

ABSTRACT

THE CONSTRUCTION OF VIOLENCE: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PARIS AND OSLO-UTOYA ATTACKS

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This research examines whether specific forms of violence create an image or represent particular identities that maintain, create or contribute to the production of ‘the Other’, as coined by Edward Said. The main question this research answers is how Dutch mainstream newspapers represent the Paris and Oslo-Utoya attacks and to what extent these representations contribute to the creation of ‘the Other’. The findings are analyzed by applying the theory of intersectionality¹ by Kimberle Crenshaw and Orientalism² by Edward Said. A discourse analysis is conducted using approximately ten newspaper articles reporting on both attacks. This method is put into action by asking the following questions; which axes are referred to when depicting the perpetrators, which axes are used to talk about the attacks and how do these axes intersect? The results show that several identities based on the intersection between religion, nationality, ethnicity and political beliefs are associated with a particular kind of violence. The representations of these identities contribute to the idea of ‘the Other’ due to the fact that contrasting characteristics as used to depict the different identities.

¹ Kimberle Crenshaw. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. In *Feminist Legal Theories: Gender and American Law*, ed. Karen J. Maschke, 23 – 52. Routledge: United States.

² Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. (Vintage: New York).

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Introduction to the Construction of Violence

After the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris on the 7th of January 2015, terrorism became a more pressing subject in the Netherlands. The media have played a major role in how these attacks are perceived but also on how we look or think about possible future attacks.³ How we talk about or write about or even think about violence creates a certain discourse. I find it important to look at how Dutch mainstream media have chosen to represent these events and how it influences the way we treat or address differences within our society. Critically looking at the representation of violence and group identities it creates and/or maintains makes us aware of how we interact with different social groups in The Netherlands. Awareness is very important in order to create a more positive and effective attitude towards differences in our multicultural society.

I wish to understand how certain social groups and/or individuals and their identities are constructed through the representation of violence in the Paris and Oslo attacks covered by Dutch mainstream newspapers. My research question is the following; how do Dutch mainstream newspapers represent the Paris and Oslo attacks and to what extent do these representations contribute to the creation of ‘the Other’? My sub-questions ask how the perpetrators were represented, how the attacks were represented and how intersectionality and orientalism help us to better understand these representations? I wish to gain a better understanding of how the construction of violence takes place in Dutch mainstream media and whether or not this contributes to the production of ‘the Other’. In order to make my research feasible I will only use a limited amount of articles by five Dutch newspapers. In order to answer my main question I will research Dutch newspapers and conduct a discourse analysis.

In chapter one I will explain the theories I will apply to the analysis of the findings in my research. I will refer to Orientalism by Edward Said⁴ and the concept of intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw⁵. In chapter two I will explain the method I will implement throughout my analysis. Chapter three will focus on the description of the Paris and Oslo attacks. Chapter four will contain the analysis of the newspaper articles reporting on the attacks in both countries and their perpetrators. Finally, I will give a summary of the main points made in my research and add concluding remarks regarding the research- and sub-questions.

³ Nieuwsuur. 2015. Hoe groot is de dreiging van terrorisme in Nederland. NOS. 17 February <http://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2012476-hoe-groot-is-de-dreiging-van-terrorisme-in-nederland.html>

⁴ Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. (Vintage: New York).

⁵ Kimberle Crenshaw. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. In *Feminist Legal Theories: Gender and American Law*, ed. Karen J. Maschke, 23 – 52. Routledge: United States.

Chapter 1: Theory

Introduction

I wish to find out how the construction of violent events and their perpetrators takes place in Dutch mainstream media and whether or not this contributes to the production of ‘the Other’. I will use two main theories to analyze my findings. I will use theories by Kimberle Crenshaw and Edward Said. In order to answer my research and sub questions it is important to look at the different aspects of identity that come together in several media reports surrounding the Paris and Oslo attacks. By applying the concept of intersectionality I will gain a better understanding of fundamental aspects that are represented by the media and which might lead to the construction of certain identities. More specifically, I wish to find out which axes of intersectionality are used to represent violent events, which might influence particular identities. The theory of Orientalism will help to understand whether or not the represented identities create, maintain or reinforce the idea of ‘the Other’. By looking at the identities that are included or excluded from the mainstream discourse regarding violent events, I will gain a better understanding of orientalist views that might occur through the representation of these events.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw in her article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics”.⁶ Crenshaw distinguishes several axes of difference that can be used to understand a certain issue. Intersectionality looks at how different axes or systems of identity whether biological, social or cultural characteristics interact or coexist.⁷ The theory examines how forms of oppression or domination based on, for example, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, race, class, and religion can exist simultaneously in a system of social injustice and inequality.⁸ These axes can also differ from meaning or hegemony depending on the context in which they are perceived or experienced.⁹ This means that certain identities, more specifically the axes these identities are based on, are more valued than others or considered the norm in a specific society. In short, Crenshaw’s theory examines the

⁶ Kimberle Crenshaw. 1989. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. In *Feminist Legal Theories: Gender and American Law*, ed. Karen J. Maschke, 23 – 52. Routledge: United States.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Idem.

⁹ Sharon Smith. 2013. Black Feminism and intersectionality. *International Socialist Review* 20 February <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>

multiple ways or intersections in which discrimination can take place. This is a very important model that can clarify how certain identities play a role in the representation of violence.

Intersectionality is the main theory I will use to analyze the articles of the different Dutch newspapers that reported on the Oslo and Paris attacks one day after the attacks took place. I argue that how the newspapers represent violence and the perpetrators of these attacks can be oppressive to a particular identity based on different axes of intersectionality. I want to find out which axes these are and how they intersect and create a certain identity. In order to achieve this I will look at the words used to describe the attacks and the perpetrators and analyze which axes come together in the articles. Moreover it is relevant to understand how these representations might associate certain identities to violent events and how this takes place. In order to explain this further I will refer to Orientalism by Edward Said.

Orientalism

Edward Said coined the term Orientalism in 1978 in his book *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*.¹⁰ Said implemented a discursive approach based on Michel Foucault's theory of knowledge and power. Orientalism mainly refers to the difference between the East and the West by looking at how the West constructs 'the Other' in order to reinforce its own superior identity. The idea of what the East entails is created through a Western looking glass.¹¹ Another important point regarding Orientalism is that it functions as a way to project fear onto the other.¹² This stresses the idea that there is a 'good' and a 'bad' subject.¹³

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its **contrasting** image, idea, personality, and experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.¹⁴

¹⁰ Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. (Vintage: New York).

¹¹ Haroon Khalid. 1994. An Introduction to Edward Said's Orientalism. *Renaissance* 25 March <http://www.renaissance.com.pk/febbore2y6.htm>

¹² Dr. Christine Quinan. 2015. Gender, Ethnicity and Religious Practices: Lecture Gender, sexuality and ethnicity, Utrecht University.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. (Vintage: New York).

Edward Said argues that the Europeans divided the world into the West and the East or the occident and the orient, which stood for the civilized, and the uncivilized. Said states that the West created a dichotomy between what the East really is and a romanticized idea of the 'Orient'.¹⁵ The idea of them and us formed the basis for the existence of an artificial boundary between the two parts. Particular aspects are associated with the orient and contrasting aspects with the occident.¹⁶ The West is seen as the normative center while irrationality, sensuality, femininity and other aspects that are seen as inferior to the paternalistic society, characterize the East.¹⁷ Based on Siad's work the idea of the orient stresses that the way we represent others is never neutral or necessarily true and that within these representations not only stereotypes but also other misconceptions are constructed and maintained. I argue that the different axes that constitute an identity have a hegemonic order, which influences the social position of individuals and groups in the interaction with others.

I believe that by analyzing the representation of violent events we can gain a better understanding of the creation of the Orient by the West. In order to understand whether or not Dutch newspapers contribute to the creation of the other through the representation of violence, I will look at the values and attributes that are assigned to the West and East in the newspaper articles. The combination of intersectionality and Orientalism will shine more light on the issue of dealing with representations of identities in a multicultural society especially after violent events. As I will show in my research there is a specific way of talking and writing about differences, which might generate or maintain misconceptions about a certain group or individual. Eventually, it is my aim with this work to contribute to our understanding of how we can treat each other in a way that recognizes our differences without making them a disadvantage.

¹⁵ Jim Dexheimer. 2002. Orientalism. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literary Dialogues* 25 March <http://wmich.edu/dialogues/texts/orientalism.htm>

¹⁶ Haroon Khalid. 1994. An Introduction to Edward Said's Orientalism. *Renaissance* 25 March <http://www.renaissance.com.pk/febbore2y6.htm>

¹⁷ Idem.

Chapter 2: Method

Introduction

This research looks at how the Dutch mainstream newspapers represented the Norway and Paris events. The main focus is whether specific forms of violence create an image or represent specific identities that maintain, create or contribute to the production of 'the Other'. I will analyze how these representations are created in the 'everyday' mainstream discourse regarding these attacks. In order to gain information about representation and the way it is constructed by the media I will analyze eight different Dutch newspaper articles reporting on the Charlie Hebdo events and eight articles reporting on Anders Breivik and the Oslo attacks. I will refer to articles that were published the day after the Paris and Oslo attacks took place, mainly because I am interested in the first reactions regarding the attacks. This is relevant to my research because first reactions portray a more straightforward image of the public's impulsive tendencies when referring to violent events and their perpetrators, especially when there is a lack of information. In addition I will use three articles published several days after both attacks to indicate how the public's first reactions and representation changed after new information about the attackers and attacks was added. I will do this in order to support my main focus, which looks at how specific forms of violence contribute to different forms of representation. I believe that these violent events are represented in a specific way for a reason. In order to understand whether or not there is a creation of 'the Other' through the construction of violence I must understand when a violent attack is perceived as such and why.

Discourse analysis

My method in this research will consist of a discourse analysis. A discourse analysis focuses on language and how it is constructed within a certain context. To every specific domain in our social reality belongs a specific way of referring to or speaking about what happens in these domains. Certain patterns are distinctive for a social domain.¹⁸ In the case of my research I will refer to the public mainstream discourse concerning the violent acts in Paris and Oslo-Utoya. I will look at the different axes of intersectionality occurring in the newspaper articles reporting on these specific violent events.

Van Dijk states in his book *Discourse as Social Interaction* that discourses are not only a way of understanding and the construction of meaning but that it also creates action.¹⁹ I will

¹⁸ Jorgensen Phillips & Louise Phillips. 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. (California: SAGE Publications Ltd).

¹⁹ Teun A. van Dijk, 1997. *Discourse as Social Interaction*. (California: SAGE Publications Ltd).

use this book for my research because it focuses on the role of social identities based on aspects like gender, race and ethnicity. Van Dijk's work focuses on critical discourse analysis, which refers to the ways in which discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. Van Dijk states that the goal of discourse analysis is to mediate between text and society by looking at social problems.²⁰ In short, van Dijk explains that discourses are a form of social interaction and these interactions maintain or reproduce power relations among the ones interacting with each other.²¹

My aim is to uncover power relations that are produced, maintained and/or reinforced in the representation of violent events in the 'everyday' public mainstream discourse. I will use the theory of intersectionality to find out how certain power relations between identities are influenced by the representation of the Paris and Oslo attacks. Even though my research will focus on uncovering discursive power relations in the public discourse regarding violence it is still important to mention that these representations might influence the social participation of groups and individuals in a multicultural society.

Discourse analysis through an intersectional approach

My research question is: *How do Dutch mainstream newspaper represent the Paris and Norway attacks and to what extent do these representations contribute to the creation of 'the Other'?* In order to answer my research question I will analyze how newspapers have written about the attacks and perpetrators. I will put my method into action by asking the following questions; which axes are referred to when depicting the perpetrators, which axes are used to talk about the attacks and how do these axes intersect? Basically I will ask whom are we talking about or referring to when we read these articles? By applying the theory of intersectionality I will be able to depict which different axes of identity these descriptions are based on. I will use Crenshaw's theory to ask questions about axes like gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, political beliefs and geographical location, which might play a role in the representations of the attacks and the perpetrators. I argue that how these axes are represented when depicting the attackers and perpetrators in the news articles, contribute to the construction of 'the Other'. In other words, it is relevant to understand which values are assigned to specific identities in the news articles. That is why it is important to not only look at the different identities that these articles reinforce, maintain or create but also to understand how this might represent orientalist views based on those different axes.

²⁰ Teun A. van Dijk, 1997. *Discourse as Social Interaction*. (California: SAGE Publications Ltd).

²¹ Idem.

Sample selection

The Dutch newspapers I have chosen to analyze are considered to be the biggest mainstream newspapers in the Netherlands based on the amount sold per year. Moreover, these papers differ from political beliefs, information dissemination and target groups. The NRC, Volkskrant, Trouw, Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad are papers that represent left and right winged political beliefs. Aspects like age, education, income, profession and marital status divide the target groups belonging to each paper.²² I have chosen these papers because they reach the most Dutch citizens and present a general view of the public's mainstream opinion.

As I mentioned above, the focus will be on newspaper articles that circulated one day after both attacks took place, thus on the 8th of January 2015 reporting on the Paris attacks and on the 23rd of July 2011 reporting on the Oslo-Utoya attacks. As I mentioned in the introduction, I have chosen to look at the articles published the day after the attacks because I find it interesting for my research to look at first impressions, opinions and impulsive tendencies that occur when there is a lack of information and incomprehension regarding the attacks. I will use eight articles per case study from the approximately 10 (per case) I found. I have chosen those more relevant to my research based on the questions I want to answer. The articles are provided by the LexisNexis database and are a combination of analogue and digital reports. In the case of Charlie Hebdo fewer newspapers reported on the attacks in comparison to the Oslo attacks, which makes it a bit more difficult to go in-depth on the representation of the perpetrators. I believe this is due to the nature of the attacks, which I will explain further in my analysis. In addition I will use three articles (per case) published a few days after the attacks, because they support my argument concerning the lack of information and how this influences the representation of the events.

Concluding remarks

This research answers questions that are of social importance in a multicultural society. Even though it does not focus on multiculturalism specifically, it does relate to differences among people and the interaction and encounters with others, which are always present in our society.

²² Unknown. 2008. Journalistiek: de kranten en het dagblad. *InfoNu* 20 February <http://mens-en-samenleving.infonu.nl/communicatie/25509-journalistiek-de-krant-het-dagblad.html>

Chapter 3: The Paris and Oslo Attacks

The Oslo-Utoya attacks

Anders Behring Breivik is the admitted perpetrator of the Norway attacks that took place on the 22nd of July 2011. Breivik took the life of 77 people and injured hundreds in Norway. On the 22nd of July a bomb exploded in a car stationed in front of the Prime Minister Stoltenberg's office in Oslo. The news of the bombing spread as Breivik boarded a ferry to the island of Utoya. Breivik was disguised in police uniform and carried several weapons. Utoya was the location of a political summer camp organized for the youth by the Norwegian Labor Party. One hour and a half after the attacks Breivik was arrested for the killing of 69 people on the island and 8 others during the bomb explosion earlier that day. Hours before the attacks Breivik emailed his manifest *2083 – A European Declaration of Independence* to 5700 people. This document explains Breivik's ideological views dismissing multiculturalism and the 'threat' due to Muslim immigration, Marxism and the Norwegian Labor Party. Breivik pointed out that he was part of a terrorist organization that is present in Norway. Breivik was sentenced to 21 years in prison with a likely chance of expansion because Breivik is considered a threat to society and due to the severity of his crimes.²³

The Paris attacks on Charlie Hebdo

From the 7th until the 9th of January 2015, 16 people were killed in the attacks on Charlie Hebdo and during a hostile takeover in a grocery store. Charlie Hebdo is a satirical magazine that began publishing in 1970.²⁴ The goal of this magazine was to satirize politics and religion among other topics. The magazine has often been described as controversial with openly provocative topics and cartoons.²⁵ On the 7th of January at 11:30 am gunmen forced their way into the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. According to several newspapers the gunmen allegedly said they came to avenge the prophet Mohammed. During the attacks eight employees, a guest at the magazine, a maintenance worker and a policeman were killed.²⁶ The policeman was killed when the attackers fled the Charlie Hebdo offices. On the 8th of January the police named brothers Kouachi as prime suspects.²⁷ As stated in the Volkskrant on the 8th of January, the attacks were allegedly committed by, Cherif (32) and Said Kouachi (34), which were

²³ Anders Behring Breivik. 2015. The Biography.com website. *Bio* 17 March
<http://www.biography.com/people/anders-behring-breivik-20617893>.

²⁴ CNN Library. 2015. 2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts. *Edition CNN* 17 March
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>

²⁵ Idem

²⁶ CNN Library. 2015. 2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts. *Edition CNN* 17 March
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>

²⁷ Idem.

supporters of Al-Qaida and of French-Algerian descent.²⁸ On the 9th of January the brothers were killed after the police launched an assault on the building in Dammartin-en-Goele where the brothers were hiding.²⁹

A few topics that are predominant in the description of the attacks regard religious and political beliefs. In the next chapters I will describe how the attacks and the perpetrators are depicted in Dutch newspapers. Then I will specifically point out which axes of intersectionality are represented in the articles and how these relate to the creation of ‘the Other’ as explained by Said in *Orientalism*.³⁰ I argue that the way the attacks were represented influences the way we get to read but also perceive topics like violence and religion.

²⁸ Volkskrant Nieuws. 2015. Verdachte getraind door Al-Qaida. *Volkskrant* 24 February
<http://www.volkskrant.nl/dossier-aanslag-op-charlie-hebdo/teruglezen-franse-politie-zoekt-in-bos-naar-daders~a3825634/>

²⁹ CNN Library. 2015. 2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts. *Edition CNN* 17 March
<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/>

³⁰ Edward Said. 1979. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. (Vintage: New York).

Chapter 4: Analysis

Case 1: Anders B. Breivik

I have analyzed the newspaper articles regarding the Norway attacks that made the front page. As I mentioned before I find it interesting to look at the first media reactions regarding the attacks. In the case of Breivik and how the attacks and especially the perpetrator are represented the first reactions give a particular understanding of who would or could be an attacker and commit these kinds of crimes. In addition, I will refer to three articles published after the identity of the perpetrator was made public. This is interesting in the case of Breivik because the lack of information regarding the perpetrator and the attacks gave room for speculations and assumptions, which made the first reactions remarkable.

The depiction of the Oslo-Utoya attacks

First of all the newspapers described the attacks as possibly being Al-Qaida attacks because of the way in which the attacks took place. As I mentioned in Chapter 3 the Oslo attacks started out with the explosion of a bomb in front of a parliament building and later on the attacks continued on the island of Utoya. As stated in the NRC article “The role of Al-Qaida is not ruled-out, Al-Qaida tactics can be described as multiple attacks that happen simultaneously.”³¹ This quote implies that a specific kind of violence is associated with the Muslim fundamentalist organization. The NRC stated in the same article that there wasn’t any certainty that the attacks were committed by an Islamic organization that tried to intimidate the West but assumptions were made.³² The *Algemeen Dagblad* reported on Al-Qaida speculations and added: “the terrorist attacks in Oslo emphasize the necessity to fight against international terrorism.”³³ The attacks are portrayed as possibly trying to intimidate the West and as an international threat. The fact that this kind of violence is associated with Al-Qaida is problematic because it refers to a group with a specific religion and as the articles show also a specific geographical location based on these religious beliefs. The axes of religion and geographical location intersect in the depiction of the possible attackers.

Terrorists, of any sorts, always find a reason to commit a cowardly attack, for example with explosives in a parked car or brainwashed to commit suicide. Fanatics, driven by religious, dogmatic or political extremism, simply hide behind the collective name of Al Qaeda or a private Madness Company to sow

³¹ Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

³² Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

³³ Nieuwsdienst. 2011. Waanzin BV zaait weer dood en verderf. *Algemeen dagblad*, July 23, 2.

death and destruction.³⁴

Moreover several newspapers listed a few motivations that Al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations might have to attack Norway. The motivations listed were for example the fact that Norway had interfered in countries like Afghanistan and Libya.³⁵ Other examples used to motivate Al-Qaida attacks are the previous threats made by Al-Qaida in regard to Norway and Mohammed cartoons published in Danish papers.³⁶ These quotes imply that the interference of Western countries in non-Western countries can cause the East to retaliate and that religion plays a big role in the motivation to attack a country like Norway. I argue that these quotes contribute to what Said refers to as the artificial boundary between the East and the West. I believe this is based on the axes of geographical location and religion due to the fact that the attacks are portrayed as a kind of violence that is motivated by religious beliefs, in this case the Islam, and assigned to Eastern countries as international threats. Said states that by defining the East through the Western looking glass, the West establishes its own superiority.

Several newspapers also commented on the reason why the attacks in Norway were unexpected. The NRC claims that Norway is committed to fighting for peace and proves this by using the example of the Nobel Prize for peace that is always awarded in Norway and mentions praiseworthy activities the country engages in.³⁷ A few days after the attacks the Trouw published an article stating the incomprehension on why Norway was a target for terrorists. The Trouw used the following argument to prove why the attacks on Norway were incomprehensible: “[...] like Norway we are all in shock. The country with only 5 million inhabitants was so proud to be an idyllic, open, democratic and a peace-loving nation.”³⁸ Another quote supporting the Trouw’s argument is: “Measured by income, life expectancy and wellbeing Norway is the best country in the world to live in, the United Nations believed the same in 2009.”³⁹ These quotes also refer to Said’s idea of assigning contrasting values to the East and the West. Values like democracy, economic welfare and openness are assigned to Norway. As the quotes show it seems to be very unexpected for this kind of violence to take place or initiate in a country that shares these values. In the first paragraph I have explained that by associating a specific kind of violence with Al-Qaida the axes of religion and geographical location intersect in the representation of the attacks. The quotes in this paragraph support this argument but also add what Said refers to as orientalist views in the

³⁴ Nieuwsdienst. 2011. Waanzin BV zaait weer dood en verderf. *Algemeen dagblad*, July 23, 2.

³⁵ Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

³⁶ Buitenland. 2011. Onverwacht doelwit; Gissen naar motieven van dader dodelijke aanslagen. *De Telegraaf*, July 22, 9.

³⁷ Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

³⁸ Hoofdredactie. 2011. Het stemt tot nadenken dat extremisme voortvloeit uit conservatief-christelijke hoek. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

³⁹ Eric Fokke. 2011. Het dorp Noorwegen bestaat niet meer. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

representations of the attacks.

The depiction of the perpetrator

As I made clear in the previous paragraph the first reactions when the perpetrator was not yet identified pointed towards Al-Qaida and/or other Islamic fundamentalists. When Breivik was identified as the attacker newspapers wrote about an “enemy from within”.⁴⁰ The NRC depicted Breivik as a 32- year old native Norwegian man⁴¹ in one article and in another article as a non-immigrant ethnic Norwegian man.⁴² This is interesting because this quote shows that somehow it is important to mention that Breivik was not an immigrant and that being an immigrant implies certain aspects about appearance that might be based on skin color and race. Another point that is interesting is that Breivik was written about as an enemy from within after his ethnicity was established. This raises questions concerning Norwegian nationality and ethnicity and how they intersect. In the second article depicting Breivik as non-immigrant there was still a possibility that Breivik belonged to a radical Islamic organization that wanted to intimidate the West because of the nature of the attacks, as the following quote will show.⁴³

According to the police, it was not an immigrant but an ethnic Norwegian man who committed the attacks. It was not clear whether he was acting on his own or on behalf of for example, a radical Islamic organization that aimed at Norway and possibly, wanted to intimidate the West in general. The fact that the two more or less simultaneous terrorist actions were in different locations close to each other would be an indication that Al Qaeda was behind the attacks.⁴⁴

The Algemeen Dagblad portrayed him as a strong blonde man with Norwegian appearance while still not being sure whether or not Breivik was working for Al-Qaida, which was still a possibility.⁴⁵ Even though Breivik looks a particular way he could still be involved in violence that can be linked to Al-Qaida or terrorism in general. Other papers like the Volkskrant and the Telegraaf also emphasized Breivik’s nationality, Norwegian appearance and skin-color.⁴⁶ Some papers chose to include Breivik’s possible involvement with Al-Qaida after knowing his nationality while papers like the Telegraaf pointed out that: “The perpetrator would have a

⁴⁰ Hoofdredactie. 2011. Het stemt tot nadenken dat extremisme voortvloeit uit conservatief-christelijke hoek. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

⁴¹ NRC Handelsblad. 2011. Noorwegen in shock door terreur. *NRC*, July 23, 1.

⁴² Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

⁴³ Idem.

⁴⁴ Floris van Straaten. 2011. Rol Al-Qaeda niet uitgesloten. *NRC*, July 23, front page.

⁴⁵ Gerben van het Hof. 2011. Slachting in Oslo. *Algemeen Dagblad*, July 23, 1.

⁴⁶ Buitenland. 2011. Onverwacht doelwit; Gissen naar motieven van dader dodelijke aanslagen. *De Telegraaf*, July 22, 9.

Norwegian appearance, which might contradict with an attack by a Muslim extremist.”⁴⁷ Moreover, the following quote in the *Volkskrant* shows that officials doubted Breivik’s motives after finding out about his appearance.⁴⁸

Norwegian officials would not speculate on the motives for the double attack. After the attacks most experts assumed it had something to do with Muslim terror. After the death of Osama bin Laden Al-Qaida vowed revenge. [...] However, the Norwegian police said that they did not come from an international or Islam inspired terrorist act but rather of a domestic assault on the Norwegian political system. It's more of 'our Oklahoma City' than 'our World Trade Center,' said an anonymous Norwegian police officer. An extreme right-wing American with a fascination for paramilitary movements committed the bombing in Oklahoma City in 1995.⁴⁹

I argue that these first reactions regarding the perpetrator implicate a very particular way of looking at who would commit these violent attacks. The idea of what a perpetrator is or looks like seems to gain a new significance. In order to support this argument I would like to refer to some examples taken from newspaper articles that were published just a few days after Breivik’s identity was announced. The *Trouw* stated that: “It was a big shock to see that the perpetrator was an ethnic Norwegian and now the country will have to fight against an enemy from within that kills his own fellow country-men.”⁵⁰ Another quote from the same article states the following: “[...] not an extremist Muslim but a white Christian male is new for us. This is not about an isolated crazy person but a political extremist.”⁵¹

It was a lone wolf, that Anders B. Breivik . He acted entirely alone, like "our" Tristan van der Vlis, Karst Tate, and Volkert van der Graaf. Norwegians appeared relieved on TV, despite the grief over the 92 deaths. No organized network, but a local idiot. That means little chance of follow up attacks. If I were a terrorism expert, I would rather talk about this instead of the has-been topic of Al-Qaeda. For all those young men who are radicalizing to the left or right behind the Internet, terrorism works as an expression of individual resentment and anger.⁵²

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ AP, Reuters. 2011. Zeker 17 doden bij dubbele aanslag Noren opgeschrikt door bomaanslag en schietpartij. *De Volkskrant*, July 23, 2.

⁴⁹ AP, Reuters. 2011. Zeker 17 doden bij dubbele aanslag Noren opgeschrikt door bomaanslag en schietpartij. *De Volkskrant*, July 23, 2.

⁵⁰ Hoofdredactie. 2011. Het stemt tot nadenken dat extremisme voortvloeit uit conservatief-christelijke hoek. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

⁵¹ Hoofdredactie. 2011. Het stemt tot nadenken dat extremisme voortvloeit uit conservatief-christelijke hoek. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

⁵² Cultuur & Media. 2011. Terrorisme-experts zeggen maar wat. *Trouw*, July 25, 11.

So as soon as Breivik's nationality and ethnicity was made public organized Islamic fundamentalism was ruled out and the attack became an individual act. The attack was considered to be an individual political attack⁵³ and brought about by "a local idiot who was young, intelligent and just a regular guy when he was younger, as claimed in the *Trouw*."⁵⁴ Another quote that gives a clear representation of the perpetrator is the following.

The biggest shock is probably that it is an ethnic Norwegian. With Muslim extremism that has held the West in his grasp for a decade, it was also an enemy from 'outside'. But how can a country defend itself against an enemy from within? What motivates someone to kill dozens of innocent compatriots? This time it is not a Muslim extremist, but a white man, who calls himself a convinced Christian conservative, this is new. This is not a dangerous or insulated crazy person but a political extremist. Someone who has fed his convictions and ideas of all kinds of right-wing conservative groups, including the Tea Party in the US and that of Geert Wilders in the Netherlands.⁵⁵

After acknowledging Breivik's nationality and ethnicity the newspaper started reporting on a terrorist that was 'inside' the country and not international as stated in the previous paragraph. This implies that for Breivik to be an international threat he must have a different ethnicity and nationality instead of that of a white ethnic Norwegian. Breivik's motives for the attack started out as being religious and after his nationality and ethnicity were made public his motives concerned more political and individual reasons. In this case Breivik's specific intersection between nationality, ethnicity and religion excluded him from possible participation in a collective organization that might have religious motives to commit violent attacks. As stated by the *Telegraaf*: "The perpetrator has a Norwegian appearance, which might contradict with an attack by a Muslim extremist."⁵⁶ An interesting point is that Breivik's Christian beliefs were not mentioned as a plausible motive to radicalize. Thus, changing the attack itself as being an individual attack and changing his motives in order to understand why this particular person could have attacked a country like Norway. This contributes to the idea of 'the Other' because a specific kind of religion, in this case the Islam, is associated with this form of violence. This is in contrast with Breivik's Christian religion. The specific identity of Breivik based on nationality and ethnicity excludes him from possible involvement in Islamic fundamentalist attacks. The representation of the axes ethnicity, nationality, geographical location, religion and political beliefs influence the way we perceive Breivik as a perpetrator.

⁵³ Erik Fokke. 2011. Utoya: broedplaats politieke kopstukken. *Trouw*, July 25, 4.

⁵⁴ Cultuur & Media. 2011. Terrorisme-experts zeggen maar wat. *Trouw*, July 25, 11.

⁵⁵ Hoofdredactie. 2011. Het stemt tot nadenken dat extremisme voortvloeit uit conservatief-christelijke hoek. *Trouw*, July 25, 2.

⁵⁶ Idem.

Case 2: Charlie Hebdo

The Charlie Hebdo case differs significantly from the Breivik case due to the fact that little information about the perpetrators was published. Dutch newspapers only covered their names, age and to some extent religion. I will refer to the perpetrators in a more general way due to the lack of information. In order for my method to be applicable to this case I will discuss the topic of freedom of speech and how this relates to the attacks and the identity of the perpetrators.

The depiction of the perpetrators and the attacks

As I mentioned in Chapter 3 the perpetrators were identified on the 8th of January as the two males Cherif (32) and Said Kouachi (34), which were supporters of Al-Qaida and of French-Algerian descent.⁵⁷ It became clear that the perpetrators were supporters of Al-Qaida after they announced this during the attacks. As the following quote shows, Charlie Hebdo has often referred to the Islam, which had negative consequences.

Charlie Hebdo became known in recent years far across the French border, due to the frequent satire on the Islam and the excitement that it caused. The previous editor, Philippe Val, had police protection for years after he had printed the Danish Mohammed cartoons. In November 2011 a firebomb destroyed the editorial office. The tense relationship between Islam and humor is often put to the test.⁵⁸

Due to previous history with violent attacks and the fact that the perpetrators announced their involvement with Al-Qaida, the perpetrators were associated with the Muslim fundamentalist organization and the attack was motivated solely based on religious beliefs. A problem that arises is that a group of people is associated with the Islam.

Charlie Hebdo is not against Islam - but Muslims have often clashed with the artists and writers of the magazine over the years. Moderate Muslim organizations started lawsuits against them after they depicted the Prophet Muhammad once again, with a joke.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Volkskrant Nieuws. 2015. Verdachte getraind door Al-Qaida. *Volkskrant* 24 February <http://www.volkskrant.nl/dossier-aanslag-op-charlie-hebdo/teruglezen-franse-politie-zoekt-in-bos-naar-daders~a3825634/>

⁵⁸ Arie Jan Korteweg. 2015. Volkskrant In de geest van De Sade, Celine en Foucault. *Volkskrant*, January 8, 5.

⁵⁹ Rene Moerland. 2015. Charlie Hebdo, een fanatiek blad met een hekel aan fanatici; Vanaf 2006 is Islam een geliefd doelwit. *NRC*, January 8, 4.

The Islam was especially a favorite target of ridicule since the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in 2006 published cartoons of Muhammad with a bullet in a turban.⁶⁰

However, we would do Charlie Hebdo injustice by reducing it to an anti-Islam magazine. Nuclear power, feminism, the pope, animal suffering, the National Front, the Belgian king - nothing is safe from the sometimes blunt, rough drafters of Charlie Hebdo.⁶¹

The Islam is represented as a collective identity based on a religion that is associated with this kind of violence, which leaves little room for differences among Islamic individuals. This contributes to the construction of ‘the Other’ in the sense that it creates an ‘us versus them’ situation based on religious beliefs. Islam is linked to violent events and Charlie Hebdo is associated with other values, which I will state in the following paragraphs. The representation of the attacks is problematic because they were represented as an attack on freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech or hate speech

I have explained and given examples regarding the representation of the perpetrators in Dutch newspapers. In this paragraph I want to look a bit closer into the axes of intersectionality regarding the representation of the Paris attacks and how they relate to the concept of Orientalism. I argue that freedom of speech is a value assigned to a particular identity and contributes to the idea of us versus them. First of all I will look at which particular identity freedom of speech is assigned to by looking at the axes that intersect in the representation of the Paris attacks. The NRC used several facts to depict Charlie Hebdo as “anti-clericalist and republican but also radical and irresponsible while supporting freedom of speech.”⁶² Other papers like the *Volkskrant* and the *Algemeen Dagblad* referred to the magazine as “openly provocative to several cultural groups, cultural practices and religions.”⁶³

Charlie Hebdo is a satirical weekly magazine in a solid anticlerical and republican, sometimes anarchic French tradition. The mixed group of several dozen artists and (investigative) journalists share the faith of the freedom of expression, which they see as an absolute right. Against the power also when it comes to religion and social taboos.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Idem.

⁶¹ Arie Jan Korteweg. 2015. *Volkskrant* In de geest van De Sade, Celine en Foucault. *Volkskrant*, January 8, 5.

⁶² Rene Moerland. 2015. Charlie Hebdo, een fanatiek blad met een hekel aan fanatici; Vanaf 2006 is Islam een geliefd doelwit. *NRC*, January 8, 4.

⁶³ Hans de Zon. 2015. Charlie Hebdo: kampioen van de grove, bijtende satire. *Algemeen Dagblad*, January 7.

⁶⁴ Rene Moerland. 2015. Charlie Hebdo, een fanatiek blad met een hekel aan fanatici; Vanaf 2006 is Islam een geliefd doelwit. *NRC*, January 8, 4.

As this quote shows freedom of speech is represented as a value and right that is exercised regardless of religious and social taboos. The AD also referred to the French Revolution, which linked the right of freedom of speech to French history.⁶⁵ Moreover, the *Volkskrant* emphasizes the importance of heritage and nationality by referring to the tradition of freedom of speech in France.⁶⁶

Long toes serve only to dance on, the motto of Charlie Hebdo. This French ruthlessness has a long tradition. Charlie Hebdo is an explorer of the limits of the permissible. Always has been. Thus the magazine stands in a rich French tradition. Think of writers like Rabelais, De Sade, Celine or Houellebecq, the magazine *Hara-Kiri*, filmmakers like Blier or Keuchiche and thinkers like Foucault, Debord or Artaud.⁶⁷

Several papers wrote about freedom of speech as being part of the French heritage and history, which was linked to the French revolution. This implicates that freedom of speech is a right that belongs to the French nation and those that share this nationality, heritage and ethnicity. The intersections of these axes imply that one specific identity has the right to freedom of speech. The following quotes shine more light on this point. “[...] Even in France, where comics are an important cultural expression and the freedom of expression is cherished, it is hard to keep their heads above water.”⁶⁸

Charlie Hebdo is a modern example of a centuries-old tradition of sharp satire. A tradition that goes back to the scandalous pamphlets in the run-up to the French Revolution where left-winged rebellious radicalism is combined with a challenging crudeness.⁶⁹

The AD also refers to French tradition and the French Revolution, in order to promote satire as freedom of speech. This rules out the possibility of this being a system based on hate speech against those who do not share the same beliefs as the magazine. Freedom of speech is represented as a characteristic belonging to an individual's nationality and culture but also as an aspect of a particular kind of society.

Satire is the property of the magazine and it is used to make fun of extremists who use Mohammed for their own purposes and self-interest. [...] At Charlie Hebdo they were not sensitive to such criticism. They see their satire as fundamentally innocent. “With a pen in your hand, you do not

⁶⁵ Hans de Zon. 2015. Charlie Hebdo: kampioen van de grove, bijtende satire. *Algemeen Dagblad*, January 7.

⁶⁶ Arie Jan Korteweg. 2015. *Volkskrant* In de geest van De Sade, Celine en Foucault. *Volkskrant*, January 8, 5.

⁶⁷ Idem.

⁶⁸ Idem.

⁶⁹ Hans de Zon. 2015. Charlie Hebdo: kampioen van de grove, bijtende satire. *Algemeen Dagblad*, January 7.

think: Hey, I can cut throats,” Charb said in an interview. Charb and colleagues remained true to their motto: “We are not responsible for violence that others commit, we have right to laugh.”⁷⁰

Nationality, heritage, history, culture and political beliefs are aspects that are used to explain and justify the magazine’s position in regard to the attacks. I argue that the representation of the Charlie Hebdo attacks imply an attack on freedom of speech by Islamic fundamentalists. Moreover, the *Volkskrant* depicts the radical nature of the magazine as a form of freedom of speech.⁷¹ To substantiate the argument that Charlie Hebdo is about freedom of speech several *Volkskrant* articles emphasize that Charlie Hebdo did not only attack the Islam but also feminism, the pope, animal cruelty and the Front National.⁷² This also relates to Said’s theory because contrasting aspects of the East and the West are represented in these articles. Freedom of speech is represented as a value belonging to France or Western countries and the Islamic fundamentalists that attacked Charlie Hebdo are automatically placed against this mainly because of their religion. Religion, in this case specifically the Islam, is assigned to the East. Values like secularism and openness towards social taboos and religious topics are assigned to the West. In short, freedom of speech is represented as belonging to a national identity that shares democratic/liberal beliefs, supports secularism, and is of Western descent, preferably with French heritage. This is in contrast with a religious identity like for instance that of the perpetrators.

⁷⁰ Rene Moerland. 2015. Charlie Hebdo, een fanatiek blad met een hekel aan fanatici; Vanaf 2006 is Islam een geliefd doelwit. *NRC*, January 8, 4.

⁷¹ Idem.

⁷² Idem.

Conclusion

The main focus in this research is to understand how specific forms of violence represent specific identities that maintain, create or contribute to the construction of 'the Other'. I used the theories of intersectionality and Orientalism to better understand how these representations work. As I have shown in my analysis the perpetrator in the Breivik case is represented differently from those in the Charlie Hebdo case. There was sufficient information available about Breivik but due to the increase in this information the representation of the attacks and its attacker changed. Different axes of intersectionality were represented when referring to Breivik as a perpetrator. Breivik's nationality, ethnicity and race played a big role in how Breivik's actions were portrayed. Breivik was portrayed as a radicalized individual after his ethnicity and nationality was made clear. The Charlie Hebdo perpetrators were portrayed as Islamic fundamentalists. Their identity was mainly based on religious beliefs.

The attacks were both represented very differently due to the identity of the perpetrators and the nature of the attacks. The Paris attacks were considered to be religiously motivated and represented as an attack on Western values, namely freedom of speech. I came to this conclusion by looking at the different axes that intersect in the representation of the attacks. In this case history, culture, nationality and religion played a relevant role in the representation of the events. Freedom of speech was depicted as a right and ongoing French tradition, which stood in contrast with the religious identity of the perpetrators. This in turn contributes to the creation of 'the Other' because contrasting aspects were used to describe the East and the West through a Western looking glass. In the case of Breivik the attacks were initially represented as Al-Qaida attacks thus by Islamic fundamentalists. After Breivik's identity was made public the attacks were represented as political extremism. This implied that a specific kind of violence was most likely to be motivated by Islamic fundamentalists but also that a specific identity is assigned to this kind of violence. This also contributes to the idea of 'the Other' seeing as certain identities are linked to forms of violence while others are excluded from this discourse. One last point is that these representations refer to groups or individuals that share the same identities based on the intersections I pointed out. Misrepresentations of these identities are maintained and reinforced through the representation of these violent events.

My research shows that Dutch newspapers have a particular way of referring to violent events and of relating this to specific identities that are represented more negatively than others. These representations can advantage or disadvantage particular social groups in a multicultural society. In a bigger context my research emphasizes that it is important to be aware of the way we represent different identities especially in a multicultural society where differences in ethnicity, nationality, culture, history, heritage etc. are predominant.

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