

SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP REVISITED: A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON  
TERRORISM IN THE TRANSATLANTIC REGION

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To those who lost their loved ones fighting for peace

To all the counter-terrorism efforts out there

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## ABSTRACT

Nourah Shuaibi: Symbiotic Relationship Revisited: A Study on the Impact of Mass Media on Terrorism in the TransAtlantic Region  
(Under the direction of Holger Moroff)

The mass media have had a strong presence in publicizing acts of terror throughout regions where such activities can be seen. Since the late 1960s scholars agreed on the existence of a relationship between mass media and terrorism, which they called ‘a symbiotic relationship’. However, minimal efforts have been dedicated to empirical studies on the impact of terrorism intensity due to media coverage. This research set out to examine the literature to support the impact on acts of terror through mass communication. The study concluded that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the correlation due to outdated approaches to the matter in question. The existing data is limited to the period until 2005. This thesis provides a refurbished model to collect recent data from 2005 to the present. The renovated model shows promise to establishing a stronger correlation for this symbiotic relationship.

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## INTRODUCTION

A relationship between the media and acts of terror has been debated amongst scholars for years, which resulted in minimal empirical evidence to prove the effects of such a relationship. There might be a common agreement that the media has an impact on the portrayal of terrorist activities as well as the terrorists' need for media coverage specifically within the transatlantic community, where media plays a special role in defining the essence of democracy and the respect for human rights. Hence, there is a relationship of some sort in this equation, but with very little literature empirically analyzing it and finding correlation on whether the media increases the occurrence of terrorism. There is one study composed by Nelson and Scott in 1992 that empirically studies whether media coverage increases the instances of terrorism in the period between 1968-1984, which yielded no results in the significance or strength of the relationship's correlation.

However, there has been some more recent studies on the psychological impact of media coverage on the public's opinion and reaction, which present a clue at reassessing the hypothesis of Nelson and Scott within today's intensely media-focused public spheres of a globalized world. With the aid of studies such as that of Schbley's in 2004, which noted the impact of the media on the propensity of Muslim zealots for terrorism and others that represented inaccuracies and misinterpreted information of the media impact on terrorism coverage (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2004), this paper will examine the relationship between the media and terrorist activities to answer the



following question: does the media have a role in inflating the perceived success of terrorism? Assuming that one of the goals of terrorists is media attention to reach the mass population – which will be examined further in this paper – then more media coverage means more success by definition; hence, deeming the answer to the previous question obvious. However, more research will be applied to prove the assumption presented as well as the evidence for media in encouraging or intensifying acts of terror. The focus of the studies will be mainly on the European Union (EU) and its counterpart, the United States (US). This Transatlantic relationship is extremely essential in examining the role of the media on terrorism, since these regions encompass the very essence of the freedom of the press and the principles of Democracy that might be a key to the attraction of terrorist activity on their soil. The EU and the US have a unique relationship that made them prone to being the targets of terrorism; hence the empirical data within this research will focus on these regions specifically.

This paper is divided in three main sections. The first will be dedicated to identifying if there is indeed a relationship between mass media and terrorism, the second section will determine the consequences of this relationship and the third will provide a recommendation section with adjusted guided approaches to conduct a more concise research on the cause-effect relationship in question within a more recent data base. The guided approaches will be examined to whether this relationship means that the media has a role in intensifying terrorism or if the correlation of the effect of the media is in fact weak as Nelson and Scott's paper suggests. The intensity moreover, will be examined on whether there has been an increase in terrorist activities due to media

coverage, as well as the intensity in brutality, which equates to the number of casualties and the means to which the killing is executed among other factors.

The methodology of the paper will be an adoption and an evolution of Rohner and Frey's model, which intends to assess the strategic interaction between terrorists and the media (2007). This model will be further emphasized by several view points of other authors about the role of the media in reporting terrorism such as Adesina Lukuman Azeez (2009), Anita Peresin (2007), and Gabriel Weimann's "The Psychology of Mass-Mediated Terrorism" (2008). Euro barometer polls and other opinion polls from citizens in Europe will be presented to better assess the relationship's impact on citizens' views in how they perceive acts of terror as dictated by the media.

Since the majority of literature on terrorism and the media suggest that there is a symbiotic relationship existing between the two factors, this paper will try to formulate an encompassing model with theoretical as well as empirical factors to demonstrate the inescapable truth of the interaction between media outlets and terrorist activities. A dangerous codependency between the two would represent an inseparable love-hate relationship. In other words, terrorist groups require media coverage to grow and gain ideological influence, wherein the media receives great monetary gains from increased viewer ratings and a competitive advantage amongst rival media channels.

The results of the research would signify a relevant importance in countering terrorism, where this topic suggests a way that the EU and the US would carry out counter terrorism approaches through media outlets. The media will prove to be an

essential agent in influencing the perception of terrorism, whether in elevating the phenomenon, or alleviating it.

## **DETERMINING THE RELATIONSHIP: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MASS MEDIA AND TERRORISM?**

A symbiotic relationship has been identified to exert the very existence of the media and terrorism today. Scholars such as Frey (1988,2004), Hoffman (1998) and Wilkinson (2000) argued that there is a relationship between the mass media and terrorism and this relationship would exemplify the characteristic of symbiosis. This description suggests that there is a common-interest pendulum formulating the equation for the media and terrorism to coexist. Abraham Miller, a political scientist further asserts that this relationship operates on codependence where neither actor can step out. He states:

Terrorism is capable of writing any drama – no matter how horrible – to compel the media’s attention ... Terrorism, like an ill-mannered *enfant terrible*, is the media’s stepchild, a stepchild which the media, unfortunately, can neither completely ignore nor deny.

-Tuman, 2003: 115

Hoffman in 2003 stated that there are three revolutions in mass communication, which had a direct influence on terrorism (Hoffman, 2003). One revolution occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the wake of the invention of the printing machine (pp. 9). This invention enabled the printing of papers in great numbers, which increased the outreach of news to more households and more of the public gained access to the printing press news. This era also showed a symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorism in the example of Narodnaya Volye and their anarchist contemporaries.

According to Hoffman, the anarchists were able to use the papers printed to communicate their message across to a wider audience.

The second revolution in the aid of proving the undoubting symbiotic relationship is the launching of the first television satellite by the United States in 1968 (Peresin, 2007: 9). This also coincided with the birth of international terrorism. The invention accelerated news broadcasting which enabled terrorists to immediately use it to achieve their goals. An expanded outreach of news enabled terrorists to fathom a revolutionary spread of their ideas to a global audience and not just a local one.

The third revolution did not coincide with the invention or creation of a new machine or a technological breakthrough but it changed the way news is administered by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. News channels produced for the first time a 24/7-news cycle with on the clock broadcasting. This technique, according to Hoffman is known as the “CNN syndrome” (Peresin, 2007). This round-the-clock news proclaimed American media as “the best intelligence agency” (Peresin, 2007: 9).

Another factor that should count, in my opinion, for a strong base of the three revolutions is that mass media communication emerged within a Democratic scene where freedom of speech is one right translated through freedom of the press. This factor portrayed ease in spreading one’s ideology through news. Hence, if this technology was not valued as a fundamental right for the functioning of a Democratic system, then the influential spread of the media would not have had the same grip on shaping today’s perception of world news. Terrorists from authoritative regimes would not have had the chance to take advantage of this Democratic principle in their

respective countries, which allow media coverage with limited freedom and heightened governmental censorship.

To further examine the relationship between media and terrorism, the motives for each actor to exist must be examined. The media industry for most cases is a business, which seeks profits. Publicly funded media such as the BBC falls under the same spectrum due to its dependence on viewer ratings and sales of their self-launched shows on DVD's for example. Hence the equation includes all types of media regardless of the funding involved, because they all seek to upsurge their viewer ratings and gain an expanded pool of followers for increased influence. This indubitable truth of the media's reliance on public ratings to generate profits and other means of recognition gives way to unravel the attraction to theatrical and dramatic news that stirs the public emotions. In fact, the amount of money generated by every percentage of increase in viewer ratings raises the annual profit by tens of millions of pounds with privately owned media (Wilkinson, 2002). This financial reality draws any profit-oriented industry to emphasize on increasing publicity by any means possible. Since terrorism became theatrical, the news media is unable to resist any chance of a good story, so the media is obliged to provide intensive coverage of terrorist bombings, kidnappings, assassinations and hijackings.

Terrorists, on the other hand are drawn to news media coverage to gain maximum publicity, which in return enhances their ideology through symbolic actions. It is crucial that terrorists obtain coverage at the largest news channels to gain more legitimacy through the reputable television station. Hence, there is also a hierarchy of news coverage that terrorist groups have the convenience of prioritizing due to the

expanding influence of the mass media. This means that terrorist activities should always be innovative and changing to attract top news outlets, due to the media constantly being in need of new angles and diversity in news coverage. Walter Laqueur (1976) emphasizes on the inescapable truth of this unbreakable relationship by stating, “terrorists have learned that the media are of paramount importance in their campaigns that the terrorist act by itself is next to nothing, whereas publicity is all” (Azeez, 2009: 4). The Brazilian Carlos Marighela sums up the importance of the media for any successful terrorist movement in his book “Minimanual of Urban Guerrilla” (1969). He is considered one of the most influential theorists of modern terror, as he was a terrorist as well. Marighela outlines the use of the media for successful terrorist movements, which became a manual for terrorists worldwide:

To kidnap figures known for their artistic, sporting, or other activities who have not expressed any political views may possibly provide a form of propaganda favorable to the revolutionaries ... modern mass media, simply by announcing what the revolutionaries are doing, are important instruments for propaganda. The war of nerves, or the psychological war, is a fighting technique based on the direct or indirect use of the mass media.

-Marighela, 1969:87-90

This influential piece became evident with later terrorist attacks and terrorist declarations justifying their acts, which paid careful attention to strategic events, times, and places. An example of that is the 1972 Munich Olympics attack on Israeli athletes.

One of the terrorists who orchestrated the attacks testified:

We recognize that sport is the modern religion of the Western world. We knew that the people in England and America would switch their television sets from any program about the plight of the Palestinians if there was a sporting event on another channel. So we decided to use their Olympics ... to make the world pay attention to us ... from Munich onwards, nobody could ignore the Palestinians of their cause.

-Gabriel Weimann, 2008:70

The September 11, 2001 attacks were also theatrical performances greatly amplified by the media to further prove to the terrorists the importance of media exploitation in publicizing their message. In this sense, terrorist acts have been a success in terms of public attention and the ability to promote terrorist agenda to the global community.

The model of *Triangle of Political Communication* by Brigitte L. Nacos (2002) is among the first theoretical models to demonstrate the potency of the symbiotic relationship between terrorist groups and the media. The following figure demonstrates the communication between the general public and government officials, where the media is the facilitator or transmitter of the communication.

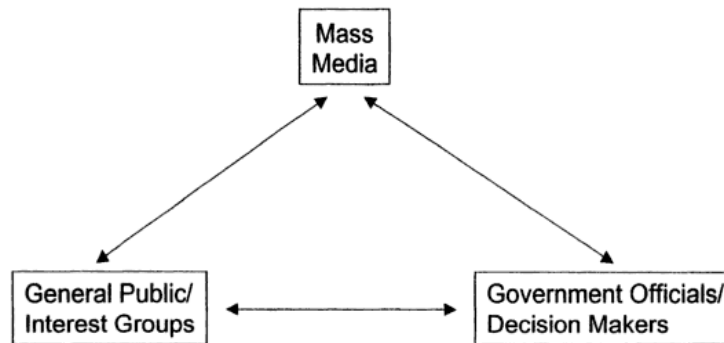


Figure 1: *The triangle of political communication (Nacos, 2002:11).*

The government can utilize the media to demonstrate a certain agenda item through to the public or use it to sway public opinion on certain policy endeavors. The same relationship applies for the general public, where certain commercials or interviews can portray specific public opinion to be demonstrated to governmental entities. This relationship draws an explicit image of mass media's role within society and political structures, which is what makes it a luring medium to be exploited by terrorist groups.



Of course media channels are not considered neutral or passive in construing any message on television, hence competing to gain the media's interest to publicize a message is crucial. The media is in a position to decide which story is newsworthy, which needs to gain maximum media coverage, or what details of a story are excluded from the viewer's scope. This point brings terrorist groups to strategize their attacks accordingly to gain maximum coverage and to have their political message publicized as well. The certain messages pertaining to the aim of terrorism moreover, must be understood to better examine the crucial use for the media to deliver terrorist success. David L. Paletz and Alex P. Schmid defined several terrorist goals using the mass media as a means to an end (1992).

The first goal, argued by the authors is the demonstration of a terrorist movement's strength. This goal pertains to the fact that terrorists want to show governments that they are compatible challengers and can showcase their opponents as more vulnerable players. They do this by embarrassing or humiliating their enemies (Camphuijsen & Vissers, 2012). The success of this message is dictated by the publicity gained for their cause, which was evident in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The publicity of this attack reached a global audience, which in return amplified the capabilities of terrorist groups when infiltrating the world's hegemony and at the heart of its symbolic power and authority.

Paletz and Schmid also argue that another major goal for terrorists is to raise public resentment towards their government. Terrorists make use of emergency government repression to demonstrate a reality that the public might not want to live through, which increases the likelihood for people to consider joining terrorist groups,

because they are not directly involved with restricting their freedoms due to emergency legislation for homeland security for instance. Repressive action on the part of authorities tends to present a darker side of government entities and would in turn breed resistance from the public and a motive to join the terrorist cause. The media, therefore, is used to portray such repression and publicize government actions and the responsibilities of citizens in the new societal order. This indirectly helps in spreading the terrorists' political message.

Another goal of terrorist groups aided by mass media is “the demoralization of their opponents and raising of the morale of the terrorist group and its supporters” (Camphuijsen & Vissers, 2012:17). This aspect has been indirectly achieved by the media when they choose to humanize the terrorists and provide a background story of who the criminals are, which gives way to public sympathy. The media can publish a particular act of violence or investigate the underlying motivation of the act, which might engender understanding and foster a connection from the audience. This particular role of the media might have an impact on the increased recruitment of Western fighters to terrorist groups today. The process of pseudo speciation as identified by Erik Erikson explains the same idea of what the media here attempts to achieve, be it indirectly or directly. Erikson explains how killing in general is justified due to the fact that the targets are dehumanized and are treated or propagated as inhuman without capabilities of emotions in order for the killers to dissociate their consciousness of guilt towards the victims. This process is being practiced in entirely opposite ways by the media, which tends to portray terrorists as humans like any other and might be in need salvation from the public.

Another goal for terrorists is to polarize public opinion and radicalize a significant portion of the population. This is meant to create chaos and fear among citizens, which might yield uncertainties and increase insecurities towards the authorities. This shows that the government might not be fully in control, which may lead to social conflict. In order to promote this perception, terrorist groups utilize media exposure, which proves to be of utter importance in this matter. Finally, terrorists believe that the violence committed is necessary and is in fact the only recourse to 'set things right' and hence would promote their actions as heroic. The media accentuates this goal when the terrorists' message of violence as a means to an end is publicized as such, rather than an end by itself (Paletz & Schmid, 1992).

The strategy that terrorists use to exploit the media has been identified with a clear understanding on what are their goals for making a use of the mass media. The way the media has greatly sensationalized terrorist reputation is an inevitable task that needs to be identified, because the majority of literature agrees that the judgment of the acts themselves have been publicized in a negative light. However, modern reporting has acquired positive attributes that greatly changed the image of terrorists. This change will be examined thereafter to analyze whether the symbiotic relationship has been an aid to the terrorist cause or if it in fact has been a counter terrorism tool. Ieva Cepulkauskaite (2000) conducted a study to examine the influence of mass media on terrorist activities. Her findings will be examined in the section of the effects of this symbiotic relationship. However, in this section her four elements on the shift of reporting news on terrorist activities will be examined here to portray how the five goals identified by Paletz & Schmid are indirectly administered by the media.

The public notion of terrorism has 'improved' in the sense that the negative light linked to acts of terror offers alternatives to understanding terrorist persona in the eyes of the public spectators. The shift in reporting has demonstrated an interesting relationship between the public and terrorist groups through four steps that the media has taken when reporting terrorist attacks. The media has used: rationalization of terrorism, labeling of terrorism, terrorists as solitary fighters, and the *Stockholm syndrome* when administering reports to the public (Peresin, 2007).

Rationalization of terrorism refers to providing an explanation for the terrorist act in play. The media tends to explain the reasons for aggression committed against the innocent before presenting the news about the terror act itself. Reporters attempt to find the motives and show the political context in which the terrorists are portraying their demands. This process of reporting might have a profound effect on arousing sympathy for the terrorists, where a sense of identification is offered to the public to somehow relate to the terrorists in question.

Labeling of terrorism on the other hand, is when the media gives terrorists different names when identifying them. For example, terrorists are sometimes referred to as "killers", "fighters for independence" or other labels as such. The labels all have differing connotations and some might be connected to positive values, which can view the terrorists in a brighter light to the public and might aid the cause of their mission. Labeling is a serious matter that needs to be used strategically to convey the right message to the public and have the desired effect for the government being targeted.

The third aspect is showing terrorists as solitary fighters. Terror acts are usually portrayed with a couple of people and do not exemplify a whole force or an army trying

to bomb a place. Therefore, showing the terrorists as solitary fighters being surrounded by police forces and special squads creates an asymmetrical fighting scene to the average person watching the news on television. It is argued by scholars that presenting terrorists as individuals whom are ready to sacrifice their lives as they are outnumbered by capable forces often yield a positive image of bravery and chivalry (Peresin, 2007). This characteristic connotes to the respected and idealized heroes of Western mythologies and stories told to children. A connotation as such would inevitably yield undesired sympathy from the public to terrorists and would in return encourage acts of terror.

Finally, the forth and last shift of media reporting is the *Stockholm syndrome*. Briefly, this term refers to a psychological phenomenon in which hostages express empathy and have positive feelings toward their captures. This syndrome is also known as capture bonding. Victims of terror acts often tend to identify themselves with the perpetrators and their motives. This is seen when a victim sees a humane side to the criminal. An example of that is when terrorists release a pregnant woman in a hostage situation or when helping older hostages and calming down others. The media can portray these unexpected acts of compassion, where the effects are visible on the public's consciousness following the act.

Of course this relationship should not be confused to personify an intimate and positive bond between the media and terrorism. On the contrary, terrorists have not always been fond of the techniques the media have had on transmitting their message. They have noted the power of disseminating any message through to the audience as it can profoundly hurt the image of the terrorists themselves. Specific to Islamic Jihad for

instance, Manuel Soriano argues that “Al Qaeda ... believe the West is using media as a tool of war by lying about the motivations behind both the jihad movement and the motivation of Western governments”(2008:6). The media is claimed to be responsible for distorting the salafis message of liberation and they were immediately seen in a negative light.

From this distortion comes a four point list that Soriano argues to be the terrorist point of view - in this case the jihadist's - in the negative impact media has on their message. The first is referred to how the media diverts attention to the bigger issues of the Muslim population as a whole and focuses on insignificant details or on issues of little importance. The bigger picture in this case is always diverted from what the jihadists claim their message as is representative of the whole Muslim cause.

The second point is that the media has been exaggerating the military strength of the West, which puts the terrorists in a weaker stance to influence a bigger crowd. The third point of distress is that the media often distorts the image of Arabs and links their motivation to that of a madman (Baran, 2008). The fourth and final point is that Western military violence against Al Qaeda is widely accepted due to the fact that the media promotes western aggression against Islam. Aggression is then justified as the means to rid of the perceived madman. It is inevitable to acknowledge, however, that this equation is mutual when seen in the point of view of the media. The West uses the media as a tool to convey their message whether it was the promotion of the war against terror or the creation of a strong civil front through nationalism, terrorists use the media as well to engage in the same approach that their opposition does. Either way, the media is undoubtedly used as a tool to satisfy an end goal.

The above case does not in any way discredit the accusations on terrorists' acts and so committing acts of terror is not justified, because of the media's responsibility in tainting what is claimed to be their noble cause. Therefore, terrorists did not only master the use of the television media, but a new phenomenon came across as a valuable tool to exploit to the benefit of the terrorist cause as well. The Internet is another form of mass media communication that had a huge impact on terrorist activity by the end of 1999 (Weimann, 2008: 74). This presence is a fairly new subject to be explored in literature. Scholars are still processing the birth of this phenomenon within the hands of terrorists as it is well alive and in great use amongst today's terrorist groups.

The facts around the establishment of Web sites, online forums, and chat rooms serving terrorists and their supporters is astonishing. In 1998 there were approximately a dozen Web sites operated by terrorist organizations, where this number grew to 2,300 in 2003 and up to more than 5,300 Web sites at the end of 2006 (Weimann, 2006: 75). These numbers could easily be quadrupled today. The Internet, according to Gabriel Weimann has started off serving terrorist groups as well as individual terrorists who want to spread their messages of hate and violence and attract followers and fans. Today, moreover, terrorists are benefiting greatly from the use of the Internet than attacking it, where cyberwarfare and cyberterrorism has been one of the evolutionary warfare tactics.

The advantages of the Internet, hence, prove to be staggering. The Internet is decentralized and is not subjected to control or restriction. It allows access to anyone around the world, which makes it ideal for terrorists as a means of communication.

These lucrative characteristics are just the beginning of what terrorists could establish with a playing field that is all theirs. The structure of the Internet made it easier for terrorist groups to communicate and conduct meetings on coded transmissions. This gave way to a new term coined by Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2001, 2003) called “netwar”. Netwar refers to “an emerging mode of conflict and crime at societal levels involving measures short of traditional war in which the propagandists ... consist of small, dispersed groups who communicate, coordinate, and conduct their campaigns” through the internet without any central command per se (Weimann, 2008:75). This has been evident in the case of Al Qaeda due to it being a flexible and adaptive entity with a decentralized structure.

Terrorist groups have established multiple websites and chat rooms and have utilized the Internet to attract supporters, manipulate potential supporters, appeal to the international community and target their enemies. Many terrorist groups have been documented and they include groups from all corners of the world. Those in Europe include organizations such as the Basque ETA movement, Armata Corsa, and the Real Irish Republican Army (Weimann, 2008: 76-77). The appeal of such websites extend beyond television media and is in a way a form of attracting news channels to broadcast manipulated images of terrorist causes.

The website features multiple versions of local as well as other languages to cater to the viewers and for those who are just curious to know more. Extensive historical background and justifications for the violence committed by the specific group are also conveniently portrayed on the pages of terrorist groups’ websites. The images of beheadings and other terror acts are also streamed online on their respective



websites to publicize the terrorists' plans and commitment to perceived justice. The international 'bystander' is another public pool that the terrorists attract on their websites. These people are usually the public and surfers who are not involved in the conflict. This is evident through the presentation of simple and basic information about the organization (Weimann, 2008).

The images and uncensored footage on the Internet has also pushed television news channels to adjust their standards on the type of footage they would show. This resulted in a type of competition between news outlets and the Internet to generate higher viewer ratings, which in return pushed television outlets to show visuals that might not been common before (Baran, 2008). This new communication technology is pushing the boundaries for what television audiences are used to viewing, which might have profound consequences on the effect of terrorism on local societies. Press releases are also often placed on the Websites. The detailed background information and other useful material has been luring for other television reporters to gather more material to report on in international news. As a matter of fact, according to Weimann (2008) one of Hezbollah's sites actually addresses journalists to interact with the organization's press office via e-mail. One main benefit that is seen through the terrorists' eyes is that the Internet allows a two-way communication between the audience and the terrorists, which continues to create a stronger bond for recruitment and other activities in delivering a message globally.

This determined relationship between mass media and terrorism has demonstrated its inescapable compatibility between the two in today's world. However, before heading to the next section of examining whether the media does in fact have an

effect on terrorism, this section will briefly examine another byproduct that births from this relationship. Propaganda war as many authors call it, has been evident proof of the strong bond of the symbiotic relationship.

Many scholars contend that propaganda war has been initiated by contemporary media communication (Peresin, 2007). Negative publicity is known to hurt the terrorist's mission to absolute justice and hence, committing certain acts such as bank assaults, ambushes and diversion of arms solely for propaganda effects (Marighela, 1969). Propaganda war, according to Peresin can be "a very powerful psychological weapon and can greatly increase the effect of certain actions" within terrorism (2007:9). Propaganda through media has been used by terrorists numerous and can be identified within four main objectives to deliver terrorist agenda.

Some acts of terror are committed to convey the propaganda of the deed and to create extreme fear among the terrorists' target group, which is considered the first objective of propaganda war. The second is to mobilize wider support for the cause of terrorists. This is targeted towards the general audience and the international arena by emphasizing that such acts resemble righteousness and are truly morally justified. The promise of victory is once again emphasized to manipulate public opinion through media propaganda.

The third objective of propaganda war is to destabilize the enemy by disrupting the response of the targeted government for example. This is also seen to distract potentially successful deterrence of the security forces and gives more time for the terrorists to appeal their case by gaining compassion and support through propaganda. The fourth objective is to inspire further attacks. This is done by promoting the

terrorists' cause and inciting more support, increased recruitment and raising more funds through the mobilization of the masses.

This is all a careful tactical game that terrorists prepare for to be able to exploit the mass media and deliver their message globally. Of course the media's objectives are well publicized, hence it is easier for the terrorist groups to strategize a newsworthy story to gain maximum publicity through a highly viewed channel. However, through the market of increased competition, media outlets are instigated by many limitations to reporting. Terrorists, therefore exercise the upper hand on propaganda war through the Internet. The websites created give terrorist organizations complete autonomy and freedom to represent their cause and image in any light they desire, therefore, infiltrating propaganda war in a more cunning and impressionable way.

Now that a relationship between the media and terrorism has been established as a symbiotic one and encompassing inseparable attraction, it is necessary to examine the effects and consequences of this relationship on the public, the terrorists themselves as well as on any counter terrorism efforts attempted by targeted governments. The following section attempts to answer the questions pertaining to the effect of this relationship on terrorism.

## **THE RELATIONSHIP EXAMINED: IS IT NEGATIVE, POSITIVE, OR NEUTRAL?**

The role that the media plays in the occurrence of terrorism, despite the doubtless symbiosis, has been greatly debated and many scholars such as the French sociologist Michel Wieviorka and the Spanish communication theorist Miquel Rodrigo claim that there is not enough evidence to prove that media has any effect on instigating terrorism. Wieviorka denies any symbiosis between the two players and that terrorists relate to the media on four different levels that range from pure-indifference to media to media-oriented strategy (Biernatzki, 2002: 5). In other words, terrorists do not always commit acts of violence to strategically attract media attention, where publicity could be is their last concern.

Another opposing view is Rodrigo's, where he argues that the mass media cannot be scientifically shown as the sole player for the complex phenomenon of terrorism. He continues to say that terrorism cannot be considered a fundamental act of communication (Biernatzki, 2002). The scientific evidence is hence lacking for any cause-effect relationship between media coverage and the spread of terrorism. Although there are many people who would disagree with the above-mentioned scholars, scientific evidence and empirical studies have been under-done in literature and there are hardly any studies to show the existence of the consequences of such a relationship.

However, Margaret Thatcher's stout remark on the media being the 'oxygen' to terrorist activity (Peresin, 2007: 19) hints at an obvious need to prove such a relationship. Others who followed suit are Peter C. Kratcoski who stated "if one of the elements of terrorism is the wish to obtain publicity for a cause and create propaganda, the media has obviously overreacted in responding to this desire" (Biernatzki, 2002:6). Brian Jenkins, the senior adviser to the RAND corporation also claimed "terrorism is a product of freedom, particularly freedom of the press (Biernatzki, 2002:5). Alex P. Schmid provides another argument that would oppose Rodrigo's stance on the lack of evidence in his book *Violence as Communication* (1982) when he identifies the basic view of how terrorist actions should be seen. He argues that terrorism should be seen as a means of communication to deliver a message of political change across, rather than identified as mere unjustifiable violence and "this type of terrorism has to be explained in relation to the prevailing information order and the news values that are paramount within this order" (Biernatzki, 2002:9).

Henceforth, this section will attempt to draw on every scholar's observations and gather several opinion polls conducted in Europe as well as reports from the Sixth Framework Program, a project on Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law financed by the European Commission and a unique empirical study by Dominic Rohner and Bruno S. Frey to present an approach to empirically view the existence or non-existence of a cause-effect relationship between mass media and terrorism. The studies will focus on exploring this relationship in Europe as a region, due to the number of target terrorist activities taking place throughout history and for the region being an attractive hub for recent homegrown terrorism. These different studies

provide a portion of the puzzle to finally gather scientific material to test this recent phenomenon and give way to future research that would open the field of scientific revelation towards today's terrorism. Each study will be specifically examined hereafter.

### ***Impact on Public Opinion***

Alexander Spencer conducted a study to examine the salience of the mention of the term 'terrorism' in leading British newspapers to observe any effect salience has on British public opinion through the semi-annual standardized Eurobarometer polls from 2003 to 2011. The author suggests a correlation between the salience of terrorism in news media and the importance of the term in public opinion. Spencer expected that the salience of terrorism in the media in Britain was highest in the six months following the London bombings in 2005 and this was due to another hypothesis of his that states that an expected increase in violent attacks will lead to more public attention due to it being luring to the mass media (Spencer, 2012 figure 2).

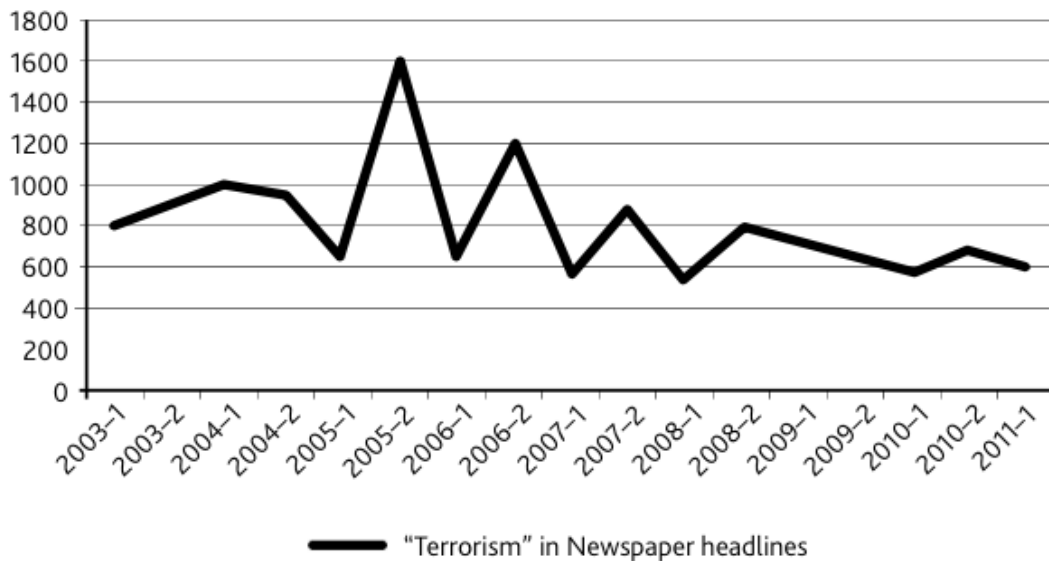


Figure 2: Salience of terrorism in newspaper headlines (Alexander Spencer March 2012)

The following chart shows a tally of Eurobarometer results twice a year starting from 2003 to 2011 with a center question: what do you think are the two most important issues facing Britain at the moment? (Standard Eurobarometer No. 59-74).

Standard Eurobarometer	Percentage	Rank
2003-1	28%	3
2003-2	17%	4
2004-1	25%	3
2004-2	28%	2
2005-1	14%	6
2005-2	34%	2
2006-1	17%	5
2006-2	35%	2
2007-1	25%	3
2007-2	17%	4
2008-1	13%	6
2008-2	9%	8
2009-1	9%	8
2009-2	6%	8
2010-1	6%	9
2010-2	12%	7
2011-1	11%	8

*Figure 3: Public priorities on issues concerning their country (Alexander Spencer March 2012)*

From 2003 to 2006 there has been high responses to how the public prioritizes issues concerning their country and terrorism remained mostly ranked the second or the third on the public's list of importance on consistent basis. This chart along with the previous line graph compiled on the salience of the term terrorism clearly show an impact on media formulating public opinion in publicizing terrorist news.

Spencer then dives into a deeper dimension to explore the effects of this relationship. He looks at another element that could play a significant role in formulating the necessary evidence to finally put the whole debate on the media and terrorism to rest. Framing is one key element that news media pays close attention to

when composing a certain newsworthy story. His paper considers the implications of how knowledge about terrorists is presented as well as the language used to influence the perception of the public towards terrorism, which might ultimately give way to adding another component of the influence on the spread of terror aided by the media.

The first framing technique tackled is the use of metaphors. The author distinguishes between conceptual metaphors and metaphoric expressions by stating the following:

The conceptual metaphor, for example terrorism is war, involves the abstract connection between one 'conceptual domain' to another by mapping a source domain (war) and a target domain (terrorism) ... however, metaphorical expressions are directly visible and represent the specific statements found in the text which the conceptual metaphor draws on.

- Spencer 2012:16

The significance for human cognition through the use of media for metaphors exemplifies importance in justifying the perception of terrorists from the general public. The next metaphor explored is the 9/11 'war on terror'. This metaphor illustrated an actual war and brought back cognitive connections to Pearl Harbor and other battles, where Osama Bin Laden has been declared a 'terror war lord' (Spencer, 2012: 17). Hence the salience of the metaphor 'war on terror' was studied in British newspapers. The implications of such salience made the prospects of military intervention a viable and an appropriate response. For example, between 67 and 74 percent of people surveyed support military action by Britain against Afghanistan in 2001, and in 2002 the number was consistently high and it continued until 2004 (Spencer, 2012: 18). In 2006 there was a downturn on the number of war metaphors in British newspapers, where this resulted in a recession on public support for the 'war on terror'. This evidence indicates a correlation between public support of the war and the



media's metaphoric use of war terms on terror. Other metaphors were studied as well in Spencer's research like 'evil' and other terms labeled for terrorists with the same correlation occurring.

Moreover, a study by the Sixth Framework Program in 2008 was conducted in Europe to examine the effects of the media on three possible targets: the public, the government or policy decisions, and possible effects on terrorism (terrorists). The researchers affirm Hoffman's statement that the real issue of the media and terrorism "is not so much the relationship itself, which is widely acknowledged to exist, but whether it actually affects public opinion and government decision making ... in a manner that favors or assist terrorists" (Hoffman, 2006:183). Hence, the hunt for answers begins with secondary sources in literature and primary, such as opinion polls and media analyses.

Brigitte Nacos conducted interesting studies to give scholars who followed insight on the correlation of this relationship. She found out that after the 9/11 events, news consumption was tainted by fear of terrorism as opposed to people who did not consume the news very closely (Nacos, 2006). Her studies are mainly focused on the United States, but her findings suggest interesting implications to Europe, as the Sixth Framework Program suggests. Later studies done by Nacos and other scholars found that attention to terrorism in the media does not have a strong effect on the way the public perceives terrorist threat. However, a factor was determined to present correlation into the equation. This factor was 'who' conveys the message (Sixth Framework program 2008). Nacos suggests that if the source were authoritative, where

the message has been delivered by a terrorist or a known leader, then people would react to the threat of terrorism differently (2006).

Another experimental study conducted by Michelle Slone in Israel provided a significant relationship between watching related news footage of terrorists and the creation of a heightened state of anxiety among the public (2000). She conducted this experiment with different groups exposed to different footage, where the clips ranged from terrorism and security threats to one group and other random events to another group. This experiment however, only examines the immediate response of media footage and does not convey the possibility of long-term effects.

Hoffman on the other hand, has found one clear impact of the symbiotic relationship on public behavior. This impact is a reduced willingness to travel by air after being exposed to terrorist coverage in the media (Sixth Framework Program, 2008). There is apparently quite an effect of this relationship where evidence have been scattered around, which resulted in minimal supported for any correlation. Hence, the Sixth Framework Program looked at more research analysis to determine the strength of the suggested correlation. The Transnational terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law (TTSRL) research was conducted through an intensive view of Eurobarometer opinion polls done by the European Union. The approach taken was similar to that of Alexander Spencer's. However, a closer look at each country was the main divergence between both researches. The graph shown below demonstrates the answer for the same question that Spencer took from the Eurobarometer, but this graph is an accumulation of all European Union members.

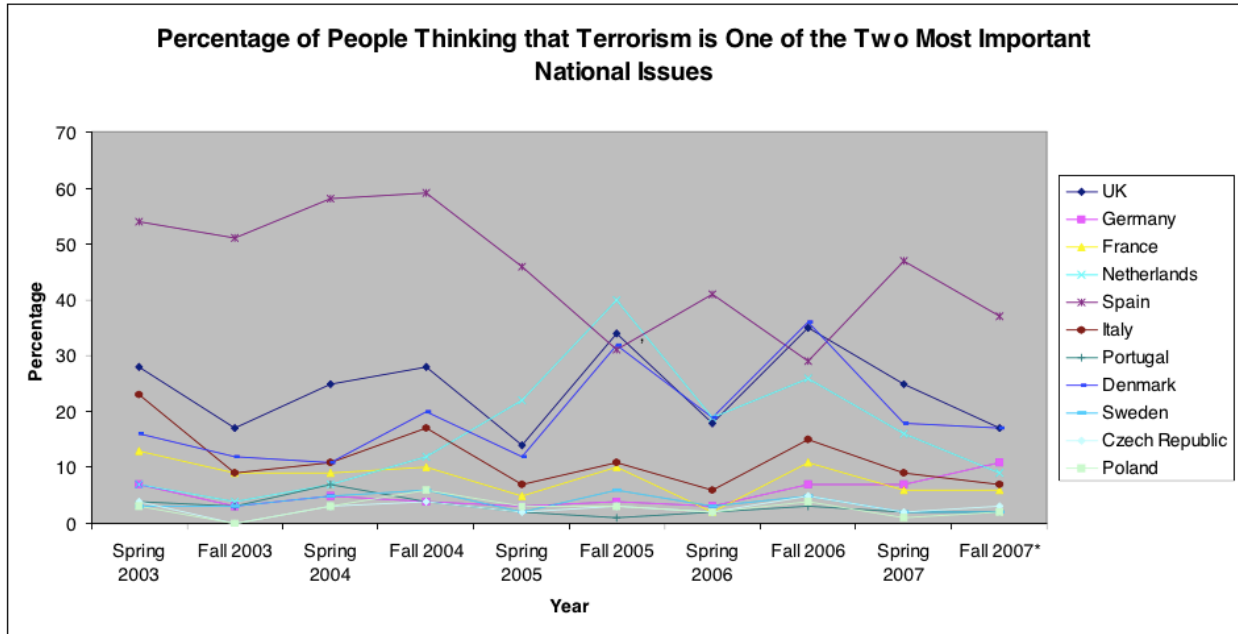


Figure 4: Public opinion on terrorism and national issues (TTSRL research: Sixth Framework Program 2008)

The fluctuations could be explained through numerous reasons, where the significance of terrorism coverage in the media could be one. The peak in fall of 2005 for example, can be explained by the atrocious act of the London bombings. However, this would explain why Britain’s percentage is high but it would not explain why other countries scored high as well unless the perception or salience of the issue of terrorism has been a factor within media at that time. The study then goes further to examine each country’s results with the salience of terrorism in media for that time to better determine whether there is a correlation. The results show a mixed spectrum. Germany, Britain and Netherlands show similar trends in the threat perception on the public and media attention to the subject. The trends shift with world events, which is what is expected from a strong correlation between the two factors studied. However, France generally demonstrates a more focused local media attention, which makes it rather interesting to see whether after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the

results on the Eurobarometer would differ, because France actually experienced the proximity of terrorism on its own soil.

Another study was taken from PARANOID and analyzed to see the significance of certain words and their rank of importance within each year.

2003	2004	2005	2006
CDA	Muslim and its derivatives	Muslim and its derivatives	Netherlands
Iraq	Netherlands	Netherlands	Muslim and its derivatives
Netherlands	People	Terrorism	American
American	Terrorism	European	Dutch
Bush	Yesterday	People	Terrorism
Fortuyn	American	Yesterday	People
The Hague	Dutch	Other	Minister
Hillen	Iraq	Minister	Bush
Percent	Bush	American	Other
People	President	Dutch	Yesterday

Figure 5: Public perception on terrorism (TTSRL research: Sixth Framework Program 2008)

This chart might give a hint at the correlation between media coverage and public opinion. According to the study, the assassination of Theodore Van Gogh a Dutch film director was not mentioned on the top 10-list and is ironically not even mentioned in the top 500 regardless of his assassin being a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim. This may suggest that the media have not related this incident with any of the metaphoric terms or concepts of terrorism. The incident might have been associated with terms like radicalization, Islamism or any of the sorts, which further suggests the complexity of this attempt to find a correlation. To unearth a strong correlation, numerous elements need to be accounted for as well as controlled. Definitions of terrorism should be a factor as well as a distinction between governmental and nongovernmental terrorism for example, would play a big role in the founded results. Many factors prove that recent

literature has been weak in finding a strong correlation due to the complexity of the topic in question. Nevertheless, this research continues to tackle possible factors and material that might aid in the impact or the relevance of the media on terrorism.

The previous chart also speaks of obvious trends on major events through the years, but the word Netherlands is seen often ranked high due to the fact that terrorism might have been focused more domestically within the homeland security threat rather than globally. This might be one explanation for the recurrence of domestic terms in different European countries. People moreover, may feel that terrorism is more important when they hear it regularly circulating in their own country, which then resonates globally and hearing about it domestically would logically heighten public perception and fear towards the phenomenon.

### ***Impact on Policy: the Government***

The second aspect, which might be affected by media coverage of terrorism, is policy-making. Scholars have argued that the media has a strong connection with government officials where it has the power to set the agenda, promote the salience of a topic and negotiate with terrorists as the media is given some authority over this area. The Triangle of communication by Nacos shown previously demonstrates the communication network the media has. Hence, the Sixth Framework Program once again conducted a research analysis on the effect the media might have on policy changes.

A concept of media will take precedence here to better understand the whole picture of media control over policy-making. The so-called CNN effect is well known to establish the nature of media-assertiveness. Since, this study concentrates on Europe as

a region then an equivalent to the CNN station would be the BBC. Hence, the CNN effect will instead be referred to as the BBC effect in this section. Steven Livingston describes three main factors that distinguish the characteristic of this effect. The first is that it entails a policy agenda-setting agent, the second is that the BBC (CNN) effect acts as a hindrance to the achievement of policy goals and finally, that it constructs a hastened expectation to policy-decision making (Sixth Framework Program, 2008).

Moreover, an emotional and compelling coverage can reorder foreign policy priorities for governments. Coverage intensity is vital to what the government is expected to do on whether it was pressured from the public or the international arena to act. Government officials might have to hastily make a decision largely due to modern technologies and the media's instant reporting, which creates accelerated demand for action. An example of that would be when an American soldier was killed and dragged in Somalia. There were increased pressures to withdraw US troops and the demands have been greatly successful when the government responded immediately (Hoffman, 2006). The more gruesome visual images are portrayed in the media, the higher the public pressure on the government to act. An example of the rising impact of gruesome imagery would be when European support for the mission in Afghanistan fell drastically after the invasion. European diplomats were convinced that this was due to the BBC effect. The media was reporting on the collateral damage, the humanitarian crisis and the realities of war, where obscene imagery became very common on European television screens (Sixth Framework Program, 2008).

The hijacking of the TWA flight and the events in Beirut shows another example of the intricate relationship the media has on terrorist activities. Journalists have

interviewed family members, and the reports had a focus on human interest and drama. This led to an enormous increase in public pressure to give in to terrorist demands. Another influence that the media have had is within disclosing certain information to the public. The amount and type of information media reports on a certain attack might hinder the rescue missions and place the lives of police officers in danger. Television crew can appear too close to the hostage area, or releasing too many information about the terrorists in the media, which might obstruct court trials against them or present more public misinterpretation and intervention in police counter-terrorism efforts. There was a case where journalists took on the role of negotiators with terrorists as well. CBS White House correspondent Lesley Stahl once explained “we are an instrument for the hostages ... we force the Administration to put their lives above policy” (Hoffman, 2003:120).

Another aspect of media and government intermingling might not be considered as much of a hindrance and could be argued on either side of the spectrum. Government officials usually take advantage of the strong media presence in people’s lives to convey certain propaganda. Hence, reporting on terrorism in a way that could benefit and justify government action against the infiltrators is seen as beneficial reporting. Media coverage then could be used to explain or propagate any counter terrorism efforts proposed by the government, which makes it easier on politicians or government officials to do their job regarding the safety of their homeland. An obvious and rather over-used example is former US president George W. Bush’s efforts in convincing the public that there is a link between Iraq, weapons of mass destruction, 9/11, and terrorism.

The effect of media on policy changes is evident. The media continues to play a great role in setting agenda priorities. The active role of pressuring the government through media reporting proves that this communication medium is very much involved in defining country politics. Therefore, so many scholars hint at a strong connection between the media and acts of terror as media outlets can be exploited to one's own agenda. Experts hence, agree that the most fatal effect of this crisis is the confirmation of terrorism as a tactic (Peresin, 2007).

### ***Impact on Terrorism***

The final point of analysis is the impact of media on radical thought. Does the media actually have an effect on those who might be swayed to join terrorist groups in the recruitment process? This is a difficult question to answer and it will continue to be for the lack of empirical evidence and the difficulty to obtain any primary sources on terrorist intentions or prospective terrorists' confessions. However, Rohner and Frey hint at a link to this question in their book as they state, "there is a common-interest-game, whereby both the media and terrorists benefit from terrorist incidents and where both parties adjust their actions according to the actions of the other player" (Frey & Rohner 2007:142). This implies that more terrorism leads to more media coverage and the opposite is true where more media coverage of terrorism leads to more theatrical terrorist acts. The authors' study focuses on Africa and terrorism there, where they expected terrorist activities to be bloodier in order to reach a global audience. This is primarily due to the fact that regions receive varied media attention based on their priority for global news. The findings were confirming, however, the



bloody attacks may account to more explanations than the cause of media attention but media attention could highly be one of the reasons.

Ayla Schbley went on to prove this point by conducting interviews with 2,000 Arab and Muslim demonstrators in European cities. She attempted to explain Al-Manar's (a television channel based in Lebanon) role on aggravating terrorism. Her question roamed around what Hezbollah coined 'Jerusalem Day', where Muslims should demonstrate against Israel and the US. She concluded that although not all of the demonstrators are radicalized, they exerted "certain propensity to violence", where much of their information came from the media (Schbley 2004: 130). Her argument raises an interesting factual truth to the relationship of media in intensifying terrorism, however, she did not isolate information coming from other European or American news channels, because these European nationals surely are exposed to their host country's local news as well.

Moreover, an even more interesting observation quoted by Schbley is that many who were interviewed claimed that they learned how to carry out attacks from the media. When asked a general question of what did they learn from the media, many answered, "how to carry out attacks, what Americans fear, how to enter the United States, or that nuclear plants in the United States are vulnerable" (Sixth Framework Program 2008:43). This is an alarming observation. If those who are not terrorists and might not even exert any symptoms of radical thought would be gullible to easily pick up on terrorist agenda principles and executions - which makes recruiting people commonly accessible - then there would be definite indirect consequence through media coverage. This in and of itself should be enough proof to demonstrate the impact

media has on terrorism. Again, this might be one separate instance, however, replicating such studies in different countries and comparing the results would be a first step to finally accumulate empirical evidence to demonstrate the strength and impact of this symbiotic relationship between media and terrorism.

After establishing the type of research conducted to find a correlation between the media and terrorism, it is understood that a concise study that encompasses vital elements is needed to carry out fieldwork dedicated to finding a cause-effect relationship between the two factors. The next section will demonstrate a refined study with several changes in variables collected between all the previous researches presented to compose an upgraded model to guide future scholars on how to approach this relationship.

### **A NEW APPROACH: A HYBRID MODEL**

To begin with, the polls and Eurobarometer questionnaire will be the point of departure here. The type of question asked “what do you think are the two most important issues facing your country at the moment?” is an ambiguous statement that could encompass any number of factors. Hence, we need to narrow down the possibilities for answering the question in a sense that does not jeopardize the integrity of an unbiased question, but at the same time would lead to the conclusion of the matter. Therefore, to conclude on whether there is a strong correlation between media and terrorism, polls should ask different types of questions. The model I suggest would start with a roadmap to lead to the right data to examine this relationship. The questions that the new model should ask are as follows: what are the two main sources of media do you use to obtain your daily news? Which three top channels/newspapers do you follow to obtain your news? How much of your news intake about terrorism activities do you obtain from the television? The Internet? Newspapers?

Focused questions on the type of media consumption and the percentage of terrorist-related news consumed will offer a precise indication on the impact of media coverage on terrorism and public perception. The answers to the previous questions will then lead researchers to the second step in the correlation process. As soon as the specific television stations have been identified, the next step would be to analyze the salience of terrorism-related terms within certain periods of time from the specified television stations or newspapers most watched by the audience interviewed. This is

where the model adopted through the Sixth Framework Program in 2008 on the salience of the word terrorism and its derivatives in various EU countries would be borrowed to examine the salience within the top chosen news channels or newspapers of the questioned pool of people. Focused questions on the specific news coverage gathered through the period from 2005 to 2015 would be beneficial to obtain a sample of perceived reactions of the public towards terrorism activities. Such questions might be a development of Ayla Schbley's 2004 study when she asked a pool of consumers about their reaction of terrorist news gained from the respective channel. Looking at the reaction to the terrorist-centered news to the public opinion on what they learned and how they perceive the risks of the proximity of terrorism within their own country, will give an idea of how to empirically examine the effect of the media on public opinion. As the news becomes more sensationalized and the type of footage bloodier with higher discern on moral conduct, the actions of average citizens could be observed to shift based on the number of criminal incidents taking place with similar demands, scenarios or methods as inspired in the highly salient footage of the Islamic State, for instance.

As the new model examines the relationship with newly expanding groups such as ISIS and their strong grip on visuals, there would be more empirical evidence to support the hypothesis relating media to higher intensity acts of terror. Crimes and the surfacing of extremist thought around the world have been become more apparent within everyday news. Hence, gathering data on public opinion as well as the corresponding criminal incidents within each country would certainly give way to the beginnings of a thorough study on the media's effect on terrorism. This would

eventually yield more promising results on methods of countering terrorism through the media. At the same time, a thorough study on government policy shifts parallel to specific news coverage intensity should be examined to establish a correlation between modern news portrayal of ISIS for example, through various media channels and the effects of such on policy decision making and governmental foreign affairs.

Moreover, since the one obvious consequence that has been studied and is easily obtained was the air travel statistics before and after terrorist-related news coverage, then this empirical evidence can be further dissected to establish a bigger cause-effect relationship. For example, one research could focus on a series of terrorist events in a given time (9/11, London bombings, and recently ISIS expansion within North Africa) and correspond it with the airfare sales of major airlines. These suggestions would certainly give way to a cause-effect relationship between media coverage and public consequences on terrorism. However, the question remains of the consequence on terrorism as a phenomenon itself.

This could prove to be rather complex, because there are numerous variables that should be accounted for and numerous others controlled. For example, taking two major terrorist groups under the microscope and establishing specific criteria for what constitutes the intensity of each act. The number of casualties (ISIS beheading a number of Christian Egyptians on the shores of Libya), the significance of the dates chosen for certain acts, the symbolism of certain places, or the recurrence of their terrorist acts would be some suggestions for the factors constituting the intensity studied. This intensity standard would then be compared to the coverage that corresponds to the certain act. The coverage style, be it concerned more with background stories, hostage

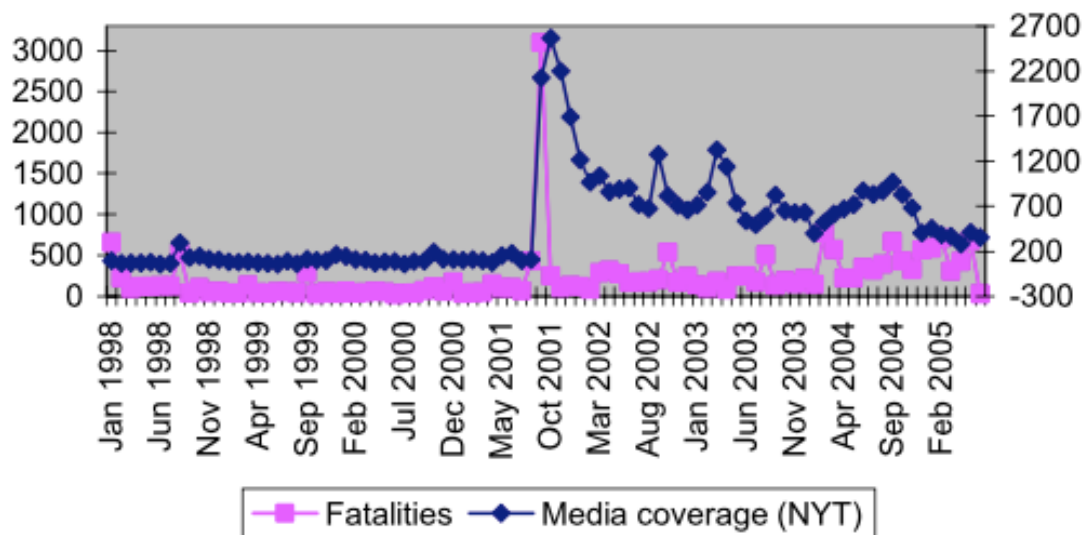
reactions, visual images etc. would all be factors placed into account to correlate the intensity of the coverage with the intensity level of the terror act itself. For example, the recent ISIS videos and killings have intensified governmental response to their actions. This intensity factor could concentrate on reactions towards terrorist acts; where with ISIS, Egypt for instance has reacted with strikes and a threat for war.

Studies moreover, can concentrate on specific factors of terrorism to place side by side with the relevant media coverage. In other words, different studies could empirically try to find a cause-effect relationship between media coverage of a certain group or acts of terror in general to the number of recruits recorded to join terrorist organizations. This approach would certainly provide a cause-effect correlation with a specific aspect of terrorism; recruitment. Due to the gathering of the number of recorded recruits to join extremist groups, empirical evidence would provide another piece of the puzzle to claim the effects of media on public opinion. This factors out the many recruits who decided to come back to their home country, which could be used as an opportunity to question the former recruits to see the percentage of influence media had on their decision to join. One example would be the recent interview by Sky News with a former ISIS recruit on the truth of the videos on the killings and beheadings (Taylor & Kaplan, 2015).

The information needed for this type of study is available out there but approaches and recent research has been obtaining the wrong type of information to prove a cause-effect relationship. This research is time consuming and can prove to be rather tricky with evident material available for study. However, it is highly possible to establish a credible empirical study to obtain an answer to the million-dollar question.

Considering the above mentioned research suggestions, the one model that signifies a similar orientation to this paper’s recommendations is Dominic Rohner and Bruno S. Frey’s paper “Blood and ink! The common-interest-game between terrorist and the media” (2007). Although this study concentrates on the period from January 1998 to June 2005, it still contains a viable research method that should be replicated to periods beyond 2005. Nevertheless, this study will be presented here as a final case to prove the cause-effect relationship between the media and terrorism through a significant method of research.

The authors chose two main newspapers to examine what exemplify relatively unbiased news coverage and a renowned internationally oriented news base. These are the *New York Times (NYT)* and the *Swiss Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)*. The variable looked at is the number of times the expression “terrorism” or “Terrorismus” appeared during the months in the period from January 1998 to June 2005. Moreover, based on the number of casualties during a specific terrorist attack, media coverage has been correspondent to it and the results of this factor are shown in the following graph.



*Figure 6: Correlation between fatalities and media coverage (Rohner and Frey 2007)*

The 9/11 terrorist attacks corresponded with high media coverage as well as high casualties. This significant attack set precedence for the acts of terror that followed, which had significantly higher media coverage and casualties than the attacks prior to 2001. A trend of increasing terrorist activities has emerged after this fatal event. With that increase moreover, remained high intensity media coverage with close reporting on acts of terror.

Granger tests have been conducted in the authors' study to examine the effects on longer periods of time. The test showed that a 99% confidence provides for the terror fatalities caused by media coverage on terrorism by the NYT, which means that casualties from the terror attacks are heightened by media coverage (Rohner & Frey, 2007). Moreover, it has been concluded that "media attention of the NYT causes terrorist fatalities at a level of confidence of 95%" (2007:139). Media coverage from the NZZ has also yielded similar results.

Moreover, another measure was conducted to see whether the fatalities from Western Europe and the United States matter more than fatalities in other regions like Africa. The results have shown a 99% level of confidence on the fatalities mattering more than in Africa via media coverage. Each victim in a Western country receives more media attention, hence, signifying the importance of media coverage from Western countries on terrorist groups. This is great evidence for the cause-effect relationship between media coverage and terrorism through one specific element: casualties. This also explains why Europe and the US are seen as attractive points for terror activity.



The same study conducted tests on a different factor to establish a causal relationship. This factor was the number of terror incidents compared to media coverage by the same two newspapers. Terror incidents in Western Europe cause higher media coverage by a level of confidence of 95% and the same level of confidence applies to media coverage of terrorism that causes terrorist incidents (Rohner & Frey, 2007). Based on this information, by default the following assumption should hold true: the number of terrorist incidents in developing countries must decrease due to the minimal media coverage it receives from Western news media outlets. However, the evidence from Boko Haram and ISIS' terror acts does not yield confidence in this assumption. But a different shift has been observed in this regard, where the fatalities of the acts of terror committed by those two terrorist groups operating in developing countries have increased dramatically to attract Western media. Hence, a strong correlation between casualties and media coverage is present. The authors also conclude with the same remarks here where they state:

To make it into the news, terrorists operating in Western countries can commit some minor terror incident with few fatalities, whereas terrorists in developing countries need to "produce" a lot of blood to attract the attention of the Western media.

- Rohner & Frey 2007:141

This is an example of terrorists adjusting their strategic activities to appeal to the media. This shows a strong correlation between media activity and the influence on terrorism. The following figure from Rohner and Frey's study shows a corresponding graph for media coverage of terror events in other countries and the fatalities per incident as well as the injuries per incident.

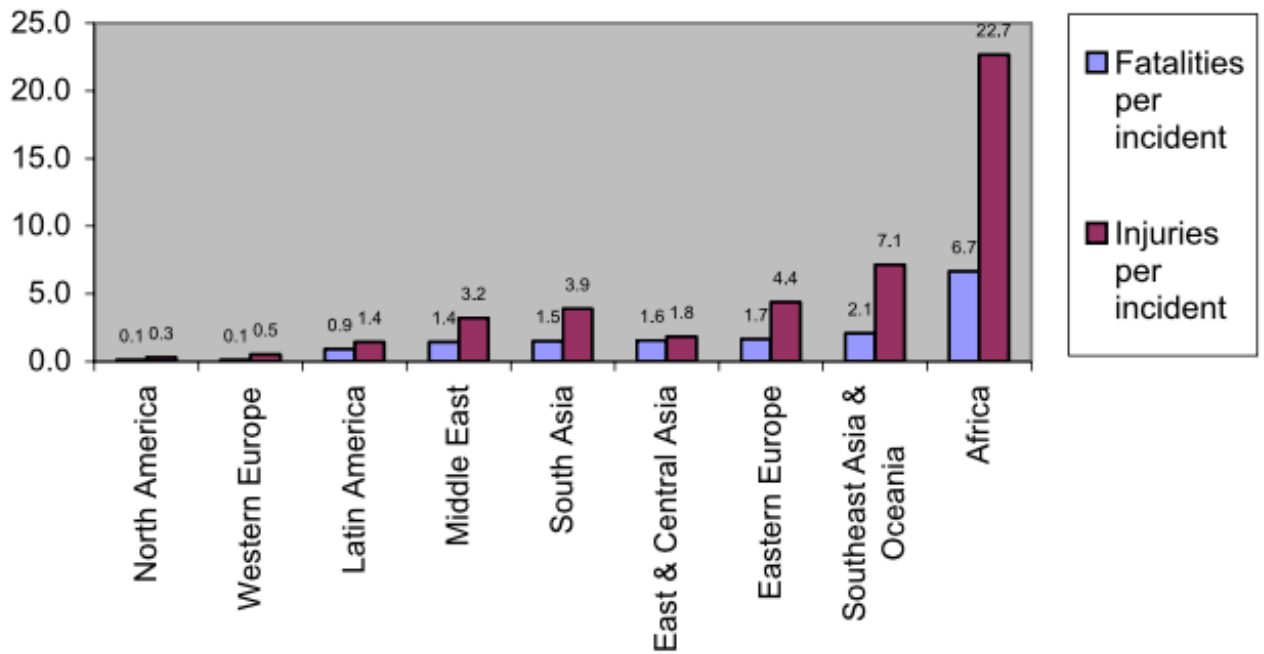


Figure 7: Fatalities and injuries comparison per continent (Rohner & Frey 2007)

To conduct this same statistical study to today's incidents in the Middle East by ISIS as well as Boko Haram's fatality-intensified terror attacks would display an even bigger gap between fatalities in developing countries and developed ones. This study supports the notion that causality is evident in both directions, where the effects of terrorism on media coverage also sights true with a recent statistic published in *Le Parisien* newspaper, where it shows that the number of subscriptions to *Charlie Hebdo* increased from ten thousand to 200 thousand after the terror attack on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 (2015). Hence, a cause-effect relationship is demonstrated from both elements on one another.

## CONCLUSION

A symbiotic relationship has been identified by most scholars on media coverage of terrorist activities and terrorism as a phenomenon within the US and the EU respectively. This fact is inescapable and has been studied from the beginnings of the conception of the term with the communication revolution up to today's robust world of industrialized mass media. Since a relationship has been identified, there has been minimal research analyzing the type of relationship and its significance to today's acts of terror. This unfortunate gap in literature has caused little to no claim of responsibility on either side for the fatalities and changed reality of today's bloodshed.

Setting out to answer the question of the existence of a cause-effect analysis on this relationship, the results of this paper offer great promise for future research. With the aid of empirical studies such as that of Rohner and Frey's (2007) and Ayla Schbley's (2004), it has been proven that media coverage has an effect on terrorist incidents as well as the fatality of terrorism today. Studies in the EU and the US also demonstrated a great influence on public perception granted by media coverage of terrorist activities and air flight statistics as a result of public attention to terrorist-related news. An influence was also proven from the terrorist side to media coverage and this cause-effect relationship has stood to be a mutual linked existence for both entities. Sadly due to the lack of financial resources and time, this paper was not able to replicate such studies on terrorism from 2005 to 2015, which is highly recommended for future

research. This research is relevant to the counter terrorism strategies and approaches that the EU and the US can take in ending terror on their homeland. The transatlantic relationship between the regions must be examined, because it gives way to a key component that might be the tool used to bring peace once again upon the Western world from ideological extremism. The EU and the US are prime examples of places where the freedom of expression is highly respected, which can also be a place where extremist thought can foster and accumulate, due to the numerous opportunities to voice one's ideologies through media. Hence, examining the effects of the media on terrorism from 2005 onwards will vehemently demonstrate the importance of using the media as a counter -terrorism tool for the West.

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