

Ilmo Ilkka

ENEMY OF ENEMIES

Framing of Daesh in the UK and US Media

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
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ABSTRACT

Ilmo Ilkka: Enemy of Enemies: Framing of Daesh in the UK and US Media
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The purpose of this thesis was to identify the different frames that were constructed in four different Western media outlets, and the elements which constituted those frames when framing the terrorist organization known as Daesh or Islamic State between 2014 and 2016. Framing theory offers the researcher a way to analyze the methods that texts construe and construct the surrounding reality. This can be done either consciously by the writer or through the unconscious mental models that the writer has.

The data for this research consists of eighty-four articles from the editorial pages of four newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. The decision to limit the data gathering to the editorial pages was due to the fact that on those pages, the newspapers make explicit their political stances on any given subject matter. Thus, the editorial pages act as the *face* of the newspaper.

The decision to research Daesh was made because of the wide-reaching notoriety, infamy and concrete actions that the organization has engaged in. The research contributes to the academic knowledge about the relationships between various media organizations, their political stances, and the ways through which the Western media constructs an image of an enemy that is Othered culturally, morally, and geopolitically.

The analysis identified four grand frames from the datasets: the clash of civilizations frame; the hapless Arab frame; the bombs and guns frame; and the deliberation frame. The constitutive elements of these frames included defining problematic effects/conditions, identifying causes/agents, endorsing remedies, and conveying moral judgments. The first three frames were present in all the datasets but the last one was found only in the dataset from *The Guardian*.

Keywords: Framing theory, Daesh, Islamic State, Media studies, War on Terror

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TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tunnistaa ja analysoida kehyksiä sekä niiden rakentamiseen käytettyjä elementtejä, joita neljä englanninkielistä sanomalehteä käytti raportoidessaan Daesh/ISIS-terrorijärjestöstä vuosien 2014-2016 aikana. Kehysteoria antaa tutkijoille mahdollisuuden analysoida keinoja, joilla tekstit osallistuvat ympäröivän todellisuuden rakentamiseen ja sen muovaamiseen, joko kirjoittajan ollessa tietoinen prosessista tai hänen omaksumistaan tiedostamattomista ajatuksellisista malleista.

Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui kahdeksastakymmenestä neljästä tekstistä, jotka oli julkaistu neljän englanninkielisen sanomalehden pääkirjoitussivuilla. Sanomalehdet olivat *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Washington Post* ja *The New York Times*. Päätös rajata aineisto vain pääkirjoitussivuille johtui siitä, että sivuilla julkaistavat journalistiset tekstit edustavat sanomalehden omaa näkökulmaa ja kannanottoa kulloiseenkin aihealueeseen. Tällä tavoin ne toimivat julkaisujen *kasvoina*.

Daesh/ISIS-terrorijärjestön tutkimisen motiivi johtui järjestön luomasta ja saamasta laajasta negatiivisesta julkisuudesta sekä järjestön teoista Lähi-Idässä ja maailmalla. Lisäksi terrorijärjestöjen ja medioiden välisiä vuorovaikutuksia tutkiessa voidaan selvittää miten ne vaikuttavat toisiinsa.

Tutkimus paljasti sanomalehtien käyttäneen neljää pääkehystä: sivilisaatioiden yhteenotto -kehys; avuton arabi -kehys; pommeja ja aseita -kehys; ja harkitsevuus-kehys. Näiden kehysten rakentamiseen käytetyt elementit olivat ongelmallisten olojen määrittely, syiden ja tekijöiden tunnistaminen, ratkaisujen ehdottaminen ja moraalisten arvioiden tekeminen. Kehyksistä ensimmäiset kolme olivat kaikki havaittavissa koko aineistossa, ja viimeiseksi mainittu oli löydettävissä vain *The Guardianin* aineistossa.

Keywords: kehysteoria, Daesh, ISIS, mediatutkimus, "terrorismin vastainen sota"
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1. Introduction

The topic of my thesis is the ways that the media in the UK and the US framed and represented ISIS/ISIL/Daesh between 2014 and 2016. These variances between the nomenclatures surrounding the organization could be seen as the first hurdle a researcher has to tackle. This issue will be analyzed later on in this section, but at this stage the three terms can be broken down to

- (1) ISIS: an abbreviation from the *Islamic State in Syria*
- (2) ISIL: an abbreviation from the *Islamic State in the Levant*
- (3) Daesh: a term used by the people in the region, with connotations for the verb “to crush” (Irshaid, 2015; Siniver and Lucas, 2016, 65).

The first two are problematic to use in this thesis as they convey a sense of legitimacy to the organization and the so-called state that they managed to set up and govern. The terms are also geographically linked, which is questionable when discussing an ideological organization which, though having a strong presence in a certain region, does operate in other regions and countries, as ideologies are not necessary tied to a given geographical or regional area, especially in the modern interconnected and globalized world.

As the organization and its affiliates have openly admitted their hostility towards the Western and non-Muslim world, accurate information about it and its *modus operandi* were hard to obtain while the organization was still at the height of its power. No doubt there are numerous security apparatuses that have done their own assessments of the organization, but such information and intelligence are not readily available to academic research. There has been some research into the organization’s usage of various media and media products (e.g. Kraidy, 2018a; Kraidy, 2018b; Winter, 2018) and its effects on the region’s political sphere (e.g. O’Loughlin, 2018).

I approach the framing of Daesh in Western media with the following research questions in mind:

- (1) What kinds of frames do the newspapers construct regarding Daesh?
- (2) How does the construction of frames occur and what elements are they comprised of?

As such, even though exact information concerning the organization comes from highly reputable and reportedly trustworthy entities, the information is mostly not academic or peer-reviewed, at least in the sense that the academic world sees it. Nonetheless, it is the opinion of this writer that the information available, which has been made accessible through various media organizations and journalists, is reliable and consistent enough to warrant its use in the analysis section of the thesis. The focus of this thesis is, however, on the framing and representation of Daesh, and not on the organization itself.

It is important to try and understand how the organization is represented in the various media that perforate people's lives and shape the perceptions of audiences. This is because the more we can understand radical organizations and movements, the better situated we are in mitigating their detrimental effects on the world. Alongside this need for research, the focus on Daesh and its representation can be justified by the fact that, though the organization is far from being the only one to use spectacular violence to further its gains, the organization's successes in the areas it controls – or has controlled – has been one of the major success stories of the global Jihadist movement.

In addition, the organization's efficient propaganda and recruitment apparatuses ensure that there are fighters willing to take up arms in its name. The successful recruitment of fighters is hard to attribute to the organization and its media branch alone, so it would be fruitful to analyze the role the Western media have had in the creation, upkeep, and recreation of Daesh's image. This could offer insights into how various government and non-governmental institutions could prevent radicalization within their spheres of influence, as Daesh has a proficient media department aimed at the Western Muslims who are dissatisfied with or alienated from their surrounding societies.

As to the precise reasons of why this thesis focuses on the media organizations is due to the fact that the media inhabit the role of "gate-keepers" in society (Fowler, 1991, 13). With this role, the media can have a powerful influence over the discourses at-large, as Gunther Kress states it:

Discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of institutions. Beyond that, they define, describe and

delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension what is possible to do and not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. (Quoted in Fowler, 1991, 42)

Meanings are, thus, at least partly created and maintained through discourse whilst at the same time the discourse creates go and no-go zones for the users within that discourse. The importance of discourses, their power, and their relations to the themes of terror and terrorism especially in the narrative of the “War on Terror” is presented clearly by Hodges and Nilep in *Discourse, War and Terrorism* (2007, 2-4): they state that any given discourse not only conveys information about the world but also shapes the ways the readers understand it, and for this reason these discourses should be studied critically. This narrative is particularly useful and important in this thesis, as Daesh and its origins can be situated directly to the War on Terror politics and policies that began after the 9/11 attacks in New York. Furthermore, the War on Terror narrative will be visible in the analysis and results in this thesis, as all of the four newspapers rely to a varying extent on this particular discourse.

Following Lewis and Reese, a more in-depth analysis of the War on Terror frame can be said to consist of various features, including the act of “organizing information” while being based “on an abstract *principle* that is embedded in ideological struggle – an ‘organizing idea’ far larger than an individual text” (2009, 87-88). Additionally, the War on Terror frame is held in a collective consciousness, acting as a “rallying cry of nationalism”, enduring the test of time, and including “clear patterns of *structure* bifurcating the world into two camps – with us, or with the terrorists” (ibid.). Through their study, Lewis and Reese showed how, in the view of journalists themselves writing about the War on Terror, the newsrooms engaged in “reification” of the frame, where the frame itself was not questioned, only its implementation (2009, 93). Thus, the frame itself held its ground against possible criticism aimed at its essence, or its being, and all the criticism that was linked to the War on Terror frame was aimed at the ways the different policies were used within the frame, stranding the “pundits and the press to squabble instead over technicalities and tactics”

(ibid.).

After the frame was internalized by the media professionals, e.g. journalists and pundits, the next step in the process was the act of “naturalization” which entails the frame moving from “a fixed thing that is apparent to a taken-for-granted condition of modern life that is amorphous. [...] the frame becomes almost imperceptible, making it difficult to see where it begins and ends” (Lewis and Reese, 2009, 94). In this way, we could perhaps argue that the actors were absorbed by the frame they were using, and they could no longer distinguish it from facts of the world, at least not easily.

Furthermore, Roger Fowler, in his book *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, notes how even the most neutral-looking news item is still situated within language, and, thus, discourse, eliminating its ability to be truly objective; it is always the result of particular choices by the writer (1991, 4-5). Following Fowler’s notions, it becomes clear that the critical study of media texts, be they in written form, pictures, videos or something else entirely, is a crucial avenue through which researchers can make visible underlining assumptions, power-relations, and viewpoints a seemingly neutral news item holds.

When taken-for-granted assumptions are studied critically, the worldviews, and by extension, that which is deemed normal, on the one hand, and what abnormal on the other, may perhaps help us realize the hidden biases various media texts may have. These biases or ideologies can also be called, in Van Dijk’s terms, “Common Ground”, meaning that a group can share their ideology to such an extent that its mere presence is not questioned within that group, nor is it easy, if even possible, to start questioning its validity or rightness (Van Dijk, 2006, 117-118). This should not be taken as an indictment of the reader as adopting blindly the group’s ideology, but rather as a testament that all groups share these “Common Ground” biases. To manifest the hidden biases, the reader must be able to critically analyze the text, and even then, the act of seeing them might prove to be difficult.

The nature of my analysis will be that of a comparative content analysis with the main focus

being on the qualitative approach, though a quantitative approach is also used to some extent. The qualitative approach can be seen as prioritizing the researcher's interpretations of the data, placing the researcher in a position of a critic, rather than a completely objective entity, who must understand their own biases and ideas within the course of the analysis (Kuypers, 2010, 287). The approach taken in this thesis with regards to the nature and analysis of the data follows the ideas of rhetoric brought forth by Kuypers as he argues that rhetoric is the "strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specifiable goals" (2010, 288-290). This definition posits that rhetoric is intentional, long-term, and has a clear goal, i.e., the influencing of other people to agree with the communicator, their ideas, agenda etc. (ibid.). However, as Kuypers himself states, the definition can be enlarged to include unintentional and unconscious effects on the receiver of the communicative text (ibid.). The definition of a critic and criticism is another crucial aspect when dealing with the qualitative approach within this thesis. The aim of criticism is "to promote greater appreciation and understanding" concerning rhetorical acts (Kuypers, 2010, 290-291). Furthermore, the critic does more than just present their opinions concerning the subject matter; they construct and defend arguments based on the evidence found in the data, with the aim of convincing others of the *logos* of their arguments (Kuypers, 2010, 292-293).

As for the subjective position inhabited by the critic, it can be viewed as being composed of the choices made by the critic with regards to the approach and theoretical perspective(s) chosen for the construction of their arguments (Kuypers, 2010, 294). This acknowledgment of the choices made, alongside the unverifiable nature of the symbolical data, e.g. words, phrases and other lexical elements and the contexts in which they are present, used in rhetorical criticism, and the "freedom of choice" that humans possess regarding, for example, the use of different lexicons to understand and explain the world, is fundamental in creating constructive criticism (ibid.). By saying that the data in rhetorical analysis is unverifiable does not mean that the words themselves would change with every reader, but rather that the words are never truly objective as data from a quantitative study would be.

Following this notion, the reason for using the particular moniker Daesh, when referring to the terrorist organization in this thesis, is that it bypasses the issue of whether or not the organization operating in the Middle East can be understood as having a legitimate claim to statehood. In addition, using the term Daesh does not grant the organization the other major legitimating feature they crave for, that is to say that they represent Islam, and by extension, Muslims in general. This kind of focus on the language and the terms concerning the organization may seem trivial, but it should be kept in mind that words do have a kind of a power over how we as language users see, make sense, and even shape the world around us. By not allowing the organization the power to impose its own malevolent and destructive worldview through Orwellian language games upon those writing about it, the audience as well as the producers of the texts can, perhaps, help to make visible and in some ways de-escalate the antagonistic attitudes between what could be called the Western versus the Islamic world.

However, that is not to say that the term “Daesh” is in and of itself uncontroversial in academic writing, as the term used in this context is a pejorative one, carrying with it some negative connotations, being similar in its pronunciation in Arabic to the verbs *to crush* and *to trample something down* (Irshaid, 2015; Siniver and Lucas, 2016, 65). The issue of the nomenclature concerning the organization is also discussed in an article by Siniver and Lucas (2016) who concentrate their research on the use of the “ISIL” term within the Obama administration. They argue that the issue of which term to use to describe a perceived threat relates to the abstraction of military conflict: this abstraction enables the powers that be to enact policies and actions under the vague and ambiguous language that they have coined (Siniver and Lucas, 2016, 67-68).

However, an additional feature supporting the use of the term *Daesh* when writing about the organization is the fact that a number of Middle Eastern media organizations and politicians are using the term (Siniver and Lucas, 2016, 64-66). The term is also in circulation by the people who are most affected by the organization’s actions in the region and so, as outsiders and citizens of the “enemy states”, i.e. Western non-Islamic states, it is this writer’s position and opinion to use the

term in this thesis (ibid.). This term, then, is something that is imposed upon the organization from the outside, and not something that they themselves would prefer to be called.

In addition, the term avoids the issue of a caliphate, a political entity within the Islamic tradition of the Middle East. This political system did have legitimate rule over the people in the region throughout history ending with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, but the caliphate Daesh purports to have created is an ultraconservative and an apocalyptic one, riddled with contradictions (McCants, 2015 133; 166-167). The declaration of the caliphate also drew criticism from other jihadist groups and scholars within their ranks, as the killing of Muslims is *haram* or forbidden even to jihadists. Additionally, the caliphate is illegal, goes the argument, because it lacked the validation of the majority of Muslim leaders (McCants, 2015, 139-140).

The data for the thesis comes from 84 editorials and op-eds from four different newspapers, with two from the United Kingdom and two from the United States: *The Guardian* and *The Sunday Times* represent the former, and *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* the latter. By having the papers represent both countries, and, arguably, various political leanings, I hope to add depth to the analysis, though I am well aware that the act of choosing such papers is limiting my scope into the Anglo-American world. This is, however, warranted as the two nations have been crucial in the grander narrative and real-world events surrounding the War on Terror.

In addition, the timeframe represented by the data covers the organization's rise to infamy within the Western world, beginning in June 2014, and ending with the escalated military actions taken by both Russia and the coalition headed by the United States in the winter of 2016. This timeframe offers the opportunity to structure the data into thematic groupings, including for example the initial shock and cries of retribution to the violence perpetuated by Daesh, and the debates on what manner of responses would be appropriate and successful against the organization and by whom should they be implemented.

The corpus of media texts was obtained by inputting the following parameters into the LexisNexis online service: "*ISIS OR Islamic State*" with the timeframe starting from June 1st, 2014

and ending on the 30th of April 2016. From the corpus of hundreds of texts, a sample of 84 texts was chosen by inputting the parameters “*ISIS¹ AND Editorial*”. This last parameter includes all pieces of writing that appear on the papers’ editorial pages, including op-eds, editorials by the staff, and opinion pieces.

The reason for focusing on the editorials, op-eds, and opinion pieces is that they can be seen as being more opinionated, and being “mainly focused on judgment and appreciation, corresponding to the fact that editorials aim to comment on behaviors and events” (Homayounzadeh and Mehrpour, 2013, 9). As such, the above three forms of journalistic writing need not be so rigidly bound to the ideals of objectivity and neutrality, thus exemplifying the media organization’s stance on any given issue.

The structure of the thesis will begin with a brief overview of Daesh, offering the organization’s history, historical context, and organizational structure. This section is followed by the introduction of and debates surrounding the theoretical framework: framing theory. After these theoretical and methodological approaches and tools have been presented to the reader, the thesis will move on to the analysis section, which will be structured in the way of thematic groupings touched upon above. Finally, the thesis will offer its conclusion containing a brief summary of the findings and discussion topics for the future.

¹ For *The Washington Post*, the term used in the parameters was “Islamic State”, as the paper has decided to refer to the organization by that moniker. All the other papers use the moniker “ISIS”.

2. A Brief Overview of Daesh

This chapter will offer a brief introduction to the history, aims, and historical parallels of Daesh. As stated in the introduction of the thesis, due to the recentness of the organization and its secretive and hostile nature, exact details in the academic sources are not as numerous as one would hope. That being said, there are some academic sources dealing with Daesh,² its history, and the organization's possible aims. These include some details brought forth by Ahmed Hashim. He notes that Daesh has its roots in a militant group called Jamaat al-Tawhid al Jihad (JTJ) sometime in 2000 which operated in Iraq, fighting the occupying forces there after the invasion. JTJ provided the blueprint for the actions and tactics utilized by Daesh, relying heavily on suicide bombing campaigns against its enemies, and with an aim of establishing "an Islamic state under *sharia*, God's law" (Hashim, 2015, 69–70).

In 2004, JTJ transformed into al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), pledging allegiance to the al-Qaeda network, an act that lent the group a higher-level status which in turn helped it in recruiting people and in financing its operations (Hashim, 2015, 71). The first concrete declaration of an Islamic state came from AQI in 2006, now known as Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), though the group had faced criticism for its brutal methods and the goal of state-creation from various other insurgent groups in Iraq and its parent organization, the al-Qaeda Command (AQC) (Hashim, 2015, 72). However, ISI did not have the resources needed to control the conquered regions, and was on the verge of defeat at the end of 2008, but made a grizzly return in 2009 in a campaign to destroy Iraq's infrastructure, and in attacks targeting civilians, leading to a death toll in the hundreds (Hashim, 2015, 72–73).

With a new leader, Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai a.k.a. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi taking charge of the organization in 2010, ISI rebounded, and during his reign, the group formulated its goals and objectives of creating an Islamic state more minutely and concisely, which in turn led to changing the organization's name first into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS),

² See for example Paasche and Gunter (2016); Marsili (2016); Kaplan and Costa (2015).

and to Islamic State (IS) later on (Hashim, 2015, 72–73). When the organization proved that it was not going to simply vanish from the focus of the Middle Eastern and global spotlight, it acquired the moniker “Daesh”, as was discussed earlier in the text.

Focusing now briefly on the organizational structure of Daesh, it becomes clear that it is meticulously put together and managed in a highly structured way. According to documents retrieved and published by *Der Spiegel* in early 2015 (Reuter, 2015), Daesh structured its organization in a way highly reminiscent of the East German state, complete with a STASI-like nature of everyone spying on each other (for the structure of the organization, see figure 2.0. in the appendix). The documents also revealed how Daesh would operate prior to sending its armed troops: first, the vanguard of its members would open up a *Dawah* office, which Reuter calls an “Islamic missionary center”, in order to recruit spies in the area whose objectives included the listing of various powerful people, their methods of income, and the size and allegiances of the brigades in that area (Reuter, 2015). The presence of the *Dawah* offices also allowed Daesh to spread its influence in the various towns through purchasing or renting apartments, in which to store ammunition and soldiers (Reuter, 2015).

As for the nature of the organization, and on terrorism more broadly, the ideas brought forth by Rapoport about the ancient order of Assassins are surprisingly fitting, as according to him, the order aimed to create a state of what they considered to be a correct form of Islam; this led to the creation of, or the aim of creating, a state whose main reason for existence was in “organizing international terror” (1984, 666–667).

The two groups, separated by a span of centuries, do share another aspect between them other than the desire to create an Islamic state: the methods of terror they enact. The Assassins, according to Rapoport, “inspired awe” through their highly public executions and murders, and these acts were viewed by their enemies as “hateful, repulsive, and inhuman fanaticism” but they were effective, since “[d]ramatically staged assassinations draw immense attention to a cause” (1984, 666–667). Taking this aspect into account, the widely publicized executions and beheadings

of UK and US citizens that took place from the summer of 2014 onwards, can be seen as a 21st-century equivalent of the Assassins' public executions, not limited in space or time but, rather, uploaded and broadcasted to the globalized world, and unto the eyes of potentially millions of people.

Though the aims of the two organizations can be seen as somewhat similar to each other, it is noteworthy that Daesh is highly focused, at least in its propaganda, on the mythical Islamic apocalypse. Indeed, one of the most powerful factors in the creation of the organization is, arguably, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the apocalyptic atmosphere it created within the region (McCants, 2015, 157-158). Though Daesh was far from the only organization to be borne from those chaotic times and circumstances, its brutal strategy of committing acts of violence on both Muslims and non-Muslims alike throughout its history has been an effective one, though the strategy is far removed from the strategy advocated by its former master, Al-Qaeda; and Daesh has incorporated the exceptionally brutal acts as a part of their apocalyptic branding, marketing, and propaganda apparatus (McCants, 2015, 160-165).

The organization has ceased to be a meaningful governing entity in the regions it used to control in Syria and Iraq, but the loss of unified territory under a centralized administration has not removed the threat that the organization poses (Turner, 2020, 112). Daesh has changed its structure and *modus operandi* following the loss of its physical area, but it still has numerous affiliates around the Middle East as well as in parts of Africa, though the degree of control it exerts over them is not total (ibid.)

Before the loss of its territory, Daesh had already, arguably, modified its past *modus operandi* which included gaining territory through a more or less conventional military operations, a method which enabled it to establish the self-proclaimed caliphate, towards conducting terrorist attacks outside of its sphere of influence. The attacks in Paris in 2015 and in Brussels in 2016 were a testament to the organization's earlier shift of strategy, though it is not fruitful to say that the two strategies would be somehow mutually exclusive. Attacks carried out in Daesh's name, whether by

its affiliates or non-aligned groups or individuals, should not be discounted as impossible, as the organization had already gained infamy and spread its ideas of violent extremism on a global scale.

4. Framing Theory

Framing theory is a multifaceted, and at times, quite convoluted theory of mass communication. It encompasses a plethora of different viewpoints, aspects, and objects of inquiry. Framing theory scholars have devoted significant amount of time and resources on trying to ascertain what exactly an entity such as “framing theory” includes, and what is excluded from it. They have tried to come to an agreement on what exactly is a *frame*, and what its relationship to related concepts such as *schema* and *agenda-setting* might be. Most theorists place the origins of framing theory to the ideas brought forth by Goffman in his work from 1986 titled *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Within the text, Goffman states that when an individual is faced with an event “he tends [...] to imply in this response (and in effect employ) one or *more frameworks or schemata of interpretation* of a kind that can be called primary” (Goffman, 1986, 21 emphasis added). These primary frameworks are, according to Goffman, ways through which the individual makes or creates sense out of a characteristic that would otherwise be meaningless. In other words, the frameworks and schemata are sense-making processes (ibid.).

In addition, the primary frameworks can be situated on a scale with regards to their “degree of organization” which can vary from “a system of entities, postulates, and rules” on the one hand, and ones without any definite boundaries, on the other (Goffman, 1986 21). The latter frameworks work to provide a point of view or a perspective to the individual. These frameworks offer the individual the possibility to “locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms”, a process which will almost always be unconscious (ibid.). The primary frameworks can further be divided into two sub-categories: natural frameworks and social frameworks. The former framework, as the name suggests, can be characterized as dealing with the “occurrences seen as undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, ‘purely physical’ [...] [they] are ones understood to be due totally, from start to finish, to ‘natural’ determinants” (Goffman, 1986, 22). Furthermore, these frameworks lack any intentional agency from a human or animal individual which could affect the outcome of such incidences. Examples of

such natural frameworks would be the physical laws of the universe or the weather.

By contrast, the social frameworks “provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being” (Goffman, 1986, 22). These frameworks are the ones focused upon in this thesis, as the human agency makes them susceptible to influence from other individuals and entities, and to rapid changes sprouting from outside forces. The social frameworks are described by Goffman as “guided doings” and they force the user to “standards”, to social appraisal of his action based on its honesty, efficiency, economy, safety, elegance, tactfulness, good taste, and so forth”, and they are also influenced by “motive and intent” which help determine which of the frameworks will be used in the sense-making process (1986, 22). An example would be a weather report in a given medium. What is perhaps the crucial differentiating factor between the two frameworks is one of intent, of willfulness or the lack thereof, with the natural frameworks having no intentions affecting them, and the social frameworks being born from an intention or a thought of an agent.

As for the power of frames, according to Kuypers, it relies on the frames’ ability to affect our views of the world according to which features are made prominent and which are left less so (2010, 300-302). This prominence is linked to the concept of *salience* which will be discussed later on in this thesis, but to state it broadly, the salience of a feature carried within a frame means the amount that feature receives exposure in the media (ibid.). Lewis and Reese likewise highlight the power that frames possess when they say that they “are tools used by social actors to structure reality, and their creation and manipulation are often managed by elites seeking to reinforce their discursive dominance” (2009, 87).

One of the reasons for the effectiveness of salience is the fact that people do not process all the information available to them, and arguably it might be impossible for them to do so in the Information Age. Rather, people “rely upon information that, in whatever form, is most easily accessible to us” (Kuypers, 2010, 300-302). Thus, people seem to take the path of least resistance when confronted with aspects of the surrounding reality, and these aspects are carried through

frames.

In addition, frames carry certain facts more prominently than others, and promote a certain kind of lens through which those facts should be perceived by the receiving audience (Kuypers, 2010, 300). In this sense frames have two functions: to convey certain facts about a given issue, some of which can be made more salient than others, and to promote a certain way of looking at the facts which will lead to a conception of the issue influenced by the frame used.

Part of the appeal of the framing theory and the various avenues of approach to any form of communication it offers has enabled its use in research dealing with a number of media; to blogs (Cooper, 2010), newspapers (de Vreese, 2010; Entman 2004), radio (Shah et al., 2010), and television (Iyengar, 1991). This versatility, however, leads to a host of problems when one tries to define what a frame is and what it is not, where frames are situated, and who has access to or control over them.

One of the most prominent and oft-cited attempts at arriving at a working definition of framing and its theory comes from Entman when he states that (1993, 51-52):

Whatever the specific use, the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text. Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location – such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel – to that consciousness. (Entman, 1993, 51-52)

As the above quote illustrates, the presence of frames and the act of framing is not medium-specific, and frames can be located in, arguably, almost all arenas of human communication. Later in the text, Entman offers what might be termed as the core functions of frames and framing (1993, 52-53):

Framing essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe. [...] [F]rames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. *Communicators* make conscious or unconscious framing judgements in deciding what to say, guided by frames (often called schemata) that organize their belief systems. The *text* contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain key-words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of

information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements. The frames that guide the *receiver's* thinking and conclusion may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator. The *culture* is the stock of commonly invoked frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping. Framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selection and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution. (Entman, 1993, 52-53)

As the definitions provided by Entman show, the study of frames involves a somewhat broad approach, as the researcher must take into account the four locations in which frames act, and the consequences of the actions. To frame issue in a given way means that the communicator has to make certain decisions on what content is framed, what is excluded, how frames are contextualized (e.g. if a magazine will position an advertisement for a new SUV next to an article about the detrimental effect that the automotive industry has on the environment), and how the communicator sees or thinks their audiences will react to the presented frame.

This is not to say that the act of framing is a conscious one, especially in the field of mass media, a point which will be discussed later on in the chapter. What makes the discernment of the framing process difficult is the fourth location in the communication process, i.e. culture. As the effective investigation of framing is predicated on the identification of said frames, the researcher can have difficulties in finding them all, as some frames can be so culturally ubiquitous that they become nigh invisible. They are linked to the idea of the “Common Ground” mentioned earlier in this thesis (Van Dijk, 2006, 117-118).

In this sense, the researcher must take care in order not to skim over the data, and to also have moments of self-reflection regarding the subject of research, especially if that subject comes from the same culture as the researcher does. Nonetheless, understanding frames and the process of framing has substantial advantages in the field of communication research, whether the acts of communication reside in speech, audio-visual form, or text. Indeed, there are valid reasons for applying framing theory to the study of media texts, as the theory will allow for a more holistic approach in the evaluation of the content and its possible effects on the audiences and the culture in

which it is situated.

The definitions cited above can be further augmented by considering what Entman calls “substantive” and “procedural” frames, with the former executing at least two of the four core functions of framing (i.e. defining effects or conditions as problematic; identifying causes; conveying a moral judgement; and endorsing remedies or improvements) which all help in the creation of a “kind of a cultural logic” which is self-sustaining and self-strengthening (1993, 5-6). The latter of the two frames is more focused on objects and functions: “procedural” frames propose “evaluations of *political actors’* legitimacy, based on their *technique, success, and representativeness* (Entman, 1993, 6).

Understanding the locations in which framing operates and the crucial roles that frames perform, the researcher can understand, for example, the implicated meanings conveyed by the text through content analysis by paying attention to the salience of the different bits of information embedded or, indeed, removed from the text. Furthermore, the issue regarding the ideal Fourth Estate³ represented by Western journalists is not taken as gospel when viewed through the lens of framing theory, as there are interest groups with, at times, considerable power who would like to have journalists obey the framing parameters they have set whenever an issue of any controversy is being reported on (Entman, 1993, 56-57).

In this thesis, the most important locations for the frames of the communication process are the communicators, the texts, and the culture, as there is no viable method of performing an audience study with regards to the receiver’s role. Despite the limitations this poses, the analysis will try to ascertain the perceived frames that the receivers might have. The aforementioned locations can be further defined with regards to this thesis: the communicators are the newspapers and the individual writers who have created the content, that is to say the editorials and op-eds under analysis, and to a lesser degree the various media organizations that run the publications; the

³ The term “Fourth Estate” in the context of this thesis relates to the roles of the journalists and journalistic institutions as watchdogs who keep the other societal powers in check. In addition, this role can be seen as being fundamental to the wellbeing of democracy through passing on important information to the public. (*A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, 2016).

texts are the concrete data which is studied, comprising of eighty-four pieces of writing; and the location of culture is that of the Anglo-American, post-9/11 Western culture, with special focus given to the idealistic perception of the journalistic institutions as the Fourth Estate and all the ideals that come with this notion. The culture also includes the political leanings of the newspapers and their audiences which I will cover in more detail later on in this thesis.

Going back to the quote from Entman, some terms need further clarification. The issue of *salience* warrants some additional explanation, and, according to Entman, the term refers to the status granted to a specific part of information concerning an issue, wherein the part is made “more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences” (1993, 53). This increase in salience “enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store in memory” (Entman, 1993,53). This surge in salience is achieved through and by the texts using various tactics: by location, by reiteration, or by linking them to other symbols that the surrounding culture is familiar with and gives importance to (Entman, 1993, 53).

However, the increase or decrease in salience is not as clear-cut as might seem at first, as even a seemingly minor concept or idea buried in a minor part of a text can have a high salience if it coincides with the existing mental schemata of the audience (Entman, 1993, 53). This process also works in reverse, as even a major idea or concept can have little or no impact on the audience if it does not fit into the existing mental schemata (Entman, 1993, 53). This seemingly paradoxical nature of the issue of salience is linked to the interaction between audiences and texts, and thus it is difficult for researchers to gain an unequivocal insight into the exact nature of the relationship (Entman, 1993, 53).

In order to demonstrate the power of frames and the importance in researching them, Entman recalls an experiment conducted by Kahneman and Tversky, published in 1984, wherein the researchers had subjects select from pairs of imaginary scenarios. These scenarios were concerned with combating a deadly, though hypothetical pathogen facing the United States with a casualty number of 600 people. Two pairs of scenarios with the same outcome, though framed differently,

were presented to the subjects. The first scenario (A) would result in the survival of 200 people, and the second scenario (B) would result in a one-third probability of saving all 600 people, but with a two-thirds probability of complete mortality rate; 72 percent of the subjects opted for the first scenario, and 28 percent for the latter (Entman, 1993, 53-54). In the next experiment, completely indistinguishable scenarios for treating the pathogen were offered, though they were framed differently: “if Program C is adopted, 400 people will die. If Program D is adopted, there is one-third probability that no-body will die, and a two thirds probability that 600 will die” (Kahneman and Tversky, quoted in Entman, 1993, 54). This shift in the framing resulted in a dramatic shift in the subjects: only 22 percent chose C, with 78 percent choosing D, this despite the fact that the results were between A and C, and B and D were identical (Entman, 1993, 54).

Analyzing the results of the experiment, it becomes clear that the act of framing issues has serious consequences for the decisions and perceptions of the audiences, though this should not be taken as a universal constant among the various audiences and the segments that are nestled within them (Entman, 1993, 54). Another noteworthy point that the above experiment serves to highlight is the fact that the exclusion of certain aspects or features of an idea or notion that is framed is equally important as the aspects or features that are included. Indeed, according to Entman:

Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omission of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience. [...] Receivers’ responses are clearly affected if they perceive and process information about one interpretation and possess little or incommensurable data about alternatives. This is why exclusion of interpretation by frames is as significant to outcomes as inclusion. (Entman, 1993, 54)

By excluding some pieces of information while including some others, the communicator can try and influence the receiver which is not in and of itself something rare or astounding. Rather, these are processes which are employed by a host of people in different contexts for different reasons, and it should not be seen as something inherently evil. The process should nonetheless be noted so that the researcher can identify and make visible the invisible structures of power that the different institutions have and through which they exert their power.

Other framing theorists have also noted how important frames are to the acts of communication between various actors. Some of them have called it “an unavoidable reality of the public communication process. The choice as a journalist [...] is not whether to employ framing, but rather how to effectively frame a message for your audience” (Nisbet, 2010, 44). Others have noted that to imagine a news story lacking a frame would be difficult, and that no media professional could hope to create an unframed story (Cooper, 2010, 140).

Moving on to the related concepts that come up in the field of framing theory, starting with the concept of *agenda-setting*. According to Scheufele and Scheufele, the concept refers to the rather simplistic idea that the more audiences are subjected to an idea or concept through the media, the more important they perceive it to be, or how readily the audiences can “retrieve it from memory when needed” (2013, 3).

Furthermore, the concept of *agenda-setting* is linked to the concept of *salience*, discussed above, and to the concept of *priming* as, according to Scheufele and Scheufele, *agenda-setting* and *priming* show their effects on the audiences on the frequency and prominence of media coverage surrounding an issue, with more coverage creating a more important issue in the minds of the audiences, and less coverage resulting in the diminishing importance of the issue (2013, 6).

According to them:

[a]genda setting and priming [...] have to be understood as two steps in a chronological series of effects. Agenda setting refers to the transfer of salience from mass media to audiences. Priming as a subsequent step, assumes that mass media can ‘prime’ issues by making the more salient and – in turn – also active related concepts in people’s mind. This is usually referred to as spreading activation. [...] As a result, the salient issue and related concepts are more likely to be used for subsequent judgments about candidates or issues. (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2013, 6)

As a simple example of this, a group of co-workers who have paid attention to the news on the previous night can gather around the water cooler in the office to discuss the topics they read, saw, or heard without the need to go over the basic premises of the topic. They can all easily recall the features of the topic without exerting too much conscious effort.

Additionally, Scheufele and Scheufele situate the two concepts into the realm of

“accessibility-based models” on a long continuum of media effects models, as the two concepts concentrate “on what has been made salient by media coverage and how we use it for evaluations (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2013, 6-7). The core process underlying priming and agenda setting, therefore is the ease with which a mediated issue can be retrieved from memory”, whereas the acts of framing are situated into the realm of “applicability-based models”, as they “focus on how well the message resonates with pre-existing schema” (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2013, 6-7).

Furthermore, the work by Scheufele and Tewksbury call the entity that is framing as “both a macrolevel and a microlevel construct”, and it thus has implications for both the communicators and the receivers, as the former include e.g. journalists who create and use frames that find some resonance with the receivers’ mental schemas, and the latter when the receivers “use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions” (2007, 12). I believe that following Scheufele and Scheufele’s approach in dividing the concepts into the two different realms of media effects models is fruitful in trying to understand the acts of framing without the risk of being drawn into a quagmire of mismatched and overlapping concepts which abound in the field of framing theory research.

Additionally, the theories and concepts surrounding agenda-setting and priming, though at times applicable even today, were first conceived in the 1970s when the theoretical approaches in the field of communication studies assumed that the transfer of salience from the media text unto a more or less passive audience was total and complete across all societal groups (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2013, 7). It should also be noted how the media landscapes have transformed from the 1970s when broadcasters and newspapers were mainly aimed at the national audiences. Now, however, the reach of the media has been increased to an incredible degree, at the same time when the passive consumer of media, if such a thing ever existed, has well and truly transformed into a prosumer, meaning that “we are simultaneously cultural consumers and producers” (Ahluwalia and Miller, 2014, 259). These changes, together with the ever faster and wider reach of information, from which the media create their content, have ushered in a world far, far removed from the

birthing era of agenda-setting and priming. By accepting the division discussed above and looking at framing as relying on the previously held schemata of the audiences allows it to escape such tight and universal constraints. The power of the framing effects relies on the cultural location the frames are situated in, i.e. the context and culture in which they are produced, and the interplay between it and the mental schemata possessed by the audience.

This concept of the mental schemas that the audiences hold is one of the most important features of the framing theory, and, as such, requires some further explanation. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, 11-12), among others (see e.g. Nisbet, 2010; Van Gorp, 2010) trace the relationship between frames and schemas to the work of Goffman, who, alongside other theorists in the 1970s, laid the groundwork for the theory of framing, arguing that the world is not a place that the people could be able to understand in its entirety nor to arrive at any reasonable sense for, including their own life experiences. Any new information must, according to Scheufele and Tewksbury following Goffman (2007, 11-12), be subjected to interpretative schemas or “primary frameworks” which will give meaning to the seemingly random and overwhelming information.

Additionally, according to Entman, schemas are “interpretive processes that occur in the human mind [and] are clusters or nodes of connected ideas and feelings stored in memory”, that are connected to each other at least psychologically and perhaps even physiologically, and which, through their use, create “*knowledge networks*” (Entman, 2004, 7). These networks contain information and knowledge about, say, a specific event that is imprinted into the minds of the people affected by or knowledgeable about that event. This imprint takes the form of a cognitive schema, and once the schema is “stored in long-term memory, all succeeding information about any one of these ideas has the potential to bring to mind [...] associated feelings and concepts from the knowledge network” (Entman, 2004, 7).

It would perhaps help the reader to imagine a canvas suspended from the ground by its four corners. On the canvas and pressing down on it are spheres of various colors and hues. When a droplet of water falls towards the canvas, the rivulets will rush towards a given sphere through the

depression it has created on the surface of the canvas until joining the pool around the sphere.

Another helpful definition comes from Scheufele and Scheufele when they identify the cognitive schema as “a cognitive representation of an object or relation between objects”, further following this with the idea that “a schema is broadly defined as a configuration of salient attributes that helps us process subsequent information” (2010, 116). These schemas, however, are not a priori but are constructed through the interactions an individual has in their culture, they are “socially shared” (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2010, 117). Nor are all schemas equal but, rather, construed in “schema hierarchies” meaning that sometimes the news frame is too specific to warrant the use of the “general schema”, forcing instead the people to create a new submissive schema, or treat the news frame as “an exception from the rule” (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2010, 117). Finally, an individual’s knowledge on an issue or event is a “network of different related schemas” (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2010, 117). This network of different related schemas becomes active when a media frame fits parts or the whole of the individual’s schemata, even if the media frame itself would not contain the same sets of schema that are activated in the receiver’s network of cognitive schemas (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2010, 117-119).

As the schemas and knowledge networks are, at least on some level, highly individual, meaning that no two identical networks can be found between two people, the framing theory needs to be kept at a more universal level. For example, a schema that is highly prolific and widespread across cultures would be the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as the images of the planes hitting the towers were distributed across a wide range of cultures. It should be noted, however, that even if the schema of the event is shared between cultures and individuals within the same culture, there are still ways in which the “nodes of connected ideas” might differ in their connections. For some, the images might bring related ideas of terrorism that is perpetuated only by radical Islamists, and for others it might be linked to ideas about the perceived neo-imperialism of the United States.

The way that the frames and the acts of framing link to these ideas concerning the schemas can be seen in what Entman calls “cascading network activation”, and the ideas relating to the

battles of dominance of various frames (2004, 7). According to Entman:

Early stimuli arising from new events and issues generally have primacy, since activation spreads out from the initial idea. [...] A dominant frame in the earlier news coverage of an event can activate and spread congruent thoughts and feelings in individuals' knowledge networks, building a new event schema that guides responses to all future reports. First impressions may be difficult to dislodge" (Entman, 2004, 7).

This primacy effect could be seen, for example, in the ways the social elites react to an unexpected crisis that is broadcasted through the mass media to audiences. Different reactions result in different ways of thinking about the event.

Entman's "cascading network activation" requires, perhaps, further elaboration. As the name suggests, the model is hierarchical in nature, though it is not bound strictly into a one-way, top-down ways of communication. At the top is the administration level (in Entman's example, White House, State Department, Department of Defense), below that are the other elites (Congress members and staffers, Ex-officials, Experts, and Foreign Leaders); further down are the media (Journalists, and News Organizations), which in turn feed into the news frames (Framing Words and Images), which finally reach the public (Polls and Other Indicators).

These various groups also feed into each other in a reverse-flow of information, data, and frames. The public is the birthplace of various polls that the media level reports and publishes which in turn affects the public opinion of issues. News frames are not static and not necessarily in accordance with each other, and this level feeds back into the elite level, wherein, say, the members of Congress have to adjust their output to the media to accommodate the public opinion; and lastly, the elite level influences the administration level, as the executive branch has to, usually at least, comply with the desires of the representational democracy's elected officials (Entman, 2004, 10-14).

However, this idea of the cascade is not a universal model, as is noted by Entman, and as with the real-life parallel of the waterfall, some parts from the top never reach the bottom via the intended route. Instead, each group and individual are seen as attempting to promote their own frame to the level below them, an action that can be conscious (especially at the administrative

level) or unconscious (for example on the media level) (Entman, 2004, 10-11).

Furthermore, the different entities acting on the various levels of the model do not have a unified and total picture of any given event, as there are always constraints on the resources available to the actors, be they a member of Congress or an editor of a newspaper; instead, what is actually passed down the levels of the model:

is not comprehensive understanding but highlights packaged into selective, framed communications. As we go down the levels, the flow of information becomes less and less thorough, and increasingly limited to the selected highlights, processed through schemas, and then passed on in ever-cruder form. The farther an idea travels between the levels on the cascade, the fainter the traces of the 'real' situation are. (Entman, 2004, 12)

Indeed, because this model understands the importance of the actual schemas that filter the information through the different levels of the cascade model, it is a fitting metaphor for the various ways framing is present in the workings of society. This is not to say that the model is without faults, however. The model is situated firmly in the Anglo-American culture and the representative democracy model of government, as Entman's nomenclature for the different actors on the various levels show.

In addition, the model might be seen as being slightly outdated, in need of a few updates in order to fully encompass the workings of a society, namely that the divisions between the model's levels might not be, due to the advent of the Internet and the so-called social media especially, so strictly separated. Where, for example, would citizen journalists fit in the model, or bloggers who act as media critics and fact checkers of the traditional media; or how would the modern social networking applications affect the counter-flows of the model, when a politician's career could be ruined by an offensive tweet or a picture? Increasingly, it seems that politicians are communicating their message straight to their constituencies through the use of social media platforms, a process which bypasses the media-level of the cascade.

Despite these issues, I feel that the model would be an excellent tool for great many a researcher interested in the framing theory, as it takes into account not only the difference in power

balance between the groups, but the notion of the effects that the schemas have on the spreading of frames and the use of the knowledge networks.

As an example of the model in action and on the application of the framing theory, my preliminary analysis of the data under inspection suggests that Daesh has succeeded in bringing in a frame seemingly from the outer realms into the frames built and utilized by the papers. The frame in question is founded on what Entman calls a “*paradigm*, or a meta-schema”, that is to say the frame of the radical, anti-West Islamic terrorist which has gained prevalence ever since the 9/11 attacks (2004, 24). This ties into the War on Terror frame discussed earlier, but here the frame is also used by the Other, i.e. Daesh, in its actions; the organization has embraced its Othered nature and uses it to push their own paradigm onto the newspapers and the outside media, while flipping the roles within that frame upside down. They are now the Us and the West is the Other.

This “meta-schema” is linked to the aforementioned model in that there are four critical motivations that must be considered whenever a spreading of activation occurs within the model: motivations, cultural congruence, strategy, and power (Entman, 2004, 13). The two most important motivations for the initial analysis are motivation and cultural congruence, with the former consisting of six sub-sects of motivations which include such things as the minimization of cognitive costs, the avoidance of emotional dissonance, and the monitoring of and reacting to threats against core values (ibid.).

According to Entman, the six motivations raise a high barrier of entry with regards to the citizens’ interest to foreign affairs, though if an event or issue is a severe enough threat to the values, or if it is high in magnitude and resonance, the citizens will take notice of it (2004, 13-14). Terrorist⁴ acts, especially those targeted against Western individuals or groups, do appear to have the requisite amount of threat to the core values as part of their nature to warrant the focused gaze of the citizens to descend upon them. The reason for this gaze might be identifying with the victims

⁴ By “terrorist act”, I refer to acts carried out by non-state actors, either in the form of an organization or individuals, as the very term of *terrorism* is contested in various fields.

of the attack by the citizens, though this arguably depends on which frame is used to represent the victims.

Another major motivation, cultural congruence, can be seen as measuring the amount of resistance or lack thereof that a frame experiences whenever it travels down the cascade model whilst stimulating parallel reactions from the different actors on different levels, with the supposition that every other variable is equal (Entman, 2004, 14). The amount of congruence a frame has with schemas that are in the dominating position with regards to the political climate, the more success it will have; and if there are schemas that have gained the levels of a “paradigm”, then the frame will be immensely powerful; but if there is no such paradigm present concerning an issue, then the schemas will instigate various competing frames (Entman, 2004, 14-15). It might also be possible for an idea, an event or a situation being so mismatched with the dominant schemas that the amount of cognitive cost would be too high, or the emotional dissonance too great for the citizens to accept it, in which case the frames would not cascade down the levels of the model (ibid.). An example of this mismatch would be if a politician in Finland would go against the culturally shared paradigm of stating unequivocally that Finland has committed ethnically motivated and racist systemic crimes against the Sami people of Lapland. This idea would be so far removed from the paradigm that it would either encounter immense resistance or be ignored.

An example of a highly congruent frame arising from the analysis of the data would be the very same frame that Daesh itself is promoting: that of the radical Islamic fighter/terrorist. There appears to be some variance between the frames, offering competing frames to the public, but these appear to be on a rather narrow spectrum, and are related to such variations as the amount or seriousness of the threat that Daesh represents in the Middle East and other conflict hot-spots in which it operates; how to deal with the organization; who is to take the lead in the campaign against it; and which local actors, if any, should be included in the efforts aimed at neutralizing the threat that the organization presents.

Interestingly, it would seem, at least at this stage of the analysis, that there is a notable

absence with regards to the efforts of trying to ascertain what enabled the organization to gain such a dominant role in the region, and almost any notion that the fighters in the Daesh ranks could be considered as equally human as their victims is absent in the data. This would suggest that the dominant frame(s) and paradigm prohibit the cascading of a frame down from the media level to the public level which would see the organization as being comprised of misled, disenfranchised, or even indoctrinated human beings. In this sense, perhaps, Daesh fits the frame of the ultimate enemy to the West, one that is wholly Other, and which is in a bipolar opposite position to the “enlightened” Western world. Perhaps it was this dominating frame that led Al-Jazeera to call Daesh the “Enemy of Enemies” in their extensive report on the organization (Al-Jazeera, *Enemy of Enemies: The Rise of ISIL*, 2015).

This absence of what might be called the “humanized” frame of Daesh fits into Entman’s notions that culturally incongruent frames and ideas are not successful in spreading throughout the levels in the model, as they trigger a “kind of mental circuit, a detour that steers thinking down psychologically comforting pathways,” an act that could be considered as taking the path of least resistance (2004, 15-16). For many, the idea that an extremist Islamic terrorist organization is comprised from the poor, disenfranchised people of a war-torn region of the world, several of whom might have children and other family just like the people in the West, would maybe require too many costly adjustments to their own mental schemas that the desire to shunt the idea aside and follow the dominant paradigm becomes the preferable choice.

For the purposes of my thesis, the area of framing, to which I alluded before, dealing with the journalistic acts of framing are of special interest. Taking this perspective into account with regards to the cascade model, and supposing an ideal of the media as the Fourth Estate, the role of the actors on the media level becomes increasingly important. Indeed, as Entman notes, the role of the media is not to simply pass on the frames from the upper levels to a passive audience, even if it were possible due to the underlying schemas that the journalists and other media professionals have (2004, 17-21). Rather, the media:

should provide enough information independent of the executive [administrative] branch that citizen can construct their own counterframes of issues and events. It is not enough for media to present information in ill-digested and scattered morsels. Rather, what the citizens need is a counterframe constructed of culturally resonant words and images, one that attains sufficient magnitude to gain wide understanding as a sensible alternative to the White House's interpretation [of an event or issue]. (Entman, 2004, 17)

This, it should be kept in mind, is the way the media level should operate in an ideal situation, without the constraints imposed upon it by economic, cultural, or political actors which all aim to present the media with their own preferred frames. In the real world, however, the situations concerning the media outlets and organizations can be vastly different, with the news organizations and media professionals experiencing the need to fulfil the markets' requirements to garner a wide audience for which the advertisers will pay for, and the newsroom practices and industrial norms that govern, at least to some degree, the frames that are represented (Entman, 2004, 14).

This attention to the journalistic and media frames is further justified by Entman when he notes that the frames in the media texts are functioning in three different areas: political events, issues, and actors, and that the media's framing can have omissions or "gaps" in them, which "audiences may fill by using tacit understanding (that is, their existing schemas) or that they may simply ignore" (2004, 22-23). The appearance of these "gaps" is as important an aspect of a frame as is the inclusion of some other element in them, as was discussed above.⁵ It should be noted that Entman's ideas of political events may not refer exclusively to elections, nominations etc. that are in the sphere of the traditional party politics, though that was the starting point for his ideas. The term is used in this thesis to refer to both the party politics and events that are *political* but not within the former's sphere.

Another facet of the journalistic or media frame is brought into focus by Van Gorp when he identifies them as being founded in the shared cultural context, exhibiting such features of the

⁵ Following Entman's (23-24, 2004) ideas on how to offer the researcher some concrete help in trying to ascertain and categorize the frames and their foci, I have replicated his grid in the appendix (Figure 1.0). Into the grid, the researcher can fill out the three different classes of objects or areas that the frame focuses on, and the four defining functions of the frames. As the theory of framing and frames can, at times, seem to be quite focused on the theoretical aspects of analysing the data, I feel that such grids are not out of place in the researcher's work.

culture such as archetypes; and that “journalists have at their disposal a repertoire of frames that can be useful to construct a news story [...] Organizational factors, external conditions, and journalistic sources may influence the selection of a frame” (2010, 86-87). The author is quick to note that the media is not simply conveying a frame presented to them from their sources, and that “the process of frame-building [...] can be understood as a process in which journalists frame events and issues not only by applying news values, but also by being sensitive to cultural themes” (ibid.).

In addition to the definition above, it should be noted that the study of news frames can, according to Reese, furthermore be divided into the study of the “what” and the “how” of the frames, with the former being focused with “frame building and involves the dissection of the content of the frame, specifically the network of concepts and the unique narrative and myths that make it work” (2010, 19). This approach tries to discern various “framing devices”, that is to say certain linguistic features or structures within the frame, and a research into the “what” of frames “emphasizes the special configuration of discourse elements that articulate culture. [...] [encouraging] an analysis that delves into the contextualization of topics – social, historically, culturally – and urges the framing researcher to look closely at the particular features of the frame” (Reese, 2010, 19-20). This approach has garnered some critique toward its perceived improvised and highly contextual relevance, as noted by Reese (2010, 20).

As for the “how” of the frames, they are “situated in competitive and social and political environments; frames are constructed and promoted to achieve some predetermined outcome”, and the various groups that use frames do so in order to “mobilize internally and to compete against each other in the public arena”, as well as delve into the realm of frame-construction (Reese, 2010, 20). This focus on the “how” of the frames is not without critique, as it is seen as too often neglecting the “what” of the frames, instead taking it as a given, and focusing more on the effects of the news frames (ibid.).

Though both of the approaches to the study of news frames can be seen as being equally important, this thesis will primarily focus on the “what” of the frames, mainly due to the constraints

imposed upon it which would make analyzing the “how” of the frames rather difficult. Furthermore, by focusing on the “what” of the frames, the thesis can at least try to link the overarching War on Terror frame into the context of the data, an act which would perhaps be rather more difficult if the focus was more heavily on the “how” of the frames.

Additionally, Lawrence highlights the importance of focusing on the journalistic frames when doing framing analysis. According to her, the frames that journalists and editors use have equal or even more power over the public’s perception than those used by the political actors who appear as sources for the journalistic texts. The frames employed by the journalists have more to do with the standards, norms, and procedures of the news producing entities (Lawrence, 2010, 265). However, the assumption of a unified, homogenous journalistic frame or frames is false, as the context of the news item has a critical role in the way in which the frames can be analyzed. Lawrence posits three such contexts: foreign policy, including war and international conflict; domestic policy, especially in the region of societal issues; and electoral campaigns (Lawrence, 2010, 267).

Of the three contexts, the first one is the most suitable regarding the data and analysis within this thesis, as the data is primarily concerned with the context of an armed international conflict. This context appears to have a restraining effect on the news organizations, making them relay the frames presented by the political actors and elites with less criticism than if the context were of a different kind (ibid.). Although this sentiment is undoubtedly a generalized one, it would at least hint at the possibility that the media are engaged in some kind of a self-censorship when it comes to foreign policy. Indeed, as Lawrence notes, the professional identity of the journalists and editors, along with the norms and expectations carried by that identity, can hamper the writers from introducing unwanted or critical perspectives and counterframes into the frames presented by the political actors (2010, 267-268). The example and studies cited by Lawrence is the case of the post-9/11 debates concerning what actions the United States should take following the attacks, and against whom. The “most elite news organizations”, represented by *Washington Post* and *The New*

York Times, failed to adequately challenge the frames presented by the high-ranking officials within the Bush administration at the time, a fact that the papers have later apologized for (Lawrence, 2010, 267).

Furthermore, the idea of the “indexing hypothesis” which is attributed to Bennett by Lawrence, posits that journalists configure their stories according to those persons whom they view to hold the most power on a given subject matter, and who have the best capabilities for communicating that power (2010, 269). Following this, the journalists allow those with the most power to have the most access to the public through the media. Though the act of indexing is not the same as the act of framing, the former’s ideas can be seen as being linked to the latter in two ways: first, the “main *voices* in the news are likely to be those with the greatest power over the issue at hand, and [two] the *views* presented in the news are likely to roughly reflect the current range of political debate in [...] power centers” (ibid.). This also points to the fact that frames used by journalists and editors are not static, as they shift according to the power shifts within the political institutions. (Lawrence, 2010, 269).

In addition, the reasons why indexing is more prominent in the foreign policy context than in the domestic one, are that issues concerned with the questions of governmental power and its legitimacy, an arena of debate which is more tightly restricted in the domestic context than in the foreign one, according to Lawrence (2010, 271). Another reason is the perceived simplicity of the foreign affairs when compared to the domestic ones though one may ask where this view comes from (ibid.).⁶ Additional explanation for the phenomenon is one of simplicity regarding the research in the field: due to the simplicity of the foreign affairs, researchers are drawn to examine that context over the more complicated domestic political context. The final explanation offered by Lawrence is the fact that the two contexts use different frames, mainly that in the domestic setting the “game frame” is more prevalent, meaning that the journalists make the strategic stations of the

⁶ The “simplicity” of the foreign affairs, in the context of the United States which is where Lawrence focuses on, can perhaps be attributed to the constructed social division between Us and Them. Acts of governmental power against Them is perhaps more easily justified if the divisions run deep enough, as is evidenced by the classification of any adult male in certain conflict areas as “enemy combatants” by the U.S. military.

politicians more salient than the debatable issues and policies (Lawrence, 2010, 271).

Even though the indexing hypothesis can be a useful tool for researchers, it can be made less important by sudden, powerful, and unexpected events. These events create the need to establish “sense-making perspectives”, and the political actors can help create a more critical debate of the event through not having the necessary facts available when the media asks for them, though the officials are usually quick to gain their former positions as dominant voices (Lawrence, 2010, 274-275). In the context of this thesis, such events are the highly publicized and widely spread execution videos of the Western journalists and aid-workers in the summer of 2014.

5. Analysis

Out of the complete data, a smaller subset of data was chosen by assigning all the texts a number and then utilizing a random number generator to produce final datasets for all the media outlets consisting of 21 articles from each newspaper, totaling 84 texts. These articles were then analyzed by using the ATLAS.ti software which allows researchers to manage large amount of data in qualitative analysis. The software also allowed me to assign certain codes to various words or phrases which facilitated the structuring of the analysis. The analysis focused on the core elements of the frames which include, for example, the remedy proposed by the articles, the sources present in them, the lexical elements when describing Daesh, and the causes for the organization's rise in the region. From these elements, the following frames were identified: the "clash of civilizations" frame which has at its core an antagonist-protagonist dichotomy; the "bombs and guns" frame which is characterized by the proposed military remedies to the problem posed by Daesh; the "hapless Arab" frame which puts forward the so-called responsibility of states outside the region, mainly the United States and Russia, in order to solve the problems in the Middle East; the "deliberation" frame which highlights the importance and need of legal and parliamentary democracy in any remedy proposed to the problems caused by Daesh.

The following section will provide the reader the results of the analysis in more detail, divided into sections for each media outlet.

5.1. The Sunday Times

Out of all the datasets from the newspapers, *The Sunday Times* is the most vocal in its construction of a frame I term the "clash of civilizations", which creates a clear protagonist-antagonist division when referring to Daesh and those entities that oppose it. The frame is consistently constructed from the use of morally charged phrases and words, such as describing the acts of the organization as being barbaric (Lawson, 2015; Editorial, 2015b; Editorial, 2014c), and categorizing Daesh as being "evil" (Editorial, 2014c; Editorial, 2015a; Editorial, 2015b).

Indeed, the morally simplistic language makes its appearance in the texts most often when

the texts are in response to some attack or, in the case of one editorial (Editorial, 2014), the execution of a Westerner. In the text, the killing of Alan Henning is called “callous”, and he was “beheaded by brutes who do not know the difference between good and evil” (Editorial, 2014). This proposed lack of the ability to distinguish between “good and evil” further Others the organization and its members, and invites the audiences to the arguably dangerous viewpoint that, because the members of Daesh are amoral, the response can be also amoral, or at least not so rigidly tight to being a moral one.

The use of the term “evil” can be seen as oversimplifying the nature of the organization and contributing to the antagonistic portrayal of the organization, its members and acts, because it reduces the multi-faceted nature and the complicated circumstances surrounding the context in which the organization rose to power and operated into a dichotomous judgement of good and evil. This, in turn, can be seen as shirking away from having to provide further arguments for why action should be taken against Daesh, and crucially, what that action would entail and what the consequences of said action would be. By using this simplifying language on the moral level, *The Sunday Times* excuses itself from providing any analysis in more detail.

In addition, by terming Daesh as “evil”, those opposing the organization are indirectly represented as good, which further enhances the notion that the conflict and all the misery it brings with it is something that the “good” parties must participate in, i.e. they must engage in military conflicts with Daesh. The misery and suffering of engaging in a conflict with the “evil” Daesh is justified and not something to be shirked away from, for that is what the “good”, i.e. those opposing Daesh, have to endure; solving the problem militarily or by using other means of force includes costs that simply must be paid in this frame. This also has the effect of Othering those people who are associated with Daesh, even if their support, say, of the organization was done under duress.

As for the “clash of civilizations” frame, the dataset has a number of examples of explicitly creating said frame, we can turn to text by Lawson (2015) which offers an interesting opportunity for analysis. In the text, the author outright dismisses the notion that there could even be such a

clash because “it is simply wrong to present this as an epochal ‘clash of civilisations’, as many have done: it takes two civilisations to clash” (Lawson, 2015). This dismissal of Daesh and the areas that it controlled as being explicitly not a *civilization* furthers the Othering of the organization and its members by casting them outside of the lexical and mental sphere that contains the concept of civilization; though this can be seen as being paradoxical, as terming something as having negative or absent functions, in this case that of civilization, can only work in relation to that which is absent.

Moreover, the “clash of civilizations” frame is further constructed by the numerous references to other military conflicts and wars, mainly the Second World War. On the back of those references come the appeals to a national, monolithic and, above all, mythic spirit in the vein of the endurance of the Londoners during the Blitz. This mythical national spirit is explicitly seen as a remedy in a text by Rubin (2015e) which from the headline onwards tries to offer as a remedy the idea of resurrecting the “British national character” with which Daesh can be defeated. The “civilization” under attack by Daesh is thus given properties from another, imagined one.

The remedy by Rubin (2015e) is explicitly stated as being one which the government should pursue:

That’s why I believe the government in Westminster should take advantage of this proven aspect of British character to establish a national resilience programme. Resilience means the wherewithal to minimise the long-term impact terrorist attacks have on British life [...] If a resilience programme is successful, and if the West finally strengthens the firepower of the coalition’s military so as to weaken and destroy the Isis leadership on the ground in Syria and Iraq - two big “ifs” - then it is possible to “win” this war against the cult killers. (Rubin 2015e)

The notion that there would be a mythical national “character” that could somehow be revived or “take[n] advantage of” by a form of government, i.e. the Parliament, could be dismissed as merely empty bravado, if it were not for the fact that the author is in the position to have their voice heard and thus these statements carry a certain weight with them.

This proposed remedy also arguably shifts the complex ethical, political and legal debate on how to resolve the crisis in the region into the realms of the mythical; that all a nation needs to do in the face of this threat is to submit themselves to their leaders while conjuring up the mythical

national spirit. The remedy does play on the trope of the stiff upper lip, which is usually associated with the British people and mainly linked to another conflict: the Second World War. The author, thus, perhaps draws on this trope in order to gain some validity for his argument for the national character, with the main idea of the argument being that if the people have endured and survived one existential threat, they can weather this new one.

By drawing parallels, implicit though they may be, between the two widely different conflicts, the author perhaps hopes to justify any and all military actions against Daesh. After all, their argument goes, the organization requires a remedy that is on-par with the one used in the Second World War due to the same level of threat it represents to the British people. Interestingly, the author does not consider any other nationalities or states that might be the enemies or indeed victims of Daesh; his focus is solely fixed on Albion.

In the above quote, another repeated element in the dataset is also present: that of military action. This remedy in the form of military action comes most usually in the form of advocating for airstrikes (e.g. Editorial, 2014a; Editorial, 2015a; Editorial, 2015d) in both Iraq and Syria, and the deployment of special operatives from the military (e.g. Rubin, 2015; Rubin, 2015e) which are endowed with almost super-human like characteristics in that they, along with ground troops from the different countries in the region, would neutralize the Daesh threat. What is left unsaid, though, in both of these elements of the military action remedy are the costs for the operations and the logistical considerations that must be taken into account, especially when deploying special operatives. The texts in the dataset merely mention them as a panacea to the threat without much elaboration into the concrete questions of deployment.

This can be seen as another myth, in addition to the one about the British national spirit, present in the dataset; that the special forces are not men and women but an unstoppable solution against the threat posed by Daesh. This, together with advocating for airstrikes, we can call the “bombs and guns” frame. This frame includes the military actions proposed by the authorities quoted in the texts which include, for example, politicians and researchers, and the authors

themselves (e.g. Rubin, 2015d; Editorial, 2016; Rubin, 2015c; Niall, 2015).

In addition to the proposed remedy of military action, there is another consistent and fairly common element that contributes to the frames being built. This is the attribution of the reasons or even blame for the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria to the act of withdrawal of US troops from Iraq under Barack Obama, and the Syrian civil war. Interestingly, there are no mentions about the other factors which contributed to the rise of Daesh as discussed in a previous section. Neither are there any texts that would advocate as a remedy any diplomatic measures or actions to deal with the threat posed by Daesh. The remedies, when they are present, always slide towards the physical violence end of the spectrum, with calls for an international coalition that would carry out attacks from both the air and the ground.

These calls for an international front or coalition focus on three main features, two of which have been mentioned above: airstrikes conducted by the Western nations, deployment of special operatives, and the deployment of ground troops by the regional powers. The reason for why it should be the regional powers who supply the bulk of the troops on the ground can perhaps be explained by what in the data is called the “Iraq War syndrome” (Rubin, 2015d), meaning the electorate’s wariness and weariness of engaging in another, potentially protracted land war in the Middle East involving large numbers of troops.

This remedy is exemplified by an editorial (Editorial, 2014a) that advocates for international military action:

Airstrikes need to be supplemented with coalition special forces on the ground to identify Isis targets. Ground troops need not be western but they need to be supplied and trained by the West. [...] The US-led coalition against Isis is becoming broadly based and includes Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar. Iran would like to see Isis defeated for its own strategic and religious interests. Perhaps a deal can be made with the mullahs (although Iran’s nuclear ambitions must be strongly resisted). The coalition would be even stronger if it included Turkey. (Editorial, 2014a)

The remedy, as the above passage shows, is perhaps feasible strategically and politically, but what is lacking in the dataset is what would become of the region after Daesh has been defeated. The focus of the remedy is, then, more on easing the symptoms rather than curing the disease, because we

might argue that to fight a terrorist organization with a method which creates more terror, i.e. military action, is non-viable and creates a self-perpetuating cycle. There would need to be some other element or remedy that would look at the root-causes of violent extremism, but that kind of element is sorely lacking in the dataset.

Thus, the “bombs and guns” frame appears to be, in this instance, one that does not take into consideration this cycle, nor does it pay much attention to the long-term effects of (escalated) military action in the region. The assumption in this frame is that once a sufficient remedy is in place, the problem posed by Daesh will be solved, and those who advocated for the use of the remedy and those who did the actual fighting can go back as celebrated heroes. However, we might wonder what, in this scenario, comes after defeating Daesh. The region would still most probably be devastated by war, with innumerable refugees and casualties, and the root causes of Daesh and other organizations like it, going unaddressed.

Perhaps this advocacy and the use of the frame speaks of a certain kind of compartmentalization which fails to see the grand picture in dealing with entities like Daesh. The answer to the question of “what happens after we win” is allocated to a different compartment or sphere of society from the one which contains the remedy, i.e. the military, and could maybe contain areas of education, local politics, civil rights, etc. It might not matter all that much what the actual other spheres are in this instance; it merely suffices that they are not the same as the ones involved in the remedy present in the “bombs and guns” frame. The old adage of all the problems beginning to look like nails when the only tool available is a hammer might be apt here.

Looking at the matrix mentioned previously, we can see how the “bombs and guns” frame has as its problematic effects/conditions the military capabilities and regional control of Daesh as well as the threat it poses to the West through terrorist attacks, though the last part is not as prevalent as it was in the “clash of civilizations” frame. The cause/agent is the Othered, inhuman killing machine of Daesh born out of the regional conflicts and the Islamic faith that is, again, represented as a monolith. The remedies are focused exclusively on the various military actions and

means which are given mythical powers and proportions, as was the case of the SAS special forces. In addition to this, the frame calls for the creation of a machine fit for fighting and killing Daesh that was itself described as a killing machine. This ignores the self-perpetuating cycle of war breeding terror and has no views or plans as to what would come after Daesh was defeated. As for the moral judgement, Daesh and its members are Othered and represented as evil beings that understand only war. The focus of the frame is aimed heavily at the events, for example the Paris attacks in 2014.

Interestingly, there are two instances in which a text in the dataset references a concrete remedy that has been enacted by *The Sunday Times* itself. The first of these is mentioned in a text from 2014 which states that “Today *The Sunday Times* is proud to publish a letter from Muslim community groups, including both Shi’ite and Sunni organisations, condemning the violence and urging British Muslims to challenge Isis’s poisonous narrative” (Editorial 2014b). This can be seen as an act which tries to include a minority social group, in this instance the “Muslim community” to be a part of the discussion about, or rather the condemnation of, Daesh. The second example is also from 2014 (Editorial, 2014c) and says that “Muslims in Great Britain have been united in their condemnation of Mr Henning’s murder. A few weeks ago we published a fatwa, or religious decree, from senior Muslim clerics in Britain against Isis and the British Muslims who are fighting alongside it”.

These two instances of concrete action can perhaps be seen as the newspaper’s attempt to offer a sense of balance to its editorials and other opinionated texts with some actions that are presented to the audience as something that are inclusive. This inclusivity, however, is limited to only these two instances and the texts themselves do not include voices from those minority social groups. Yet, it is interesting that *The Sunday Times*, which is the most vocal one in creating and utilizing the “bombs and guns” frame in the dataset, would be one taking a concrete measure that incorporates an aspect of the Islamic faith, as the presence of the “clash of civilizations” frame in the dataset is also strong. This should, though, be situated in the context of the editorial itself,

especially its publication date. In 2014, the situation was vastly different from one even a mere year later: the Paris attacks, both on *Charlie Hebdo* and the simultaneous November attacks on three locations, were yet to be carried out by Daesh, and the organization had not yet extended its reach to its maximum in Iraq and Syria.

Taking these into account, the reconciliatory approach taken by *The Sunday Times* can perhaps be attributed to a desire to appear as being cultured enough not to advance the “clash of civilizations” frame quite so hard or at least have the veneer of not being so antagonistic in its stance towards Daesh. However, these two instances are the only ones which make explicit mention of such reconciliatory actions, out of the 21 texts in the dataset which, though not unnoteworthy, still does not balance out the rest of the texts in the dataset which do construct the more confrontational frames. Furthermore, it should be noted that the editorials themselves are not the actual reconciliatory actions, but they rather refer to them.

As for the next section in this analysis section, we move on to *The New York Times*, which carries with it some similarities in terms of the frames present in the dataset.

5.2. The New York Times

In the dataset comprised of the texts from *The New York Times*, the clash of civilizations frame is present, as it was with *The Sunday Times*, but there are also various ways that not only is Daesh positioned in the antagonistic role, but also the larger Muslim and Islamic world.

The expansion of the antagonistic role can be seen in an op-ed from 2014, in which Friedman writes that:

The rise of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, is *triggering some long overdue, brutally honest, soul-searching by Arabs and Muslims about how such a large, murderous Sunni death cult could have emerged in their midst*. Look at a few samples, starting with ‘The Barbarians Within Our Gates,’ written in Politico last week by Hisham Melhem, the Washington bureau chief of Al-Arabiya, the Arabic satellite channel. ‘With his decision to use force against the violent extremists of the Islamic State, President Obama [...] is stepping once again -- and with understandably great reluctance -- into *the chaos of an entire civilization that has broken down. Arab civilization, such as we knew it, is all but gone*. The Arab world today is more violent, unstable, fragmented and driven by extremism -- the

extremism of the rulers and those in opposition -- than at any time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire a century ago. ‘*Every hope* of modern Arab history has been betrayed,’ Melhem added. ‘The promise of *political empowerment*, the *return of politics*, the *restoration of human dignity* heralded by the season of Arab uprisings in their early heydays -- all has given way to civil wars, ethnic, sectarian and regional divisions and the reassertion of absolutism, both in its military and atavistic forms. [...] The jihadists of the Islamic State, in other words, did not emerge from nowhere. *They climbed out of a rotting, empty hulk -- what was left of a broken-down civilization*’. (Friedman, 2014b, emphasis added)

Friedman goes on to quote other writers who express similar thoughts regarding the situation in the region, and most crucially he does not contradict or criticize the thoughts and ideas presented by the other writers. This, we can reasonably conclude, is his view on the situation: one in which an entire, monolithic civilization has fallen and has given rise to Daesh. The framing of this civilization-that-was is enhanced by the things he, quoting Melhem, says the “Arab world” has lost, namely “political empowerment, the return of politics, the restoration of human dignity”. The audiences, then, are led to believe that in this monolithic, imagined Arab world, there is nothing left of those ideals and aspirations; and if there are nothing left of that world except a “rotting, empty hulk”, then the remedy to that situation can be as extreme as anything the audiences might imagine.

This use of such powerful and absolute language enforces the Othering of Daesh, its origins, and the context in which it was born out of. The Arab world, starting from the promises of the Arab Spring being shattered to the chaotic situation engulfing it in its entirety is something beyond salvation. If this is indeed the case, we might as well ask why we should care what happens in the region and not give into apathy and not consider the region as a lost cause.

However, this line of thought can be easily dismantled by the realization that, first, there was never a unified Arab world or civilization to begin with; the states and the peoples populating the region all had their own characteristics, and so it would be rather asinine to construct this monolithic entity, even if it would have some basis on the ideological level. For example, Kurdistan in northern Iraq is arguably far removed both geographically and culturally from Tunisia or Western Sahara even though they can all be considered to be part of a certain Arab world. This creation of a monolithic culture and civilization also exempts all the other actors from any blame that might

otherwise be attributed to them in the chaotic state of the region. This kind of framing can be considered to be following in the footsteps of the Orientalist discourse, which, among other things, represents all the nations, cultures, and peoples in the region as indistinguishable from each other, and as needing the salvation of the Occident powers (Said, 2003, 155). These ideas are present especially in the “clash of civilizations” and the “hapless Arab” frames, due to the antagonistic roles that they create and the simplifications they engage in in representing the myriad social groups in the region and beyond.

Furthermore, the idea of this monolithic culture being not only corrupted but also having the roots of its corruption embedded in its nature is enhanced when Friedman states that the whole Muslim and Arab community has to engage in “some long overdue, brutally honest, soul-searching [...] about how such a large, murderous Sunni death cult could have emerged in their midst” (2014b). This quote exemplifies a frame which I will go to further detail later on, but which I term the “hapless Arab” frame. Here, though, the focus is on the lack of contextuality on the emergence of Daesh’s “Sunni death cult” (Friedman, 2014b). The author constructs a situation wherein the rise of Daesh is blamed on the Muslim and Arab world, without considering the effects of over a decade of war fought and indeed initiated by the Western powers in the region, beginning with the 2003 Iraq invasion. The reason in this scenario proposed by the text is not in the upending of the power balance of the region for dubious motives, nor the unpreparedness of those who were involved in the quagmire of military and political action in the region; the sole reason is attributed to the mythical monolithic community of Muslims and Arabs, with all other considerations that are not tied to those two entities being excluded. Here, again we can see the attempts to exonerate or whitewash the Western powers for their role in creating the situation and context in which Daesh could be formed and gain dominance in the region and beyond. The blame is attributed to the mythical community of the Orientals.

This method also contributes to the frame of “clash of civilizations”, with its simplistic referent of Daesh as a “Sunni death cult” (Friedman, 2014b). Here, the organization is given three

attributes that exclude all other remedies other than the military ones in dealing with the problems and threats it represents; for what other remedies can one have against a cult of death other than force? And what other entity might *deserve* such actions taken against?

Indeed, the remedy advocated by Friedman and its extremist nature, is explicitly stated in the same text, wherein the remedy is one of a faceless, nameless, inhuman and Othered machine:

The tension arises because ISIS is a *killing machine*, and it will take another killing machine to search it out and destroy it on the ground. There is no way the ‘moderate’ Syrians we’re training can alone fight ISIS and the Syrian regime at the same time. Iraqis, Turkey and the nearby Arab states will have to also field troops. After all, this is a civil war for the future of both Sunni Islam and the Arab world. We can degrade ISIS from the air -- I’m glad we have hit *these ISIS psychopaths* in Syria -- but only Arabs and Turks can destroy ISIS on the ground. (Friedman, 2014b, emphasis added)

As the above quote shows, the way to engage with Daesh is to do it on its terms; to create and use a “killing machine” bereft, implicitly we might argue, of any ethical considerations or regard for the rules of war. After all, a machine does not have the capacity to think or feel guilt. This can be seen as being part of the “bombs and guns” frame mentioned in the previous section, and this is enforced by texts praising the United States’ administration’s remedy of airstrikes against Daesh (e.g. Editorial, 2014d; Editorial, 2014a; Johnston and Bahney, 2014).

This reference to a machine is yet another example of the Othering language that we can see in the dataset. In addition to that, the more practical remedy is along the same lines as *The Sunday Times* one: creation of an international coalition in which the ground troops would be provided by the regional powers, with the West in a supporting role.

Furthermore, the explicit depiction of the Daesh as a “killing machine” that can only be dealt with by one of its own kind excludes any other ways of resolving the problem (Friedman, 2014b). Whether or not another kind of solution would be feasible or desirable, either politically or ethically, is not the focus of this thesis, but it is noteworthy that those other options are not even considered in the text questions. The problem and threat posed by Daesh is one of essence, i.e. that it a machine that only knows how to kill, and, thus, there can be no other measure against it other than force in the form of another machine. This has, we can argue, perhaps the unintended

consequence of turning those forces sent to deal with Daesh into machines themselves which runs against a more nuanced approach and the ideas general ideas of humanism, i.e. that those participating in this remedy as soldiers, support troops, etc. are still humans with all the desires, fears, etc. that it entails.

In this manner, both the “clash of civilizations” and the “bombs and guns” frames are enhanced. First, the enemy is Othered into a machine through the degradation of this particular antagonistic force. Second, the call for military remedy is presented as the only feasible course of action that can resolve the problem. However, it might be of interest to note how the creation of this machine had already been in action in the form of weaponized drones that gained prominence and infamy during the Obama administration, going even as far as justifying and allowing extrajudicial killings of US citizens if they were suspected of joining a terrorist organization (McCracken, 2013, 97-100). These individual machines must, at least for the time being, be operated by humans and the emotional toll of being situated far away physically, staring at a screen and giving a command to fire a weapon (thus ending the life or lives of anyone who is caught in the crosshairs) might be quite taxing.

In addition, the dataset has an abundance of terminology from the realms of disease (e.g. Kerry, 2014; Editorial, 2014a; Maureen, 2014) which are used to describe Daesh, contributing to the antagonistic, inhuman role that the organization is given in the “clash of civilizations” frame. Furthermore, this clash is extended in one article beyond the space-time continuum itself. Brooks (2015) calls the actions taken by Daesh as “like distant nightmares upon the numbed conscious of the world”, before continuing:

And yet something bigger is going on. It's *as if some secret wormhole into different historical epoch has been discovered and the knowledge of centuries is being unlearned*. This is happening in the moral sphere. State-sponsored slavery seemed like a thing of the past, but now ISIS is an unapologetic slave state. Yazidi women are carefully cataloged, warehoused and bid upon. Writing in *The National Interest*, Ross Harrison shows how the ISIS wormhole into a different moral epoch is accompanied by a political wormhole designed to take the Middle East into a different geostrategic epoch. (Brooks, 2015, emphasis added)

Thus, not only is Daesh an antagonistic, barely human civilization that warrants the creation and

usage of killing machines, it is now also a force that “unlearns” “the knowledge of centuries” and is Othered by categorizing it as being from a “different historical epoch”. The “clash of civilizations” frame now includes a civilization that is chronologically removed from the realms of the protagonist civilization: it has the effect of forcibly regressing the monolithic civilization of Daesh to another age, showing how it – and by extension the Arab or even the Muslim world – cannot truly keep up with the changes of the modern (Western) world. The removal also applies to the moral realms which is perhaps understandable, as morality is closely tied to the age and the temporal context in which people with morals act in.

Furthermore, the drastic shift in time and morals does not only include Daesh but also the whole region which will be transported to another “geostrategic epoch” (Harrison, in Brooks, 2015). Apart from being a statement couched in hyperbole with the added use of the monolithic entity when referring to the whole region, the idea of this transportation opens up the possibilities of further Othering, because if the region is now in a different “epoch” then they are not the same as those who are members of the other clashing civilization due to the changes to their morality that is linked to the temporal context in which it resides (Brooks, 2015). This, in turn, would allow the Us in the dichotomy of Us-Them to use ways of dealing with the Others that might otherwise be morally more questionable; it lowers the bar for which measures are deemed acceptable and which are not.

As for the remedy of the international coalition, it is fleshed out and argued to be even more encompassing than the one advocated by *The Sunday Times* by Anatol (2015) when the author states that:

Since the latest terrorist attacks in Paris [in November 2015], President Obama and a range of other Western leaders have agreed that *ISIS must be crushed, Syria and Iraq stabilized, and the flow of refugees reversed*. If ISIS, Al Qaeda and their supporters are *the greatest enemies of the West*, then we must respond accordingly, by focusing on destroying them while making unpalatable compromises with others where necessary. *The successful waging of war requires concentration, ruthlessness, prioritization and a willingness to abandon old shibboleths and seek new allies*. We must remember that in this war with Islamist extremism, Russia is not an enemy but an ally, and Turkey under its present government is at best an extremely equivocal 'friend'. (Anatol, 2015, emphasis added)

The three elements in Anatol's remedy combine the military action required to "crush" Daesh, the introduction of "stability" into Iraq and Syria, and, perhaps curiously, to "reverse" the "flow of refugees". The last point, using the terminology from the natural world, creates a sense that those refugees can be likened to something inhuman, lessening the human suffering of those affected, and it could be argued that this point is tangential to the issue at hand.

In addition, the author advocates for quite a *realpolitik* approach regarding two entities specifically: Turkey and Russia. This acknowledges the various powers at play in the region and the different motives and interests that particular states have in engaging in the conflicts that are still raging there. This approach appears to be quite unique in the dataset in the way that it explicitly states that the West, led by Barack Obama and by extension the United States, has to ally itself with the long-time rival or even outright enemy, Russia. In doing so, the text expands the borders of the Us civilization in the "clash of civilization" frame which now includes Russia explicitly, and perhaps implicitly the areas within its sphere of influence. This approach is, at least in this regard, aiming more towards realism than other texts in the dataset, though the author does not go into too detailed description of the proposed remedy.

However, it is interesting that by engaging with Russia, the West is "making unpalatable compromises" which, when taken together with the remedy's need to be ruthless still has at its core the juxtaposition between the lines of the West and Russia (Anatol, 2015). By having to conform to the need to defeat Daesh, the West, according to the author, needs, first, to be ruthless and, second, to make compromises regarding the allies and enemies in the region. These stem from the fact that Daesh and other organizations like it are, according to the author, the "greatest enemies of the West" which appears to simplify the issues surrounding Daesh and the region in more general (Anatol, 2015). It might be argued that if such powerful and hyperbolic language is used, then there should be some consideration into the reasons behind the enemy's rise and how they could have achieved such success. Without contextualization, Daesh and the civilization it represents in the frame appear to be simplified and one-dimensional entities that must be, as the author notes, "crushed" which can

lead the audiences into accepting, again, measures and remedies that might not be as morally sound as those that would be aimed at any other, more nuanced enemy (Anatol, 2015).

Furthermore, the same author proposes as their remedy something that appears to harken back to the old colonial or imperial times, when they state that:

The goal that we should be working toward is full military and political cooperation between *the West and Russia* in order to defeat ISIS and promote a postwar settlement. This settlement should *involve the creation of fully autonomous areas in Sunni northern Iraq and eastern Syria*, along similar lines to the present Kurdish region of Iraq and with full control over their internal affairs. This would require a combination of the mobilization of local Sunni forces against ISIS, with some degree of international military presence. (Anatol, 2015, emphasis added)

This call for the creation of new socio-political and economical areas contributes to a frame that I will call the “hapless Arab”, meaning that it should be outside forces, mainly Western/Russian, that arrive at the scene or the negotiating table with a solution to divide the lands into certain segments populated by certain peoples. In this frame, the people most affected by the raging wars in the region are presented as being too caught-up in their own, supposedly smaller conflicts to see the grand picture and the path towards the solution which they should take; it is only the great outside powers, such as the United States or Russia, that can arrive at a solution for the problems. This kind of positioning of the outsiders, namely the West and Russia, as the only ones who can salvage the situation in the region follows the White Savior myth. Myths in general are, according to Maurantonio, used by journalists to deal with trauma and create a narrative around it (Maurantonio, 2017, 1132). A problem arises, however, when that myth is one of the White Savior, as it “signals a heroic colonizing force, responsible for civilizing primitive, indigenous (non-White) peoples (Maurantonio, 2017, 1133). The “hapless Arab” frame would, then, fit rather well into this mythical narrative with two main features: the inability of the primitive and monolithic Arab culture to save itself from danger, the sole entity that can save it being the Occident/the outside cultures from the West and Russia.

As for the matrix we discussed previously, the “hapless Arab” is constructed by having as its problematic effects/conditions the supposed ineffectuality and dividedness of the Arab world or

even the whole of Islamic world. The cause/agent in the frame are the regional powers, e.g. Syria, Iran, and Turkey, their inability to fight against Daesh and their administrations, especially that of the Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki. The remedies in the frame include, most notably, the replacement of al-Maliki's administration with one approved by the West, exhibiting a vivid example of the "White Savior" myth. The moral judgement in this frame is not as harsh as in the "clash of civilizations" frame, though not by any means a favorable one. The judgment could be described as taking the form of disappointment, cynicism, and belittlement of the imagined monolithic Arab world, though again al-Maliki is referred to in harsh terms and phrases. This frame is focused on the political actors in the form of the various administrations of the regional powers and on the issue, i.e. the Arab world needs leadership that is both approved by and leashed to the Western powers.

Considering now state-building from the outside, it has rarely, if ever, succeeded in promoting a peaceful coexistence, and we can argue that it might have even less success and face greater obstacles in a region which has seen more than its fair share of the many proxy wars and conflicts waged by the outside powers. Thus, the "clash of civilizations" frame extends into what the sphere of post-clash, in that the author promotes that the winning civilization, the Us, into setting up a friendly administration or friendly administrations into the region that was won through conquest and was previously occupied by the losing civilizations, the Others.

In addition, the author again includes Russia as being within the West's civilization in the "clash of civilizations" frame, promoting as a remedy "full military and political cooperation" (Anatol, 2015). The text does not, however, expound on what "full" might mean in this instance, so the particular forms that the remedy should take is not deemed as important as the suggestion on the grander scale behind it.

The "hapless Arab" frame is also created through an editorial from 2014 which lays the blame for the rise of Daesh at the feet of various regional powers while admonishing them for their lack foresight:

The prospects of defeating ISIS would be greatly improved if *other Muslim nations could see ISIS for the threat it is*. But, like Iraq, *they are mired in petty competitions and Sunni-Shiite religious divisions* and many have their own relations with extremists of one kind or another. (Editorial, 2014a, emphasis added)

In the above passage, a grand factor in defeating the organization is the perceived inability of the “Muslim nations”, not merely those nations situated in the region but all those that can be classified as being Muslim, to see Daesh as “the threat it is”. Thus, the “hapless Arab” frame now encompasses not only the Arabic nations and cultures, but also all those that share the same religion, a feature that overlaps with the “clash of civilizations” frame. Another consequence from this overlap is perhaps the muddling of the two meanings. If so, then the words “Arab”, “Muslim” and perhaps even “Islam” become intertwined and the borders of their definitions become blurred, which can contribute to Othering through simplification of different definitions.

Yet another contributing element to the “hapless Arab” frame is the juxtaposition and belittling portrayal of the conflicts between the Shia and Sunni factions, referring to them as “petty competitions”. The idea being conveyed here by the frame is that Sunnis and Shias are incapable to get over their differences and realize the threat posed by Daesh, suggesting that those outside the region, namely the West and Russia, are the ones who identify the threat and know how to deal with it. This glosses over the fact that those people in the region are the ones who suffer the most from that realized threat of Daesh which is something that is dismissed in the text. Instead, it connects the two groups with extremists, creating a sense of blame to them and their politics, while ignoring the role of the West and other outside powers in the creation and perpetuation of those extremists.

There are some additional texts (e.g. Friedman, 2015; Friedman, 2014a; Editorial, 2014b) that point to the divisions between the Shia and Sunni Muslims in the region as being a key problem that needs to be resolved in order to tackle the threat posed by Daesh. This approach does take into account the wider context of and the myriad factors behind the problem that the organization presents, but there are no concrete remedies or ideas about how to overcome the division, though this might be forgiven, as the issue is one wrought with complications upon complications, gathered over centuries.

Curiously, *The New York Times* does not mention the role that the United States and the coalition led by it in the rise of Daesh beginning with the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The reasons behind the organization's rise are attributed to the divisions between the two religious sects, the instability of the region without mentioning the reasons for said instability, and the administration of Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

In the next section, we will see how *The Guardian* frames Daesh, and how the newspaper constructs a certain unique frame.

5.3. The Guardian

Of all the datasets, *The Guardian* one is the most critical of the authorities' remedies, often using criticism of said remedies in way that we can call "anti-remedial", because the texts offer criticism of proposals and calls to action but do not usually offer any actual remedies of their own. The dataset also offers the most wide array of reasons behind the rise of Daesh, with numerous mentions of the Iraq invasion that began in 2003 (e.g. Manning, 2014; Seymour, 2014).

There are a few exceptions to this anti-remedial approach, and one is a text by Manning from 2014 wherein the author lays out rather concrete steps in order to defeat the organization:

Counter the narrative presented in their online recruitment videos to prevent, as much as possible, the propaganda that deliberately targets young people. [...] *Set clear, temporary borders in the region*, and do it publicly. This would discourage Isis from taking certain territory where humanitarian crises might be created, or humanitarian efforts impeded. Establish *an international moratorium on paying ransom for hostages*, and work to *prevent Isis from stealing and taxing historical artefacts and valuable treasures* as sources of income, and especially from taking over the oil reserves and refineries. [...] *Let Isis succeed in setting up a failed 'state'* - in a contained area and over a long enough period of time to prove itself unpopular and unable to govern. Eventually, if properly contained, Isis will not be able to sustain itself on rapid growth alone, and will begin to fracture internally into several smaller, uncoordinated entities - ultimately failing in its objective of creating a strong state. (Manning, 2014, emphasis added)

These elements of the remedy appear, on at a glance, to provide quite a holistic and complete set of actions which could lead to the downfall of Daesh, ranging from countering the propaganda to shutting down its income sources. There are, however, no real ideas or propositions as to who, exactly, would be carrying out these acts, and perhaps most critically, the last point of allowing

Daesh's self-proclaimed caliphate to fail ignores the inevitable human suffering the containment and supposed failure would bring to the people suffering under Daesh's rule. These measures are not without their flaws, however, as again we can see the desire to draw on the old imperial mentality of drawing borders in the region, albeit ones that are modified as being "temporary". Borders, once in place, can be hard things to modify or get rid of.

Furthermore, the text in its suggestions for the remedy appears to overestimate the resources, both material and immaterial, of the interested parties in setting up a "contained area" in which Daesh's state could fail in (Manning, 2014). Even on merely the moral level, it would have been quite hard to justify consigning an area in Iraq/Syria, with numerous civilians in it, into this role of *controlled demolition* of Daesh, not to mention on the logistical level.

Interestingly, there are elements of the remedy that are absent from other dataset in the author's text, and these refer to the financial operations of Daesh and the importance of cutting them off (Manning, 2014). However, yet again concrete proposals for measures are lacking in the text, and the exaggeration of the international community's ability to counter those operations is still present, or at least the author appears to be overly optimistic about them. This element does take into account the more realistic demands of solving the problem presented by Daesh, moving from the merely ideological antagonism to somewhat practical methods of remedying the situation. By presenting a list of actions, though not assigning actors for them or extrapolating on them, the author does identify various strategies on how to actually deal with the threat posed by Daesh, instead of merely calling out for something to be done because the organization is a threat, or an Other, or evil.

Another text in which the author argues for the reconciliation of Sunni and Shia Muslims and healing the rifts created by the then-Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, is by Owen (2014). Furthermore, the elements for a remedy include the fact that the Kurdish Peshmerga have to be given arms to fight off Daesh, the "murderous Shia militias" have to be abolished and "[t]he western-backed dictatorships of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar must be compelled to crack down

on the funding networks that are helping to sustain Isis and other terrorists” (Owen ,2014). Again, the actors who should carry out these deeds are left unmentioned; the remedy is on the theoretical level even though it does have some concrete elements in it.

Though the dataset from *The Guardian* does not construct the “clash of civilizations” frame as much as the two previous media outlets, there are some instances (e.g. Editorial 2015a; Editorial 2014a; Manning 2014; Jones 2014; Editorial 2015d) which use the terms such as “barbaric” when describing Daesh and its actions.

However, there is one article that explicitly equates Daesh with a disease, namely Ebola. In the text by Freedland (2014), the author tries to pre-empt the criticism of equating Daesh with a disease by stating that “Isis is not a disease, and Ebola is not a terror organization. But fear is their common currency: intentional for one, inevitable for the other”, but there are references to the perceived similarities of the two threats throughout the text. This renders the pre-emptive sentence as rather hollow, as the author states that “Each time one advances, the space for the other expands“, creating a direct causal link between the two entities and in some manner equating the threats the duo present to the rest of the world, contributing to the “clash of civilizations” frame (Freedland, 2014). The author discusses, among other things, the way that the nomenclature surrounding the two shifts “It starts with a menace that was once obscure and understood by few, with a name that keeps shifting (is it Isis, Isil or IS?) or a pronunciation that is uncertain (is it ee-boh-la or ebb-ola?)” (Freedland, 2014). By drawing these explicit comparisons and causalities between the two, the author draws on the unknown and the Other in enforcing their framing of these entities: the Ebola virus harkens back to the imperialistic images of the dark heart of Africa that contains a multitude of threats to the “civilized” world.

This uncertainty plays into the fear of the unknown which, at the time the article was published, was perhaps a valid point to make, as Daesh was only now gaining infamy in the Western media. This fact is mentioned in the text but again, the parallels are explicit between the organization and the disease:

So the Islamic State became impossible to ignore not when it conducted mass executions, on camera, of hundreds of Iraqi and Syrian fighters, but when it beheaded western hostages, *men whose names sounded like our own*: James Foley, Steven Sotloff, David Haines, Alan Henning. Ebola was an African *problem until cases surfaced in places we could point to on a map*: Madrid or Dallas. (Freedland, 2014)

This quite astute observation follows the perceived commonsense approach of the cold calculus of death when it comes to death, destruction and suffering in foreign news: the farther away the tragedy occurs, the more powerful the connection to the audiences it needs to have. In the case of Daesh, this connection is evident in the killings of Westerner, though there were other victims before them. As for Ebola, the threat quite concretely and literally hit home, when cases were confirmed in Western cities. Of note also is the fact that the author makes an explicit reference to the power of names again in the passage above, continuing the reasoning they started when discussing the names and pronunciations of the two threats.

Additionally, an article by Seymour includes elements of Othering, noting how “Isis goes to your head and gets under your skin; it leaves you feeling infested” before continuing that:

Back in the days when one didn’t know much about the jihadis carrying out beheadings, it was possible to think that they were just - as David Cameron has denounced them – “monsters”, savages, beasts. Or, if one were on the anti-war left, one could simply point out that there was, after all, a war on. A brutal occupation produces a brutal insurgency: case closed. (Seymour, 2014)

Here, the organization’s actions are likened, again, to a disease or an infection, and the division between the civilizations is enlarged to encompass two groups in the audiences’ world, with the reference to the “anti-war left” in the Western world. Thus, the stance towards Daesh is delineated between Cameron and his description of the organization as inhuman, and the rather fatalistic viewpoint on the situation that gave birth to Daesh following the 2003 occupation of Iraq. The roots of this latter division, i.e. the domestic political one, can be situated in the larger frame of the War on Terror and the division of the world it created, encapsulated by the sentence “with us, or with the terrorists” (Lewis and Reese, 2009, 87-88). The War on Terror frame has, in this instance, become as Lewis and Reese note, “almost imperceptible” to those living inside it which include Seymour in this instance.

This entanglement with the War on Terror frame is made explicit in the text when the author contrasts organizations and their members that were existent before Daesh, delineating the two to different eras. But, as we have seen in the background section on Daesh, it is impossible to do such a demarcation, as the War on Terror has not ended:

Whereas the jihadi ultras of the ‘war on terror’ era were an unpopular, marginalised minority within the Iraqi resistance, always opposed by the mainstream of the Sunni Arab insurgency, Isis succeeds because of the support it enjoys within much of the population it seeks to rule. And this support, it should be noted, is gained on the basis of vicious sectarianism. The most depressing aspect of Isis’s spread is the alacrity with which local people join them and begin killing ethnic and religious others who, though minorities locally, are blamed for the persecution of Sunni Arabs in the region. (Seymour, 2014)

What is interesting to note is how the author positions Daesh as being separated from the “jihadi ultras” that came before, and that somehow the War on Terror would have been a temporal age with an implied clear end, i.e. it has come to an end at the time when Daesh has been operating in the region. Here, the War on Terror frame is evidenced by the implicit accusation of how the Sunnis in the region join Daesh and engage in the killings with no evidence given of why or how such things would come to pass. This is merely given as something that happens, and which disregards the various reasons for why people would join the organization, which might include a fear for their own or their family’s safety, belief in the propaganda disseminated by Daesh, genuine grievances that people might have, or that joining is seen as the only way to escape the current conditions etc. All these potential reasons are omitted from this frame, which mixes with the “hapless Arab” frame with the simplified view of the people in the region, and the only possible reason for the people joining Daesh is the underlying sense of being wronged by other social groups in the region. This, in turn, constructs the “clash of civilizations” frame through assigning this motive and the attributes to a whole social group in the region, creating a monolith from this imagined concentration of people who are portrayed as merely waiting for the chance to become violent towards other social groups.

As for the grand frame that is constructed in this dataset, it is one that I call the “deliberation” frame, as it emphasizes, among others, the role of the Parliament in the United

Kingdom in deciding whether or not military action should be taken. The creation of this frame can be seen as stemming at least partly from the political leaning of the paper and the nature and location of its target audiences.⁷ With left-leaning tendencies, it is likely that the newspaper would be more critical of the then-Prime Minister Cameron, whose Conservative party was in power at the time from which the data was gathered. Thus, the criticism of the government and its policies can be viewed as fulfilling the watch-dog role of the media, with the volume and vitriol increasing whenever those policies run counter to the newspaper's own stance. The paper would then take the side of opposition and advocate for more parliamentary scrutiny to be applied to the proposed policies.

Furthermore, the frame deals with the supporters of Daesh from a rather human point of view which is exemplified by a text by Orr in which the author states that:

Whether they [two Austrian girls aged 15 who travelled to Syria to join Daesh] are alive or dead, they are victims of brutality, and the fact that they delivered themselves up as willing victims is all the more awful. Plenty of teenagers adopt *ridiculous beliefs, only to realise quite quickly that they have been idiots*. In few cases are either the beliefs or the consequences anything like as brutal as Kesinovic's and Selinovic's. Yet, *it's impossible, surely, not to feel sympathetic to fellow humans who develop such bleak perceptions of their lives that they think Isis is the answer*, let alone to act on those bitterly negative views with such avid certainty. (Orr, 2016, emphasis added)

In the above quote, though the author is referring explicitly to the two teenagers, they can be considered to be stand-ins for Daesh's members who have adopted "ridiculous beliefs" before realizing that they are "idiots". Through this method, the author proposes the idea that those who travel from abroad to join Daesh include these sorts of stupid teenagers, whose actions have "brutal" consequences. The overall tone, however, expressed in the text is one of humanity and a rarity in the datasets in that it not only acknowledges the victims but also focuses on them and offers thoughts about their humanity rather than constructing an antagonistic relationship with them. Here, perhaps the main differentiating factor is the nationality of the two girls: that they seem to be

⁷ In a poll published in 2017, Smith found that the paper was seen as being "slightly left-to-centre", "fairly left-wing", and "very left-wing" by 25%, 30%, and 16% respectively. <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/03/07/how-left-or-right-wing-are-uks-newspapers>

Austrian and, thus, not as Othered as they would be if they came from a country within the Middle East or some other nation that would be situated in, for example, the Global South. This, together with the “deliberation” frame constructed by the other texts from *The Guardian* does offer a more restrained approach into the problems posed by Daesh, in that the datasets, for the most part, is lacking in the rather straightforward and antagonistic frames constructed by the other newspapers.

Furthermore, the “deliberation” frame is also more cautious about promoting military action as a remedy to the threat posed by Daesh, though the military solution is the one that is promoted when there are mentions of a remedy. Instead of rather loudly advocating for a remedy that includes military action and presenting that as a panacea, the dataset engages in criticism of such plans, which are brought forth by the authorities.

Arranging the “deliberation” frame into the matrix, we can see that it has as its problematic effects/conditions include the threat posed by Daesh to the people in the region and the West as well as the actions and policies proposed by the ruling party, i.e. the Conservatives. The frame acknowledges that the problems created by Daesh must be solved, but it also sees the Conservative’s solutions as being problematic. The causes/agents are traced back to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and its coalition, including the United Kingdom, and the regional turmoil that it caused as well as the longer-running instability within the region. The frame advocates as its remedy the careful examination of potential solutions to the issues and threats raised by Daesh as well as some long-term geopolitical ones, looking past the point when Daesh would be defeated. Moral judgement is more nuanced in this frame, though Daesh is represented as an antagonistic force, but the moral issue is more focused on the Conservative policies and actions which are criticized as ineffectual and short-sighted which would feed the self-perpetuating cycle of fighting terrorism with something that fuels terror. This frame is quite heavily focused on the political actors in the West, with the domestic ones receiving the majority of the focus.

This is not to say that the texts would categorically rule out military action, only that they are more cautious in driving such an agenda, which we can see in one editorial from 2014.

In that text (Editorial, 2014c), the author notes how the use of special operatives is not a miraculous cure-all for the threat, nor is the use of airstrikes as simple as sending planes and using their weapons:

western air power, the use of *which is the justification Isis offers for these killings*, has made even less difference so far than pessimists had suggested. Isis has adapted swiftly to the new situation. Vehicles and equipment are scattered, fighters disperse as soon as western jets appear in the sky. These multi-million dollar warplanes have often been reduced, it seems, to blasting single pick-up trucks and the like with ordnance worth 10 or 20 times the value of the targets. (Editorial, 2014c, emphasis added)

The above quote also notes the paradox of trying to fight terror and terrorism through means, i.e. airstrikes, that themselves generate terror and can lead people to become terrorists. It also shows the unsuitability of traditional tools of war, at least when used in this limited form, to combat a highly adaptive and mobile force. Though the ordnance on those modern machines of war drastically outweigh those carried by the opposition, the machines are rendered far less effective when trying to combat an organization such as Daesh on their powers alone. The passage shows again the tendency found in the “deliberation” frame of offering criticism against remedies that are discussed in the public sphere, proposed by authorities, pundits, other media, etc.

As for the use of special forces, and the almost mythical powers associated with them which we saw in the texts in the *Sunday Times* and which is here advocated by the then-Prime Minister Cameron. This pattern of presenting the reader with a remedy that has been proposed by others and then offering critique as to why that remedy is flawed or even outright inadmissible in the current situation is something that is a recurring element in the dataset from *The Guardian*. This might again be explained by the political leanings of the paper and the British political system, with *The Guardian* being both willing and able to take clear oppositional attitude towards the policies and remedies proposed by the government. The quote in which the remedy from Cameron is presented and critiqued also contains elements of the “clash of civilizations” frame:

Islamic State (Isis) killed an obviously innocent man [Alan Henning] in spite of appeals from Muslim leaders in the region and in Britain, serving notice that *it recognises no moral authority outside its own harsh sphere*, and that it will take the lives of the remaining western citizens who have fallen into its hands when and how

it pleases. *It is natural to consider, as David Cameron is thought to be doing, the use of special forces to extricate them, but this is not just a matter of sending in the helicopters to swoop dramatically over a border.* Special forces like the SAS consist of particularly well-trained and skilled soldiers *but they are not magicians.* (Editorial, 2014c, emphasis added)

As the above passage shows, the organization is presented as one that has its own moral sphere and it is the only one in which it operates. The removal of an entity from a fundamental and universal entity of civilizations and cultures is a strong act of Othering of Daesh and its members. This opens up the possibility of removing Daesh and its members from the larger shared sphere of moralities and, thus, would again lower the bar for the ethical considerations of the various actions that could be taken against it.

The self-perpetuating wheel of fighting terrorism with tools that generate terror is under criticism in another article from 2014. In that article (Milne, 2014), the author criticizes the inadequacies of the West's usage of airstrikes against Daesh:

We're now witnessing *a replay of the war on terror, more than a decade after it was demonstrated to fuel terrorism rather than fight it.* Since 9/11 the US has launched 94,000 air strikes: most against Iraq and Afghanistan, but also Libya, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians in the process. Obama refers approvingly to the drone and special-forces campaigns in Yemen and Somalia as a model for his new war in Iraq. But they haven't just killed large numbers of civilians. *They have been a recruiting machine* for al-Qaida and al-Shabab, and fanned civil war. And that's what's happening in Iraq, where US-backed attacks by government forces this month killed 31 civilians, including 24 children, in a school near Tikrit. [...] *Bombing will not destroy Isis, but win it sympathy - or even cause it to mutate into something worse.* (Milne, 2014, emphasis added)

In the above quote, the author makes explicit the vicious cycle of fighting terror with terror, making a reference to the Bush-era War on Terror and its effects in the countries and regions it targeted, as well as its continuation under the Obama administration. The author makes a point of the repetitive nature of the ongoing actions and mistakes in tackling terrorism and terrorists through such military actions. The use of war machines, airstrikes in particular, against targets and groups of non-combatants can increase the appeal of those organizations against which the strikes were ostensibly used. Interestingly, the author brings forth the idea that such actions can even morph Daesh into something even "worse", noting how combating a highly ideological organization through the force of arms alone, arms that most probably will also result in casualties among non-combatants, will not

in fact result in the organization's defeat. The remedy, according to Milne (2014), would be for an international agreement to "wind down" the Syrian civil war, with the role of ultimately defeating Daesh given to the Iraq and Syrian people. This can be seen as contributing to the "deliberation" frame as it is more cautious in its approach to the problem and the use of (Western) military power.

The next section will return its focus to the United States, as we analyze the dataset from *The Washington Post*.

5.4. The Washington Post

The dataset of *The Washington Post* constructs and presents to the audience three distinct, large frames: the "hapless Arab", the "clash of civilizations" mentioned previously, but also a variant of the "bombs and guns" frame. The latter can be seen as a part of a more holistic frame that not only advocates for military action both in the form of airstrikes and boots on the ground, but which also has a certain political and theosophical dimension to it, because there are discussion points and ideas presented in the texts that relate to the role of Islam as a religion in the threats posed by Daesh and the situation in the region.

Indeed, the holistic approach incorporates some of the elements we have seen in the previous sections, such as the attribution of the reasons behind Daesh's rise to the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq (e.g. Dubik, 2014); the idea that the ultimate role for solving the problem presented by Daesh should be left to the powers of the region (e.g. Cook, 2014); and the call for ground troops (McLaughlin, 2015). However, the holistic approach also calls for more ethereal remedies, such as the consideration of *why* people fight for the organization, the answer to which, according to McLaughlin (2015), is that the Daesh fighters believe in the so-called caliphate. This belief is a twisted version of Islam, calling for a potentially wide-ranging debate on how the authorities of the faith might be able to prevent such things from occurring in the future. This theosophical debate would have to incorporate issues concerning the more mundane issues, such as poverty, inequality and others.

Interestingly, *The Washington Post* is the most vocal about the role of the then-Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, as one of the biggest reasons for the rise of Daesh, and on numerous occasions (e.g. Dubik 2014; editorial 2014b; Byman 2014; Byman and Shapiro 2014) calls for the his replacement. One text (O'Hanlon, 2014) even argues withholding military equipment shipments and aid as hostage until the Iraqi people have changed al-Maliki for someone more suitable in the eyes of Washington.

These kinds of calls for the removal of the head of state of a sovereign country contribute to the “hapless Arab” frame due to the fact that the Iraqi people are presented as having chosen for themselves a leader incapable of leading in a manner that would please the great powers, mainly the United States. This sentiment can be seen in an editorial from 2014:

Mr. Maliki has too often governed as a kind of elected sectarian dictator on behalf of his Shiite compatriots and Iranian patrons rather than the inclusive leader his other patrons, in Washington, have repeatedly urged him to be. ISIS's rapid occupation of a string of Sunni cities north of Baghdad says less about the insurgents' fighting skills than the disdain with which Iraq's troops regard Mr. Maliki. Most of them fled rather than pick up their U.S.-supplied weapons on his behalf. Mr. Obama was justified in describing the ISIS offensive as 'a wake-up call for the Iraqi government' - a last chance to mend its ways and to pursue the kind of Sunni-Shiite cooperation that U.S. commanders effectively brokered when they were still in the country. (Editorial Board, 2014b, emphasis added)

The above passage lays bare the kind of patronizing relationship that *The Washington Post* sees as existing between the United States and Iraq. The feeling that readers receive from this frame is one that seems to say that, because the United States has invested so much resources into Iraq, the nation and its leaders should be thankful and indebted to their “liberators”: they should not consider the 2003 invasion as anything other than a sincere effort to spread democracy and they should also ignore the ripple effects that the invasion has had on the region. The United States military is given as a benchmark in this narrative, with the idea that it was the “commanders” who achieved suitable level of collaboration between the Shias and the Sunnis.

In addition to this rather suspect benchmark, the editorial brushes away the nature and circumstances of why those commanders were in the country to begin with, merely referring to that period of time in declarative and neutral terms. There are no mentions of why the invasion in 2003

happened, why the cooperation was deemed necessary nor what methods were used to achieve it, merely that, unlike a local leader, an outside power had managed to bring the local groups together. Furthermore, the text notes how the troops serving under Maliki had abandoned the fight and, more importantly, their weapons and equipment were supplied by the United States. Here, the local administration is portrayed as being inept, and the solution is to adhere and follow the example set by the outside power, contributing to the “hapless Arab” frame, which is further empowered by the text calling outright that the Iraqi leadership should heed the advice from outside their sovereign country.

As for the “clash of civilizations” frame, we can turn to an article by Ebrahim (2015) in which they criticize the whole of “Islamic orthodoxy” which they see as being “out of step with the world in which the majority of Muslims live”, and this factor is one that is behind the ideologically fertile soil in which the seeds of Daesh could grow. According to the author:

Groups like the Islamic State propound *antiquated teachings still held to be true by many orthodox authorities*. These include enslaving prisoners of war and taking female prisoners as concubines. *Because mainstream Islam has not truly defused these theological hand grenades by explaining how they apply to the modern world*, groups like the Islamic State and disaffected followers like [the author’s friend] Rashid can view these *dangerous teachings* as Islam’s true ideals. (Ebrahim, 2015, emphasis added)

The clash, then, comes from the inflexibility of the faith leaders of Islam in adapting to the changed and changing world around them, a proposition that assumes that there is a sharp division between the leaders and the followers of the faith, that those leaders of the “mainstream Islam” constitute a monolithic entity that could in fact dictate how the teachings of the faith relate to the modern world (Ebrahim, 2015). Also noteworthy is the fact that the difficult theological discussion is likened to hand grenades, linking the Islamic faith in this instance with instruments of war, enhancing the perception of the clashing civilizations where the Othered, i.e. the Islamic civilization, is represented to readers as being tied to violence and war on a quite a fundamental level.

As for another element in the “clash of civilizations” frame, we can see the use of terminology from the natural world being applied to Daesh in a text by Ignatius (2015), in which

they quite cynically describe the organization and the available responses that its opponents have:

Observing the devastation in the Middle East is a bit like *watching a hurricane pummel a vulnerable coastline. Outsiders can try to mitigate the destruction and provide humanitarian relief. They must also try to protect themselves from collateral damage. But they can't stop the raging winds and surging tides from leveling fragile structures.* As disaster-management experts have learned, *a big storm has to blow itself out before rebuilding can begin.* (Ignatius, 2015, emphasis added)

This comparison to an unstoppable natural force Others the organization, its members and those who are victimized by it, following the seemingly unstoppable natural force of the Ebola virus mentioned previously. The passive stance to the remedy, of letting the “storm” to tire itself out, can also be seen as problematic as it effectively abandons all responsibilities and abilities to combat Daesh; it is just something that has to be weathered. This stance is also accredited to unnamed and nebulous “disaster-management experts”, perhaps in an effort to lend some semblance of credibility to the problematic proposition.

In addition, it is prudent to look at what role is offered to the outsiders in this context; they are merely to try and allay the detrimental effects of the unstoppable and unavoidable natural disaster, while at the same time they try to prepare for the destruction that will spread to their shores, if we are following the metaphor here. This approach is not only problematic due to the comparisons to the natural world mentioned above, but also because the destruction is portrayed as inevitable, which has the effect of exonerating those outside of the region from any responsibility for the destruction.

Furthermore, a text from 2014 constructs the “clash of civilizations” frame, though this time it comes from the criticism of a remedy on the political and strategical levels. The authors preface their argument with comparisons to the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Second World War before presenting their main idea: criticism against a potential alliance between the United States and Iran (Doran and Boot, 2014). The frame in question is built by contrasting the two countries and their values explicitly with each other:

The idea that the United States, *a nation bent on defending democracy and safeguarding stability*, shares a common interest with the Islamic Republic of Iran, a revolutionary theocracy that is *the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world*, is as

fanciful as the notion that Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler could work together for the good of Europe. (Doran and Boot, 2014, emphasis added)

As the above quote shows, the authors make an unequivocal comparison between the two, with the United States being presented as being the representative of democracy and other values that the country wants to portray itself as pursuing, and Iran as being engaged in supporting terrorism which is presented as being in direct contrast to the United States, ignoring the issues surrounding state-sponsored terrorism that the latter has also engaged in. Indeed, Iran is given the unsourced title of being the first among nations which support terrorism, as well as being described as a “revolutionary theocracy” without expanding on the terms.

Additionally, the text argues against the alliance in other ways, noting how the United States would be “making a historic error if it were to assist such an Iranian-orchestrated ethnic-cleansing campaign with air power or even with diplomatic support”, before continuing to condemn the potential alliance as both “morally reprehensible” and “strategically stupid” (Doran and Boot, 2014). The authors argue that doing this would shift the perceptions that the Sunnis in the region have into one that would see the United States siding with the Shias (Doran and Boot, 2014). The authors end with the call that the United States “should not ally with one group of terrorists to fight another” (Doran and Boot, 2014). This is interesting to note, as it runs in direct contrast to the realpolitik approach advocated in *The New York Times* by Anatol (2015), instead calling for a more traditional, imperialistic approach to the situation in the region. The Doran and Boot text argues that the values, whether real or perceived, are sacrosanct and they should not be traded for an alliance with a perceived enemy; an enemy that is labeled as a terrorist entity. This rather imperialistic mentality and the “hapless Arab” frame is given more credence when the authors call for the replacement of the Iraqi administration, and specifically al-Maliki with a “more inclusive leader” (Doran and Boot, 2014).

Following the matrix we constructed, we can see that for the “clash of civilizations” the problematic effects/conditions are the threat that Daesh poses to the West in the form of terrorist attacks, like for example in Paris in November 2015, and to a lesser degree those the organization

poses for the people within its so-called caliphate. The frame identifies the cause/agent in the civilization from which Daesh rose and is by which it is sustained, namely Islam and the imagined, monolithic Middle East. This is done by constructing the monolithic and simplistic view of the antagonistic civilization following the imperialistic ideas, and by Othering it through comparisons of disease, infection etc.

As for endorsing remedies, the frame includes a lot of ways to deal with Daesh, some expounded more than others, but the overall remedy is that of military action and violence which lead to the “civilization” of the antagonistic civilization by the West. Finally, as might be supposed, the conveyance of moral judgment is harsh, Othering and absolute in the frame. Daesh is seen as an enemy that is to be given no quarter, and no considerations are made to solve the problem it faces, other than violence. The focus on the frame is fairly equally distributed between the issue and the events, the former being represented by the existential threat posed by Daesh to the West, while the latter including, for example, the executions of Westerners by the organization.

Yet another text constructs this frame of the “hapless Arab” through calling for the replacement of the leader of a sovereign nation, al-Maliki, with explicit mentions of the material benefits that the United States has provided to his army:

IS’s military victories really reflect the weakness of the Iraqi army and the disastrous policies of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. *The United States has provided billions of dollars worth of military equipment to the Iraqi army*, which on paper far outnumbers and outguns IS. The catch is that the Iraqi army will not fight. [...] If the government can become more inclusive and win over moderate Sunnis, and *if the Iraqi army can get its act together*, IS’s gains can be reversed. *Those are big ifs.* (Byman, 2014, emphasis added)

Here, the kind of patronizing attitude that the author presents the readers with ties the concrete, multi-billion equipment to the Iraqi army with the implicit right to have a say in the domestic policies of the country. What is not mentioned, however, are the reasons why such large number of equipment was provided to the army, what the actual relationship (both political and financial) was between the United States and Iraq, and what the context was in which such a deal was conducted. The last sentence in the quote also shows a lack of faith in the Iraqi leadership’s capabilities to solve

the problems presented by Daesh and other such organizations in the region. Furthermore, it shows the cynical attitude in highlighting the disbelief in the fact that those two ifs would come to pass.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has approached the questions of what kinds of frames are constructed by the four newspapers, *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times* regarding Daesh, how those frames are constructed and what elements they are comprised of. The thesis has approached the questions from the viewpoint of qualitative comparative content analysis by analyzing 21 texts from each newspaper, with a total of 84 texts, with the journalistic genres of the texts being editorials, op-eds and opinion pieces.

The decision to focus on these certain genres was firstly that, as Homayounzadeh and Mehrpour note, they have a more commentary and subjective nature than news reports or other styles of journalistic writings, excepting satires, etc. (2013, 9). This allowed me to analyse the frames that the newspapers would like to build and convey to the readers as their own stances on the subject matters in a more clear-cut way than, for example, news reports. The second reason for narrowing down the analysis to such genres was due to the constraints of time and resources of this thesis, though the analysis of other types of genres would be a fruitful avenue of approach for future researchers.

On the theoretical level, the thesis began with examining the ideas presented by Kuypers concerning the notions of rhetoric and its usage as a long-term strategic communication in order to “achieve specifiable goals” (2010, 288-290). The texts under analysis were indeed created with achieving some goal or goals in mind, as they were published in a widely available format, i.e. online, and with the intent to vocalize the stance on a given issue of the newspaper, creating a more subjective viewpoint as mentioned above. An additional aim can be said to have been the generation of public debate about the issues, offering the readers different ideas and viewpoints into the problems posed by Daesh.

This latter role is explained by Fowler who regards the media as having the role of “gate-keepers” in the society in which they operate and, following Kress, Fowler notes how these actors help define the way that a certain “topic, object, process” can be talked about (Fowler, 1991, 42).

Moving on from this, the thesis examined perhaps the most prevalent and powerful frame in recent times, that of the War on Terror. According to Lewis and Reese (2009, 87-88), the frame has had at its core a clear dichotomy of the world, that of Us and Them, with strong nationalistic tendencies, with the terrorists being allocated to the role of Them, while those opposed were deemed Us. This division was also present in the texts that were analyzed, manifesting itself most prominently in the “clash of civilizations” frame, which included the West (sometimes accompanied with Russia) in the role of Us, and Daesh and intermittently the larger Arab and Muslim world in the role of Them.

The thesis also provided the reader an overview of the framing theory, its history, core ideas, and applications, mostly following Entman’s ideas but beginning with Goffman who stated that people, when faced with a given event, will employ a primary framework through which they engage in sense-making processes, i.e. creating sense out of meaningless entities (Goffman, 1986, 21). These primary frameworks can then be divided into two subsets: natural and social frameworks, and it is the latter of which was used in this thesis to approach the datasets and analysis because the social frameworks have at their focus an intelligent actor, namely humans (Goffman, 1986, 22).

Using Goffman’s ideas as a starting point, the thesis then looked at the power of the frames and framing processes, following Kuypers’ ideas that people tend to imbibe new information in a manner that is the easiest for them, with the effect that not all information is processed (Kuypers, 2009, 300-302). This can be seen in the datasets through the analysis in the way that subtle ways of, for example, referring to Daesh through the use of lexical elements from the field of disease and infection can create the perception of an Othered and lethal entity, or a frame of a clashing civilization, which would allow the lowering of the moral bar for any actions that would be taken against the organization.

It is possible to draw connections between the War on Terror frame as it was created in the early 2000s and the “clash of civilizations” frame built in the datasets, with the former having been introduced and kept in the newsrooms of various media almost completely unquestionably with

only the fine details of its implementation being discussed; the frame itself was left unquestioned (Lewis and Reese, 2009, 93). The latter is perhaps a continuation of this in the sense that the journalists and practices of the newsrooms had already grown accustomed to the presence and dichotomous nature of the frame, so it might have been easier to continue building upon that divided foundation when discussing Daesh and the situation in the Middle East. This would have been helped by the adoption of the frame in the minds and practices of the journalists, even though there would have been professionals who were not engaged in journalism as a profession when the War on Terror frame was introduced. The frame could have become a “taken-for-granted condition” which was “imperceptible” to those who were using it and being used by it (Lewis and Reese, 2009, 94).

In this case, the institutional practices and knowledge, most likely unobserved by the journalists, would have driven the new professionals towards a dichotomous manner of framing, whether they consciously knew about it or not. It would have merely been the way that things were done, and to notice the frame and its effects would have taken a conscious effort and another effort to try and run against it. This would be an instance of what Van Dijk terms the “Common Ground”: a way of doing and perceiving something, i.e. an ideology so deeply engrained in a social group that to question it or criticize it would become extremely difficult (Van Dijk, 2006, 117-118).

Additionally, the political leanings of the newspapers and the characteristic of the audiences they create their content for play a role in how such Common Ground could come to pass. *The Guardian* with its left-wing tendencies and its position as being, if not pro-Labour, then at least not pro-Conservative, included a lot of criticism aimed at the government’s policies, its remedies and highlighted the careful parliamentary procedures and approach. In contrast, *The Sunday Times* is more right-wing in its political stance which manifested itself with more outspoken support for the government and its actions, with less criticism, though it was not completely without offering critique.⁸ It was, however, interesting to see that there were a fair number of texts that constructed

⁸ Smith, in 2017, came to the conclusion that *The Times* was seen by respondents as being “very right-wing” by 14%,

frames that included elements, such as remedies, that were more radical than the government's, with calls for deeper military involvement in the region, for example.

For the two newspapers from the United States, their stances and the frames they constructed were less tied to their political leanings, with *The New York Times* being classified as left-wing and *The Washington Post* as slightly left-wing, exhibiting a more unified set of frames.⁹¹⁰ The audience perception can, of course, be shift over time and not be the same as the political leaning that the newspaper would itself identify, but audience perception is a useful meter to use in this thesis.

The differences between the political leanings of the papers might be due to the differences in the political systems in the two countries, with the United States lacking the similar parliamentary system with its clear opposition and ruling-party dynamic, though the countries do share the *de facto* two-party system and bicameral representative system. The United States, however, does have the office of the executive, i.e. the president, which is closely linked to party politics. In addition to this is the fact that the two newspapers and their audiences are situated in the United States, which will lead to a lack of introspection especially with regards to the causes and reasons behind the rise of Daesh. That is, it might be even harder to for these two newspapers to criticize the War on Terror frame or to break free from their own Common Grounds, as doing so would require going against not only the institutional practices but also the national narrative at large. By pointing out the role that the United States played in the creation of Daesh and attributing blame to the politicians and other elites for that creation, the newspapers could risk being regarded as betraying the country and the troops that served in the region.

Through the analysis, it can be seen how the media outlets construct frames from various elements. The dominant frames that the data revealed were the “clash of civilizations”, “hapless Arab”, “bombs and guns”, and the “deliberation” frame that was produced exclusively by *The*

“fairly right-wing” by 28%, and “slightly right-of-centre” by 28% <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/03/07/how-left-or-right-wing-are-uks-newspapers>

⁹ *The New York Times*' political stance: <https://www.allsides.com/news-source/new-york-times-opinion-media-bias>

¹⁰ *The Washington Post*'s political stance: <https://www.allsides.com/news-source/washington-post-media-bias>

Guardian. Following Entman's ideas, a matrix was recreated (Fig. 1.0.) which was used in the analysis section of the thesis, and out of the four locations, the focus of the analysis was on the communicator, the text, and the culture, due to the fact that the limits of this thesis did not allow the analysis of the receiver. The problem definition, for example for the "clash of civilizations" frame, was the physical and military threat that Daesh posed in the region in 2014 and to the Western world later on, following the Paris attacks in November 2015.

As for that "deliberation" frame, the problem definition was striking a balance between the threat and moral outrage over Daesh's actions and the moral and legal obligations of the Western world. The causal interpretation was most often attributed to the regional administrations, especially the then-Prime Minister of Iraq al-Maliki and the inability of the sects of Shia and Sunni Muslims to conceive Daesh as an existential threat, something that the Western powers apparently managed in the "hapless Arab" frame. The moral evaluation was most vividly on display in the "clash of civilizations" frame with the numerous references to Daesh as either an infection or simply evil, which created the Othered entity.

These frames were constructed through the usage of comparisons to natural disasters (Ignatius, 2015), presenting the organization as "evil" in, for example, *The Sunday Times* (e.g. Editorial, 2014) and likening the organization to a "killing machine" (Friedman, 2014b). The "deliberation" frame was constructed through various texts (e.g. Editorial, 2014c; Milne, 2014), and it is noteworthy that *The Guardian* was the only newspaper under analysis that consistently offered criticism to the ideas and remedies offered by the authorities in dealing with Daesh. This follows the idea that Entman proposed, namely that the frames are defined not only through the elements that they include, but also what they leave outside of themselves (Entman, 1993, 54). There was no mention of dealing with the organization through other than military action, so that particular avenue has been left outside of the frames, omitted from them, which, in the minds of the readers, creates the sense that there truly is no other way to handle the situation.

Treatment recommendations ranged from military action, most commonly in the form of

airstrikes and usage of special forces, to targeting the organization's financial institutions and its capabilities to acquire the resources it needed to continue existing and ruling over the so-called caliphate. These recommendations or remedies were most explicitly stated in the "bombs and guns" frame which called for the Western powers, and occasionally Russia and other actors in the region, to confront the organization militarily.

The analysis showed that all of the newspapers had multiple frames present in their texts, which included the use of language that created the dichotomy of Us and Them most profoundly in the "hapless Arab" and the "clash of civilizations" frames which, as was mentioned above, might be due to the power of the War on Terror frame that was present from the early 2000s onwards. The "deliberation" frame was noticeably more critical of the authorities' suggestions for remedies and included more details about the history and context of how Daesh was born and sustained. The frame also relied heavily on the legal and moral issues surrounding, for example, the military actions that were proposed, noting also the self-perpetuating wheel of fighting terrorism with something that creates terror in the form killing civilians and other non-combatants.

Noteworthy was the fact that there was really no mention of other ways of solving the problems and threats posed by Daesh, other than military action in one form or another; there was no mention of trying to promote diplomatic or other ways of reaching an understanding with the organization, which created the sense that Daesh truly was something that could not be reasoned with and, thus, something that was implicitly Other as its members were deemed not worthwhile or able to engage in any other ways of solving the situation. This is marked departure from, say, the approach to the Taliban in Afghanistan following the September 2001 attacks in the United States and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan. In this instance, the invasion of a foreign country was perhaps more justified than the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but we should remember the levels of demonization that was aimed at the Taliban and Al-Qaeda which at times spilled over to the Muslim population at large in various countries. Despite this, the US-backed Afghan government, the United States, and the Taliban engaged in negotiations for a peace-deal that would end the conflict,

running for 18 years.¹¹ The circumstances and the contexts surrounding the two groups were unquestionably different, but it is interesting to think why Daesh was deemed such an unequivocally antagonistic entity that no calls for mediation or diplomacy were present in the datasets. Perhaps, if Daesh had been governing its so-called caliphate for a longer time, then the appetite for military action would have waned and the media outlets would have at least pondered the possibility of a non-military remedy.

Future avenues of approach for researchers might include the investigation of how the framing of other terrorist organizations compares to that of Daesh in either the Western media or in the regional ones. The latter could provide insights into how those closer to such organizations differ in their framing and/or representation of such organizations. It might also be interesting to analyze how the framing has changed over a longer period of time by conducting a longitudinal study over decades. This might identify potential trends in how the framing has changed and how they are connected to other events that took place around a given time, such as the evolving geopolitical situation in the regions, as well as regime changes and shifting global foci between different regions.

¹¹ BBC News. 2020. "Afghanistan peace deal: Taliban walk out of 'fruitless' talks". *BBC*. Internet. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52199398?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cl7zq5566d7t/us-taliban-peace-talks&link_location=live-reporting-story

Appendix

<i>Function of Frame</i>	<i>Focus of Frame</i>		
	Issue	Events	Political Actors
Defining problematic effects/conditions			
Identifying cause/agent			
Endorsing remedy			
Conveying moral judgment			

FIGURE 1.0. A Replication of Entman's Functions and Objects of News Frames

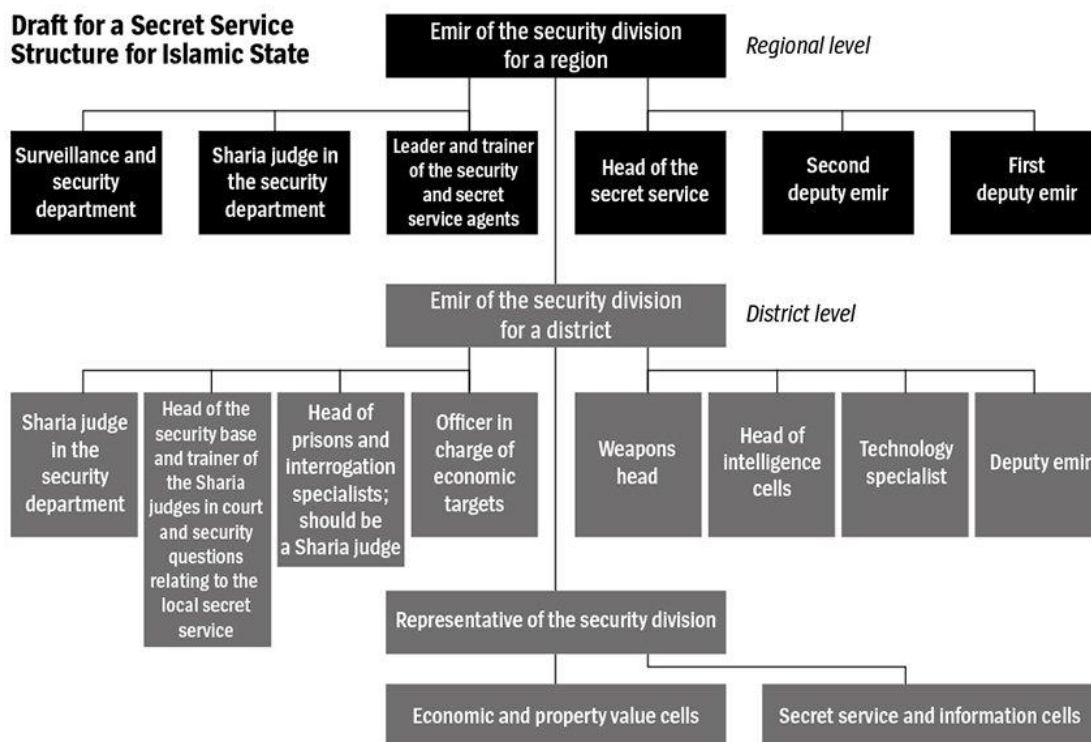


FIGURE 2.0. The organizational structure of the Islamic State. Source: Der Spiegel, 2015.

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