, this element is crucial for the analysis.

Within the operationalization of the social practice, the traits that will be sought for are evidence of the specific context which the article was written in. Which context will be quite clear as the articles were handpicked on the account of the time when they were conceived. However, what is of interest is how this is manifested in the text. An attention to detail will be needed in order to discern what the manifestations of the social context looks like in each of the texts.

4.2 Limitations of analysis

By far, the most troublesome notion of CDA is the heavy subjectivity that it is inclined to. As the researcher is virtually given free hands to make conclusions in the analysis, the margin for ethical mistakes is quite wide. At the same time, its subjectivity is one of the strong sides of CDA, sort of a double edged sword. If carefully applied in the study, a researcher can reap immense benefits from the open and deliberate nature of CDA. Rather than preoccupy oneself with the notion of putting too much of one’s own thoughts and perspective into the research, a powerful way of balancing this is by keeping in mind the importance of intersubjectivity, or a broader form of coherence to other researchers within the field. This way, the challenge that subjectivity poses can be somewhat counterweighted.

Another limitation of the analysis is perhaps the format in which it will be conducted. Having the analysis divided into each of three dimensions is not the most orthodox way of performing a CDA analysis, seeing how the theoretical guidelines used clearly states that they are interrelated. However, due to the limited size of the study, I deem it beneficial for the overall layout of the thesis. The decision makes it clear which aspect is being considered and the account for the relation between the dimensions can be commented upon,
stating the connections clearly in each dimension of analysis. Finally, the Results chapter will give another outlet for discussing any possible findings of interrelations between the analytic dimensions. This way, I feel rather sure that the division will not have a negative impact on the result of the analysis.
5 Analysis

The analysis will focus on each of the articles separately. By putting the articles through the scope of the analysis: *text, discursive practice* and *social practice*, they will all be analyzed separately first and then a comparison will be done in the results. The aim with this type of operationalization of CDA is to get a direct analysis for each of the articles in order to put as much focus as possible on each of them. This way, when going from textual- to discursive-, to social practice analysis, the results will not be intertwined and the final part of the analysis will give room for incorporating the three parts into one.

Important to highlight is that below you will not find a complete transcription of the articles chosen for analysis, instead those parts, or sections, or paragraphs, deemed especially interesting for the analysis have been added, in order to provide the reader with complete sentences and paragraphs. With the hopes of providing a more unbiased analysis, this will hopefully help the reader to create their own opinion of what was written and help him/her determine if there are grounds for the statements made in the analysis. For the complete overview of the articles, the complete transcripts are added in the annexes of this thesis.

5.1 The Guardian

5.1.1 Charlie Hebdo: Now is the time to uphold freedoms and not give in to fear

Text

In murdering so many, we can assume the terrorists sought to achieve two things. They sought to terrify others and thus to deter continued criticism, and they now seek to reduce the French state to a condition of paranoia. They want to goad otherwise liberal people to illiberal actions. To them, western democracy is skin deep in its freedoms, while the simple disciplines of their form of Islam are more powerful, more courageous, more lasting.
Looking at two of our factors of nomination, noun construction and the construction of facts, they are both visible in the first paragraph of this news article. “In murdering so many, we can assume the terrorists sought to achieve two things”—here the use of a verb process “in murdering” denotes the responsibility of the act, in connection to the terrorists. It is the terrorists that are responsible for the murdering, for “terrifying others” and “deterring continued criticism”. Not that it is unusual in any way, since in fact, the terrorist are ultimately responsible for their actions, but this is an example of the usage of verb processes to highlight responsibility. Another good example of the analysis is that of representational strategies. While highlighting the group, in this case, “terrorists”—They—as the actors, but very carefully noting that it’s “their form of Islam” that is on a collision course with western democracy, as opposed to Islam as a whole. This is an important example of how a carefully written article, in fact, helps by not fueling malicious thoughts against the larger community, by avoiding generalization, even in the aftermath of such a horrific event.

Today’s French terrorists want a similarly hysterical response. They want another twist in the thumbscrew of the surveillance state. They want the media to be told to back off. They want new laws, new controls, new additions to the agenda of illiberalism. They know that in most western nations, including Britain, there exists a burgeoning industry of illiberal bureaucrats with empires to build. This industry may be careful of public safety, but it is careless of the comfort and standing it offers the terrorist. There will now be cries from the security services and parliament for more powers and more surveillance.

“Today’s French terrorists”—again the author of the article is careful in the choice of words. This could represent the way that collectivezation is used in order to not convey humanization to terror suspects (Machin & Mayr 2002: 80). The manner of stating facts, in connection with the use of “They” could be seen as a way to connect the responsibility of the actors with the facts that the author wants to convey. By presupposition, the creation of a larger group, e.g. “most western nations”, helps the author to create a larger public that is under threat from the terrorists, adding values to those “western nations” such as “illiberalism” and “burgeoning industry”. Although this may, in fact, be true, it helps the author in conveying the message of who is under threat from this type attacks (Ibid. 154).

Only weakened and failing states treat these crimes as acts of war. Only they send their leaders diving into bunkers and summoning up ever darker arts of civil control, now even the crudities of revived torture. Such leaders cannot accept that such outrages will always occur, everywhere. They refuse to respect limits to what a free society can do to prevent them.

Perhaps in the defense of democracy, the presupposition is used in order to state another fact. “Only weakened and failing states treat these crimes as acts of war.”—By determining that
“western nations” are not “weakened and failing states” (although not specifically writing it out) the author is presupposing what western countries should do to combat crimes of terrorism. Powerful, in the way that the presupposition is used not to give instructions as to how western leaders should act, at least not directly, but instead depicting how higher representatives of “weakened and failing states” would act. Thus, the option to “refuse and respect limits to what a free society can do to prevent them [acts of war]” is not a viable option for any leader that does not identify him-/herself as “such a leader”. The use of verb processes also makes these statements powerful, as they connect the actions to “leaders” as opposite to depersonalizing them.

Britain has never been free of acts of violence. The 20th century saw bombs in London from anarchists, Fenians, Palestinians and Irish nationalists. Now we have so-called jihadists. The presupposition here is that “Britain has never been free of acts of violence”. Depending on how you choose to see it, this is either true or not. One could claim that last week was a peaceful week in Britain and that, in fact, the country was free or acts of violence, although for a short time. Or, one could claim that no society is ever free of acts of violence, as murder, rape, beatings or even schoolyard bullying are all acts of violence being repeated day in and day out in all larger societies known to mankind. However, by stating this “fact” the stage is set for determining the fact that violence (especially political violence) is, and have been, a part of the reality of Britain for a long time, although it has now taken on a new shape – that of “so-called jihadists” (Ibid. 154)

This very week parliament considers stripping British citizenship from those merely “suspected” of going abroad in pursuit of terrorism.

By stating that “this very week parliament” is the actor responsible for stripping British citizenships from terror suspects, the author implies that the decision to do so would not be a sound one. However, this fact is never stated, instead, the presupposition is made that the actor responsible is “very weak”, thus also presupposing that the actors actions will be weak as well (Ibid. 161). This is a powerful and subtle use of presupposition in order to prove one’s point.

Terrorism is no ordinary crime. It depends on consequence. It can kill people and damage property. It can impose cost. But it cannot occupy territory or topple governments. Even to instill fear it requires human enhancement, from the media and politicians.
Through *noun construction*, the term *terrorism* is here used to further emphasize the crimes committed by terrorists. By first distancing it from humanity by granting the term the ability to act on its own, e.g. “*It* can kill people and damage property”, only to then highlight that “*it* cannot occupy territory or topple governments.” The effect of distancing is used to further give emphasis to the human nature of terrorism, which it is, in fact, humans committing these crimes. At the same time, the statement omits guilt, not only to the terrorist themselves but also to other participants in the carousel of fear and mistrust – “Even to instill fear it requires human enhancement, from the media and politicians.”

**Discursive practice**

Osama bin Laden’s attacks on the United States, culminating in New York in 2001, were exceptional. Since he could not hope for an American capitulation, the intention must have been to scare the US into a hysterical reaction. As a result, all advice at the time was for America not to universalise its response to 9/11, let alone characterize it as a “war”. This would merely fuel the flames of horror, and lead on to God knows where. As Tom Paine warned: “Sanguinary punishment corrupts humankind.”

In the article, references are made to texts in connection the 9/11 attacks in New York. This way, the article is in fact connected to those events. Seeing it how the author has an agenda with bringing these attacks to the table, trying to avoid the same repercussion as the 9/11 attacks had on global security. Mentioning the foreplay of advice to the wars that ensued, cloaked as “the War on terror”, this could be considered as a warning to not go down the same path as after 9/11. In quoting Thomas Paine, one of the founding fathers of the United States and a vivid spokesperson against the death penalty (Kreis 2000), the author connects the response of war to acts of terrorism to that of a death penalty.

That is why the most effective response is to meet terrorism on its own terms. It is to refuse to be terrified. It is not to show fear, not to overreact, not to over-publicise the aftermath. It is to treat each event as a passing accident of horror and leave the perpetrator devoid of further satisfaction. That is the only way to defeat terrorism.

Here we see the author’s “order of discourse”, it becomes evident as the goal of the article is articulated. Mainly, the idea is to give substance to the idea of “not giving into fear” By earlier references to the “War on Terror” (The Guardian 2005), one can assume that is exactly what the author wishes to avoid. In other words, not to feed the extremists want for attention for his cause but instead “treat each event as a passing accident of horror”.

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Social practice

Seeing how the events connected to the assault on the offices of Charlie Hebdo were in fact, at the time, an isolated event and the first act of extreme violence carried out by “jihadists” in connection to Daesh, or the Islamic State, on European soil, it is easy to think that UK citizens could not relate to the events across the water, in France. However, as UK is an ally to the U.S and partook in the “War on Terror”, the idea of terrorism, and the policies connected to combating it are not news them. Furthermore, the 2013 murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich were still in fresh memory. Thus, domestic terrorism was already on the UK agenda at the time of the Charlie Hebdo massacre, giving an incentive to the author’s worries for Western commitment to an armed response on a larger scale to the attacks.

5.1.2 The lesson of Brussels: jihadi terrorism crosses borders

Text

Just hours after the Brussels attacks Michel Sapin, the French finance minister, spoke of Belgian “naivety” in the face of radical islam. He pointed to communautarisme – multiculturalism – as being part of the problem. But France has long had a significant problem in its banlieues – the suburbs – where record youth unemployment and a wide sense of exclusion have created fertile ground for radicalisation.

By both naming and highlighting the position of the French finance minister, the author makes use of both personalization and impersonalization. The first, where the minister’s name is used, is to hold him personally accountable for the words uttered. The second, adding the title of his office also holds his position responsible. Further, the addressing to “radical islam”, could be seen as the use of suppression in order to give the concept a life of its own, a natural and inevitable force that can only be fought and not avoided (Machin & Mayr 2012: 85). Also, the use of “radicalization” as a noun implies that the phenomenon has the power to act on its own. Instead of using a verb process (e.g. “youths are radicalized”) the responsibility of this occurrence is diverted from an acting agent (such as the city, or whoever responsible for the community that are the suburbs of Paris). This could be a strategy that the author uses in order to concretize “radicalization” as an acting concept since Belgium “suffers” from it as well (Ibid. 138).

The Belgian foreign minister was quick to retort that problem[s] of ghettoisation should be looked at together, not separately, and he had a point. And as for the criticism of Belgium’s police and security forces, it is now well documented that the networks responsible for the
killings in Paris and Brussels were connected. Surely any failure in preventing these successive attacks should be shared by the French and Belgian authorities alike.

Here, the agency is given to the Belgian foreign minister, as an acting agent. Furthermore, the usage of a presupposed fact, namely that “…he had a point”, indicates the author’s presupposed disposition of supporting the Belgian foreign minister’s views. The same way, the following statement shows an assumption by the author in order to further legitimize her claim: “Surely any failure in preventing these successive attacks should be shared by the French and Belgian authorities alike.”

As for the political reaction to terrorism, in my view, Belgium has a better record than France. Two Belgian ministers – for justice and home affairs – offered their resignations immediately after the Brussels attacks. In France, by contrast – despite two massive terrorist strikes within a year – no official has stepped down.

Already in pointing out that “in my view Belgium has a better record than France”, the author state not substantial arguments of information but instead a personal opinion, making it even more evident that the focus of the article circles around a defensive stance towards criticism. The way that the actions of the “two Belgian ministers” are portrayed shows an impersonalization of the actions of the ministers and instead highlighting their offices as “Belgian ministers” (Machin & Mayr 2012: 79)

But Belgian laïcité is very different from that of France, if only because it does not entail a strict separation between church and state. Nor can laïcité be seen as a system that in itself creates a key condition for Islamic terrorism to grow. Britain, a country where church and state are not separated, was attacked by jihadi terrorists in 2005; Denmark suffered in February 2015.

In this paragraph, the name of “Islamic terrorism” could be seen as another example of presupposition. By using the noun form, instead of the verb process, the responsibility is directed to the larger group, it is “Islamic terrorism” that grown, not “extremists” that multiply.

But this cannot explain the problem in Belgium, which has had the highest per capita number of foreign fighters in the Isis ranks of any European country. And Belgium never colonised Muslim lands – its empire was in the current-day Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

Here, instead of using expressions such as “terrorists” or “extremists”, a more neutral choice of words is given preference: “foreign fighters in the Isis ranks”. This could be seen as a way
of not using collectivization in a negative aspect, but instead using it carefully in order to not connecting these fighters to a religious group, despite their own personal religious beliefs.

**Discursive practice**

Belgium’s institutions, law enforcement agencies and social infrastructure were all criticized after the Brussels attacks. Some of this may have been warranted, but many of the accusations, particularly from French politicians and commentators, were disingenuous. It’s not as if France has dealt particularly well with the phenomenon of violent jihadism on its territory. Nor can France offer lessons about its social integration of young Muslims.

The article sets off with the stating of a number of facts: “Belgium’s institutions, law enforcement agencies, and social infrastructure were all criticized after the Brussels attacks”; “It’s not as if France has dealt particularly well with the phenomenon of violent jihadism on its territory”. The tone already points toward the agenda of the article. By answering directly to the criticism towards the Belgian response to the terror attacks with a defensive comment on French policy responses to the attacks in their country. This could be seen as a pre-constructed element of dividing the discussion into a Belgian, and a French one. Also the use of the concept of “violent jihadism” can be seen as preconceived, in the way that it effectively connects jihadism with violence.

**Social practice**

The wider debate in Europe is how democratic societies can address the threat of homegrown terrorism while safeguarding their values. No model is perfect: but instead of pointing the finger, trying to learn from the experience of other countries is the way to find solutions.

The article continues with referring to the “wider debate in Europe”, thus further reinforcing the existence of a French and Belgian narrative, respectively. However, by referring to the threat of terrorism as “homegrown” the discussion is brought back to the level of national threats of terrorism. This could point towards a climate of criticism existing in the debate around the threat of Belgian breed terrorists, as one of the attackers from the events at the Bataclan Theater in Paris was Belgian-born (BBC 2016b).

The answer is that there are no simple answers. Europe is suffering for a variety of reasons, but most importantly as a result of the Syrian civil war, which has allowed Isis to grow and set up its self-proclaimed “caliphate”. Isis’s ideology is clear in that it seeks to target the whole of Europe, seeing the continent as the west’s weak underbelly, full of “disbelievers” and “perverse”. It aims to bring about civil war in Europe by dividing communities along ethnic and religious lines until society itself collapses.
This is where the difference of the social dimension between the Charlie Hebdo events and the Brussels attacks become evident. The discourse is now connected to that to the Syrian civil war and the consequences that Isis self-proclaimed caliphate has on European domestic policy. This was not as evident when the attacks against Charlie Hebdo were carried out.

5.2 The Daily Mail

5.2.1 Growing anger across Muslim world over Charlie Hebdo magazine

Text

Already in the heading of the article we can discern a use of *impersonalization* by not addressing the protesters but instead the whole Muslim world. The association one makes is that it is the whole Muslim world which is angry, instead of a selected number of protesters. Also, the concept “Muslim world” is rather unclear, does it mean Muslim countries with a majority population of Muslims or does it mean all Muslims in the whole world?

More than 2,000 Iranians also protested outside French embassy in Tehran urging the ambassador to be expelled

An example of *genericisation* is the generic category of Iranians, in many Western countries, Iran is seen on with a suspicious eye. When used in this context it denotes further suspicion. The need of addressing the protestors as *Iranians* is unclear since in the same sentence it is revealed that the protesters were located in Teheran. This could be seen an attempt of a cultural slant (Machin & Mayr 2012: 81).

Scenes of chaos broke out across the Muslim world today as hundreds of thousands of protesters burned flags and effigies in anger over the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

Again, the term *Muslim world* is unclear and together with the *quantification* of the protesters, “hundreds of thousands” is not an exact statistic. It could be a hundred thousand or nine hundred thousand (Ibid. 84). The sentence gives the reader the feeling that this *Muslim world* of which they speak is a chaotic world filled with unruly, angry people.
solidarity (towards them), but at the same time France has principles and values, in particular, freedom of expression,' he added.

Here a reference to “these countries” is given. However, it is unclear of which countries president Hollande spoke of, making this an example of collectivization. It is now the countries that are lumped together, not specific protesters in those countries (Ibid. 80).

Meanwhile, Belgium deployed hundreds of troops to guard potential terrorism targets. Two gunmen were killed on Thursday during an anti-Islamist raid in the town of Vervier.

The anti-Islamist raid that is spoken of is quite dubious. Was it a raid against Muslim extremists, or even extremists with an Islamist agenda? Either way, by coining it as an anti-Islamist raid, the thoughts of collectivization, or even that of a “racialized slant”, as named by Machin and Mayr, come to mind (2012: 81).

**Discursive practice**

As for determining an “order of discourse” for the article, the textual analysis of the headline comes into mind. Is the goal of the article to depict the mass protests of “hundreds of thousands” as a response to satirical cartoons, or is it really to convey the image of an unruly and chaotic “Muslim world”? In this analysis, the latter will be considered a pre-constructed element and the most likely reason behind producing the article in the first place. Especially when considering a rather “misplaced” last paragraph of the report, commenting on the “anti-Islamist raids” in Belgium. This could be seen as an attempt of connecting the protests to the fight against the extremists on European soil, although the “hundreds of thousands” of protester had little, if anything, to do with the events that took place at the Charlie Hebdo offices a few days prior to the protests.

**Social practice**

Many of the unjustified generalizations and references to radical Islamists in the article can surely be connected to the recent, at the moment of publishing, events at Charlie Hebdo. The distraught atmosphere is also represented in the articles that are published in connection to the one analyzed. Articles depicting churches burnt in Nigeria and the burial of the policewoman killed by the gunmen from the attacks are displayed together with the analyzed article.

As with the case of the article from the Guardian from the same time period, little references are given to Daesh or the Islamic state but more so towards European security and the “fight against extremism”.
5.2.2 ‘Staggering’ number of European jihadis

Text

Starting with the headline of the article, an aggregation is done by stating that a “Staggering” number of jihadis are entering Europe. By being vague in the quantification of the number, it gives the impression that there is validity behind the “figure” (Machin & Mayr 2012: 84). However, at the same time, the headline reads that the EU border agency “has no idea how many illegal immigrants there are”.

Mass migration is allowing terrorists to sneak into the EU, its own border agency admitted last night.

Here is an example of agency, and a clear use of nominalization through noun construction. By referring to the “mass migration” as the agent allowing terrorist to “sneak into the EU”, highlighting that “migration” is the responsible agent in this matter (Ibid. 138).

In a devastating report, it said the Paris attacks proved jihadists were exploiting the refugee crisis.

The presupposed statement of “a devastating report” connects the report to a subjective notion of its contents, already providing the reader with an opinion, before presenting the results of the report itself (Ibid. 153).

Officials also warned a ‘staggering’ number of European citizens had become jihadis and were taking advantage of lax border controls.

The use of the term “officials” could be seen as a way of functionalism in order to create more legitimacy to the claim but at the same time not giving any specific information as to who these officials are or what agency they are representing. This way no further information is needed in order to substantiate the statements (Ibid. 81)

David Davis, a former Tory frontbencher, said: ‘The border of Syria is now at Calais because in effect there is no control and no knowledge of the whereabouts of a very large number of people.’ The revelations will reignite the debate over whether being inside the EU is a threat to Britain’s national security.

Lord Howard, a former Tory leader, has warned the Schengen open-border agreement is ‘like hanging a sign welcoming terrorists to Europe’.
By both nomination and functionalization, a statement is given legitimacy and a more personal approach at the same time. This can be useful in order to instill the reader with the sensation of a personal connection while also legitimizing the statement with an official function. In the two cases above, the “Tory frontbencher” and the “former Tory leader” are very efficient seeing how the Daily Mail’s readers are predominately Conservatives with connections to the Tory party (Ibid. 81).

Former MI6 chief Sir Richard Dearlove has also argued Britain could be safer outside the EU as it would be able to kick out more terrorists and control our own borders.

In the same manner, the official role is used to legitimize claims of not so legitimate nature. The above statement is actually a very personal and quite controversial opinion, arguing that the UK “could” be safer outside the EU and “kick out more terrorists and control our own borders”.

**Discursive practice**

Looking at the number of attempts of insinuating remarkably controversial claims of how the “border of Syria is now at Calais” or “mass migration is allowing terrorists to sneak into the EU” are defended by strategies to give them legitimacy, the discursive practice becomes of special interest. If we were to determine an “order of discourse” or agenda, it would definitely by the “dangers of mass migration into the EU. Looking at the references to the Schengen border agreement and how almost all of the “official” names in the article are retired officials or vaguely accredited agencies, the fight for legitimacy is hard fought by the author.

**Social practice**

By putting the article into the social context in which it was written, one sees that the fear of further acts of terrorism in Europe has moved towards the flow of refugees entering the European Union. Perhaps not entirely unfounded, these arguments are strengthened by the fact that between 2015 and 2016 three devastating attacks in major European cities were connected to people that had been traveling back and forth to Syria. However, when statements on how the UK would be safer outside the EU are brought forward, it is visible that the argumentation is indeed unfounded and therefore further legitimacy is needed, as covered in the two previous dimensions of the analysis.
6 Results and conclusions

This chapter will account for the overall results of the analysis and the overall conclusions that can be discerned from them. By looking at both the newspapers that were analyzed respectively it is possible to draw conclusions as to the strategic use of discourse to further the political agenda of the newspapers.

By dividing the analysis into two separate parts, one for each of the newspaper, the focus will be directed to that newspaper and its articles.

6.1 The Guardian

Both of the articles that were analyzed showed traits of the passing of an agenda. However, whereas the first of the articles the agenda was more that of a subtle tentative of smoothening out the connection between religious motives and the attack at the Charlie Hebdo offices, the second was more directed towards the security responsibility of European nations (France and Belgium). Nevertheless, both analyses showed these traits; however, it was not possible to discern any type of prejudice or conceived views towards any specific group. Instead the attempts of promoting the pre-constructed ideas as uncovered in the discursive practice analysis. The first of the articles, staying true to the message in its headline – that of not giving into the fear of terrorism used predominately collectivization as means of determining a group (terrorists) and the threat the pose. Also, the uses of presupposed items, such as the idea that a powerful nation with strong leaders do not give into policies that sanction innocent people, were heavily used. The threat of another “War on terror”, due to the reaction of politicians, seems more worrying to the author than the fear posed by European religious extremism.

The second of the articles demonstrated an agenda directed towards defending Belgian interest in a debate on European security, a lot of the techniques used were presupposition to ensure that the Belgian agenda was promoted. However, the article also showed similarities to the first one, mainly in the use of careful attention to the agency, especially considering the use of collectivisation and individualization, this would be an indication of the sensitivity of
the situation discussed. In both cases, the moderate use of generalization and the common traits of carefulness in terms of cultural or religious grouping demonstrate a position true to the political views of the newspaper.

6.2 The Daily Mail

Using strategies of nominalization and presupposition, the main pre-constructed agenda of the first of the Daily Mail articles was found to be the raising fear of radical Islamists on European soil. By connecting the mass protests in some Muslim communities around the globe, showing a unity between the that would only exist theoretically and, even so, only farfetched. As for the techniques used, *impersonalization* was a reoccurring strategy. This is thought to entail a tentative of broadening the agency for certain acts, in this case, the opinions expressed by the protester to the larger group, in this article going as far as including the “Muslim world”. Furthermore, *generication* was used, together with quantification to further congregate opinions and *collectivisation* was used in the same manner. The analysis even went as far as determining that there were traces of “racialized slants” in the article due to the manner it portrayed “anti-islamist raids”. As for the pre-constructed agenda, it was determined that the idea behind the article indeed was to portray an “unruly” and chaotic “Muslim world”, as it was named various times in the article.

The second of the articles from the Daily Mail showed traits of the usage of the agency through *nominalization* and *quantification* in the reporting of mass migration. The heavy use of *functionalism* as means of legitimizing the articles claims could be determined to be plenty. The most prominent feature in the article was the direct subjectivity it portrayed and in combination with the legitimization of its statements, its argumentation proved stale and unfounded. As for the pre-constructed agenda of the article, it was determined to be an attempt of creating an alarm around the numbers of refugees migrating into the European Union and by the “official” statements given; an agenda of the UK withdrawal from the EU could be discovered.

Looking into the overall depiction of the Daily Mail in this thesis, it shows traits of a heavy use of strategies in passing the agenda of its articles onto the reader. Both articles had unfounded argumentation that was legitimized using some of the techniques identified through the analytical framework. Nevertheless, further analysis would most likely prove beneficial before drawing any conclusions as to the political agenda of the newspaper as a
whole. This, perhaps, is a sign of a certain inadequacy of this form of subjective analysis in this field of research.

### 6.3 Thesis limitations and future research

Although it is hard to draw any conclusions on the direct link between media coverage and the psychological creation of stereotypes of prejudice, this research does give an insight into how vastly news articles can differ on a semantic plane. Since the methodology applied in the thesis have been able to show examples of different techniques of a “planned discourse”, it is possible to discern the importance of a critical eye in the choice of news outlets. Especially as we, as humans, seem to be prone to picking up these subtle signals of indoctrination and make them our own. If it is the case that all news outlets have agendas that they wish to bestow upon the public, we need to be careful in the manner we choose to consume media and be aware of these agendas.

**H1 Tendencies in mass media are a powerful factor in the formation of public opinion, or even, prejudiced and xenophobic ideas.**

It is possible to say that the hypothesis used in this research is a correct one. The thesis has managed to prove that bias is indeed a factor in mass media, and although one might not go so far as saying that the thesis actually uncovered xenophobic ideas in any of the articles analyzed, there is still evidence of the projection of an agenda. Now, depending on what that agenda is, a news outlet can work in order to promote that idea. This is especially true when it comes to the analysis of the last of the articles from the Daily mail, where an agenda of UK’s exit from the European Union was snuck into the reporting of mass migration. This is just an example of how such techniques can be used. Now, to determine any further claims of xenophobia in the UK press a more extensive research would most likely be needed.

**Can the way perpetrators of violent acts, and their background, are pictured play into our perception of a larger group?**

Coming back to the research question stated in the beginning of the thesis, it is possible to answer it using the result of the analysis. It is definitely true that these are factors adding to our perception of a larger group. However, just as with the hypothesis, to achieve any
substantial evidence of how this perception takes form, and how it is adapted to be considered a “public opinion”, a more profound research would be needed. Perhaps even bringing up tendencies of how media affect people on a psychological level. The nature of this thesis, analyzing news articles on semantic, discursive and social accounts fills a purpose. It’s direct approach to discourse analysis is resolute and efficient. However, a research of a larger scale, highlighting the psychological drivers for generating a “public opinion” would be of a great importance if any general conclusions about the effect of mass media should be made. Perhaps a connection with the psychological background of creating a personal opinion could prove an important footing before venturing off into explaining the relations behind the formation of opinion on a larger scale. Nevertheless, I am certain of the fact that this research adds some aggregated value to the discourse around public opinion and the spread of islamophobia.
7 References


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