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FRAMING 'ISLAMIC TERRORISM' IN PUBLIC AND ACADEMIC DISCOURSE AFTER 9/11

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ABSTRACT

This paper has discussed on how 'Islamic terrorism' is presented in public and academic discourse after 9/11 attacks. This paper proceeds with framing 'Islamic terrorism' so as to explain how terrorism has been represented as an 'Islamic crime. This paper and its content were analysed using Performativity in speech act theory , and frame theory. This paper looks at some examples of post-9/11 public and academic discourse. In addition, this paper has discussed the misrepresented discourse framed the mental model of 'Islamic terrorism' by using schemas to refer to the act, the criminals, and the motive. These schemas participate in activating the mental model of 'Islamic terrorism' when occurring in misrepresented discourse. The findings have shown that different discourses participated in framing the general knowledge of 'Islamic terrorism. This has resulted in framing the mental representation of terrorism as an Islamic crime that is committed by Muslims, motivated by jihad, and targets the West. Therefore, it is concluded that, "Islamic terrorism" is a frame that produces a mental model of terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The performativity of "jihad" in legal discourse - namely Islamic international law – denotes the legitimacy of the use of force that is practiced by the Islamic state. It is an exceptional and restricted case of self-defence against a specific type of aggression. The use of force that is regulated by the rules of jihad is distinctly different from any other acts of the use of force. In particular, the use of force constituting terrorism is in fact an offence in Islamic criminal law. The criminal liability for an illegitimate use of force practiced by individuals and/or organised groups comes under the offences of baghi and hirabah.

Islamic legal discourse – international and criminal – is an authoritative discourse due to its legal nature. Islamic legal discourse has been treated as

authoritative discourses that reflect the reality of the Islamic position towards the use of force, especially when the legal texts that have been contested were definite legal texts which express the legal texts which express the divine intention of Allah as the divine source of legislation for Islamic law. This paper has aims to explore how terrorism has been framed as an Islamic crime in some public and academic discourse, keeping in mind that there is nothing Islamic about terrorism but rather some of the perpetrators are Muslim.

The main case of this paper is that misrepresented discourse has framed a 'new wave' of terrorism categorised as 'Islamic terrorism', and defined as 1) committed by a Muslim perpetrator(s), 2) motivated by *jihad* [1], and 3) targeting non-Muslims or threatening Western countries [2].   The time frame for this paper ranges from the terror attack on the World Trade Centre on 11th September in 2001 onwards (2001–2015). The terror attack of 9/11 had a significant impact on boosting publications in the field of terrorism studies [3], increasing the publication on terrorism by 300%.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first section will explain aspects related to public and academic discourse. It will be a background, which will provide a review of some studies that examine the representation of Islam and Muslims using critical discourse analysis Subsequently, this section will explain the role of public and academic discourse in framing and the process of meaning making of 'Islamic terrorism'. After that, it will define public and academic discourse and distinguish between the schemas produced by public and academic discourse. The second section of this paper will be dedicated to framing the mental representation of 'Islamic terrorism' by focusing on schemas that are produced by public and academic discourse, which describe the act, motive, and perpetrators of 'Islamic terrorism' attacks. This section will examine examples of some public and academic discourse after 9/11 that suffers from misrepresentation.

Public And Academic Discourse

Public and academic discourse has a major role in framing the concept of 'Islamic terrorism' by presenting it as a new wave of terrorism that is threatening the West and Europe. Duyvesteyn [4] notes four specific features of a terror act that have resulted in identifying it as 'new'. First, the perpetrators of terrorism act transnationally and operate in loosely organized networks. Second, they are inspired by religion and are seen as religious fanatics. Third, they seek weapons to attack as many people as possible, notably weapons of mass destruction. Fourth, their victims are not carefully selected but their targeting is indiscriminate.

Although there is no difference between 'traditional' and 'new' terrorism, it seems that religion is the central feature of the claimed 'new' terrorism that makes it different or new. It seems to be widely accepted that terrorism is identified as 'Islamic terrorism'; the search results for the keyword 'Islamic terrorism' in books published in 2001- 2015 on Amazon.co.uk. Some studies have used critical discourse analysis to examine the representation of Islam and Muslims in public discourse; for instance, Martin and Phelan [5] used

WordSmith (a lexical analysis software) to analyse the textual corpora of a 4.18- million-word corpus to investigate the representation of Islam on five television networks based in the US after 11th September [5].The analysis found 15 commonly-used noun phrases from the TV transcripts in which "Islamic" is used as an adjective, presented in the Table 1:

Table 1 The 15 most popularly used noun phrases from the TV transcript corpus where Islamic is used as an adjective

Noun phrase	Television corpus	
	Frequency	Percentage of all (%)
1.Islamic fundamentalists (s)	51	10.90
2. Islamic jihad	33	7.05
3. Islamic world	26	5.56
4.Islamic militants(s)	25	5.34
5. Islamic extremist(s)	24	5.13
6. Islamic group (s)	24	5.13
7. Islamic country/ies	24	4.49
8.Islamic faith	17	3.63
9. Islamic society	15	3.21
10. Islamic center(s)	15	3.21
11. Islamic radical(s)	14	2.99
12. Islamic terrorist (s)	14	2.99
13. Islamic nation(s)	13	2.79
14. Islamic community/ies	11	2.35
15. Islamic conference (s)	10	2.14

Another corpus-based analysis, which analysed over 100 million words, concluded that the British press tend to link Muslims to an extreme belief. Baker's analysis found that "extremist(s)", "fundamentalist(s)" and "militant(s)" are the most common words to be associated with Muslims (when "Muslim" is used as a noun) [6]. The Figure 1 shows the result of Baker's [6] analysis of the distribution of extreme belief words in the British national press, with a corpus of 143 million words from 200,000 articles published between 1998 and 2009 [6].
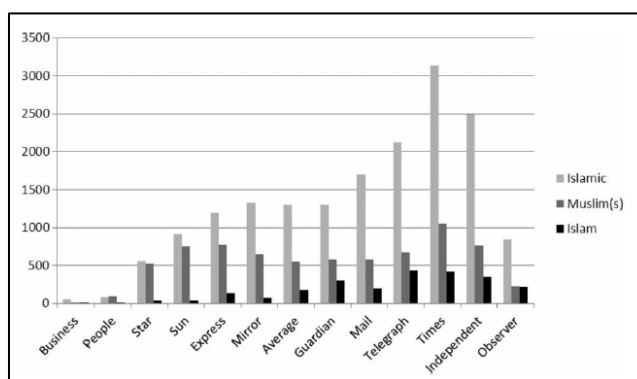
Figure 1 Overall frequencies of extreme belief words occurring before or after "Muslim(s)", "Islamic" and "Islam" for each newspaper.

The negative representation of Muslims and Islam in public discourse does not occur exclusively in the British national press. Akbarzadeh and Smith [7] examined how the words "Islam" and "Muslims" were used in two major newspapers from Victoria, Australia – The Age, and the Herald Sun – from 2001 to 2004. The study examined data related to 451 news articles and news features. According to Akbarzadeh and Smith's analysis [7], the words "Islam" and "Muslims" were used 22% of the time in news related to terrorism in comparison to the other themes. Furthermore, the study also noted that news reports used terminology such as "jihad", "Islamic terrorism", "Muslim fanatic" and other words to describe the type of attack. The study concluded that the content of the articles had an impact on the overall impression of language use; thus, journalists find it difficult to avoid stereotypes and the negative association of Islam and/or Muslims with violence.

It may be argued that the representation of Islam and Muslims was negative even before the attack on the World Trade Centre. According to Richardson's analysis of British broadsheet newspapers from 1997 to 1998 [8], which included 2540 articles, Richardson [8] found that the representation of British Muslims was predominantly negative, with 38.4 % referring to British Muslims in articles about violence or act of violence. Meanwhile, 50.6% of the articles cited Islam as influencing violence. On the other hand, the percentage of articles that referred to Islam as the enemy was 58.3%, while the notion of 'Islam vs. the West' occurred in 69.4% of the articles. However, the terror attack on 11th September caused an increase in the negative reorientation of Muslims and Islam.

Public and academic discourse produces statements of misrepresentation, which over time participates in framing public opinion on 'Islamic terrorism'. It has been argued that 'the process by which words obtain meaning is often lengthy and takes place through repetition and their careful and selective use in specific contexts [9]. Consistency in producing misrepresentation over time is one of the two factors that participate in framing knowledge about 'Islamic terrorism' [10]. Public discourse produces short-term messages, creating an episodic memory, which becomes part of a person's 'store of experiences'. Schemas are produced in response to a terror event; messages carrying

schemas of misrepresentation in public discourse transmit the experience of a terror attack to the public, even if they were not directly affected by it.

The short schemas produced by public discourse will influence public opinion and frame their knowledge about 'Islamic terrorism' for many reasons [11]. Misrepresentation in public discourse is influential because firstly, the schemas are accompanied by the audio, images, videos or tape recordings of terror organisations or the perpetrators themselves and/or a recording of the terror attack itself, images of the victims, etc. Therefore, the shock of a terror attack does not exclusively affect those who witness the attack but even those who do not. In this way, public discourse participates in transmitting the shock of a terror attack to a wider circle (collective shock). As has been argued by Kellner [12] regarding the role of public discourse, particularly the media, in covering the terror attack on 11th September, 'television functioned largely as propaganda, spectacles, and the producer of mass hysteria (close to brain washing). Thus, intensive exposure to short-term schemas is capable of producing a similar effect to long-term schemas produced by academic discourse. This has been noted by Baker [6] who says that 'a group may be negatively represented only 5% of the time it gets referred to'.

Public discourse does not particularly frame general knowledge of 'Islamic terrorism', but instead, uses schemas that activate pre-existing knowledge of how 'Islamic terrorism' looks and which public discourse uses these schemas. This shows individuals what 'terrorists' look like and provides some schemas about the religious identity of the perpetrators of a terror attack. An example of misrepresented discourse and the possible mental representation of 'Islamic terrorism' is produced by an authoritative source, the New York Police Department: its report, Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat (2007), includes a diagram explaining the process of induction into Jihadi-Salafi ideology [13]. In addition to this, five images of terror attacks were represented in the report as examples of foreign cases, since these attacks occurred outside the US. However, "foreign" does not indicate that the terror attacks were committed by foreign actors.

 In fact, the five cases were committed by national actors. For this reason, the report uses these cases to explain the 'homegrown threat'. Figure 2 is a screenshot of the diagram as it appears in the report [13]. The report uses "*jihad*" to denote "terrorism"; thus, the report schemas activate the mental model of 'Islamic terrorism'. This is well represented in the diagram on the left, with four anonymous images of a person appearing on top of a supposed description of stages of terrorism, and 'Jihadi-Salafi' and 'Jihadization' describing the ideology and the last stage in the process of radicalisation, respectively. the report uses "homegrown threat" to describe threats of terrorism that are not posed by external or foreign terror groups. Since the report identifies it as 'Jihadi-Salafi ideology', it seems to suggest that the threat is posed internally, namely by the Muslim population. In addition, the fact that the report has five 'foreign' cases of terrorism seems to justify considering Muslims a threat because all five of the cases were committed by national actors against their own countries.
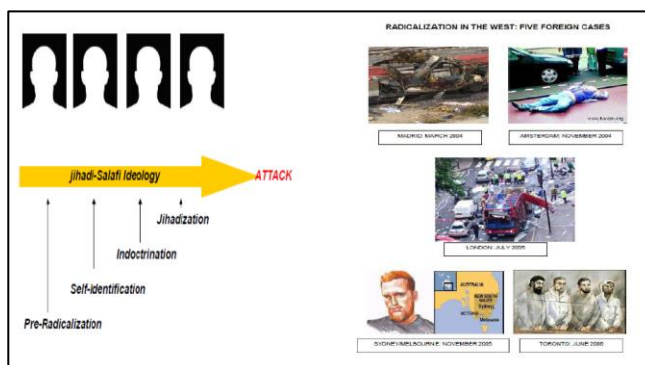
Figure 2. Screenshot from the report of the New York Police Department

Meanwhile, academic discourse produces long-term schemas. Academic discourse creates a semantic memory, and 'refers to a person's knowledge' [10] about what constitutes 'Islamic terrorism'; in this way, the schemas that are produced by academic discourse live longer than those produced by public discourse, as academic discourse includes books that have been published on the topic of 'Islamic terrorism' or articles that have been published in academic journals. These publications are on the bookshelves of libraries or available on line which can be referred to at any time, not necessarily after a terror attack. Thus, academic discourse offers the scientific or academic background on 'Islamic terrorism', which scientifically and academically legitimises misrepresentation in public discourse.

Framing the mental representation of 'islamic terrorism'

Framing is the representation of world events in a certain way, so that audiences or receivers of a discourse have a mental representation of concepts that are linked to these events. Frames suggest little contribution or participation from the receiver, as world events are presented to us in a certain way, with little control given to the audiences. Frames dictate the lens that audiences or receivers use in viewing a world event Islamic international law is a legal discourse that uses the Arabic language. An example of frames produced in response to a terror attack is the frame responding to the attack on the World Trade Centre as a 'war on terror'. According to Kellner [14], the US mainstream media framed the event as an 'attack on America' or, as he calls it, 'war hysteria'.

Terrorism is nothing but a criminal act, whether the perpetrators are from the Muslim faith or not. Yet, it seems that the frames produced if a terror attack is committed by a Muslim person are different to the frames produced if the terror attack is committed by a non-Muslim perpetrator. It can be said that 'Islamic terrorism' is a frame that mostly dominates other frames in response to terror attacks if committed by a Muslim person. 'Islamic terrorism' is not only a frame, but also a concept that provides a mental representation of a terror attack. This mental representation of the crime is sufficient to anticipate other characteristics in regard to the religion and/or ethnicity of the terrorists, depending on the location of the terror attack. In addition to this, the 'Islamic terrorism' frame also seems to predict the motive of the perpetrators: jihad. In

other words, it can be argued that, as a schema, the concept of 'Islamic terrorism' is sufficient to convey other information about the terror attack without any need for further explanation.

Accordingly, the frame of 'Islamic terrorism' represents a type of terror attack in which the perpetrators are different to other terrorists, and It is not necessary, however, for a terror attack to be framed as 'Islamic terrorism' per se in order to have a certain mental representation of this. In fact, any schema that refers to the religious identity of the perpetrators, or their ethnic background, or even incites an image of the suspect(s), or their motives is sufficient to activate the mental model of 'Islamic terrorism', are motivated religiously, unlike other types of terrorism. In addition, Islamic terrorism is a concept formulated from two words, "Islamic" and "terrorism". These two words carry two types of prejudiced idea,465as introduced by van Dijk [15]: 'They are different (culture, mentality)', and 'They are involved in negative acts (crime, nuisance) [15]. Thus, the concept, 'Islamic terrorism', suggests the religious orientation of the terrorists, and the involvement of members of the religious group in terror activities.

Although some public and academic discourse is careful in its use of the concept of 'Islamic terrorism' by expressing the fact that the link is not between Islam and terrorism, they attempt to justify their argument by suggesting that 'Islamic terrorism' is derived from a distorted interpretation of Islam, in which the incitement of misrepresented statements that link Islam with violence are strategically placed and justified by the disclaimer. For example, O'Duffy [16] uses the schema "Islamic jihad" to refer to 'Islamic terrorism', he says 'Islamic jihad inspired by Salafist and Wahhabi doctrines of Islam oppose U.S. military occupation of Saudi Arabia and U.S. clientelism in Israel, Egypt, Pakistan and others [16]. Venkatraman [17], identify 'Islamic terrorism' as 'a movement in which the violence caused by terrorism is derived from and used to preserve extreme interpretation of the Quran in an Islamic community.

Jackson [2] explains that one of the common narratives of 'Islamic terrorism' is constructed through the argument that 'Islamic terrorism' constitutes a new wave of terrorism that threatens the West. According to this narrative, Muslims, if not terrorists, are sympathisers of 'Islamic terrorism. Furthermore, similar views occur in Cohen [18], who suggests that 'Militant Islamist movements include tens of thousands of active members, hundreds of thousands of supporters, and millions of sympathizers throughout the Middle East, South Asia, Europe, and the Americas. As a result, terror attacks seem to prove that Islam is inherently violent and that religious extremists are the most dangerous and the most violent [18].

The 'Islamic terrorism' frame can be activated by using examples of other terror groups that are committing 'Islamic terrorism', for instance, Al-Qaeda. This appears, for example, in the report on preventing religious radicalisation and violent extremism published by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales [19], which identifies terrorism through directing the reader into 'types' of terrorism by suggesting certain aspects about the act, the victims, and the

perpetrators. What is interesting about this report is that it focuses on 'Islamic extremism' more than it does on far right extremism, despite the fact that so-called 'Islamic extremism' is an issue that is posed by a minority within a minority (Muslim population). If compared to far right extremism, it is less of a threat, because far right extremism is a threat that is posed from the majority group against minority groups.

The most common norm in some public and academic discourses is that "*jihad*" refers to the motives (motivated by '*jihad*') or to the perpetrators ('jihadist'). However, "*jihad*" can also denote 'Islamic terrorism'. For example, O'Duffy [16] uses the terms "violent jihad" and "violent jihadi terror" to refer to terrorism. In doing so, O'Duffy [16] suggests that terrorism is an exclusive crime that is committed by Muslims. Islamic terrorism is not only a threat that is linked to Islam or to the 'new wave' of terrorism. In fact, some argue that 'Islamic terrorism' is an alien threat or crime to the West that is brought from Arab Muslim countries. Thus, according to Romero [20], 'Islamic terrorism' is linked not only to Islam as a religion, but also to the historical, political, psychological, social and economic aspects of Arab Muslim society. Romero [20] seems to frame 'Islamic terrorism' as an inclusive act by Muslim human beings from all Arab countries. Romero [20] also suggests three forms of Islamic terrorism: the first, a form that attempts to convert an existing state into Islam; the second, the creation of a new state; and the last, global terrorism.

One of the common schemas that are used to describe the motive behind 'Islamic terrorism' is "Salafism". Kruglanski [21] claims that the Salafist interpretation of Islam provides a justification for Islamic terrorism in general. Likewise, the dominant frame about Islam is "Islamic terrorism" rather than "peaceful Islam". Baker [6] has noted that the negative representation of a social group raises concerns if it overpowers the positive representation of the same social group. Baker [6] found in his analysis of British national press produced between 1998 and 2009 that the collocates linked to "Islam", "Muslim(s)" and "Islamic" are more likely to be associated with sets of words referring to extreme belief than to those referring to strong or moderate belief. Thus, even though the report has said that the terror attack betrayed the peaceful teachings of Islam, it has little impact, as it is highly unlikely that a model for peaceful Islam can be found that is able to balance the model of 'Islamic terrorism.

One of the schemas used to describe the perpetrators of 'Islamic terrorism', is "Islamist". According to Cohen [18], Islamists 'refer to those forces that use and abuse Islamic ideology to achieve political power'. This distinction between militants, extremists or radical Muslims and peaceful, non-radical Muslims magnifies the criminal activities of Muslims in a multi-faith society, and the religious identity of the criminals becomes salient when the criminal act is terrorism or the criminal belongs to the Muslim faith. However, the religious identity of the criminal is not salient if the criminal act was murder or theft, or when the criminal act is done by citizens who belong to different faith groups. This phrase also suggests that Muslims are troublemakers, and that other citizens are not involved in criminal activities. This phrase magnifies

religion although religion plays a minor role in motivating terrorism. Goodwin [22], for example, uses the term "violent jihadist" to denote religiously motivated terrorism. The characteristics of Muslim extremists in academic discourse encourage the state to adopt all risk policies, because it provides a general model which includes any Muslim. Hence, misrepresented discourse has framed a mental representation of Muslim extremists in which all Muslims are potential threats, as it has been academically and scientifically proven that they are terrorists. Thus, it can be argued that misrepresentation is not prejudice thought, but scientific fact, as it has been proved academically that there is 'Islamic terrorism' and Muslims are the main perpetrators of this crime.

CONCLUSION

This work has examined examples of misrepresentation in some public and academic discourse after 9/11 attacks that framed a new terror threat called 'Islamic terrorism'. It has been found that public and academic discourse can produce many frames in response to one terror event. Frames can be manipulated and some frames can dominate others. It has been explained that public and academic discourse has framed 'Islamic terrorism' by forming certain ideas about terrorism that make it appear to be an Islamic crime, motivated by *jihad* and committed by Muslims. It has been argued that discourses cannot be separated from each other, because some discourses do not offer new knowledge. Thus, if a schema of 'Islamic terrorism' appears in a discourse, it is highly likely to automatically activate the model of 'Islamic terrorism'. Public discourse is able to produce short messages that participate in creating an episodic memory of 'Islamic terrorism'. While academic discourse produces long-term messages that are responsible for creating a semantic memory. Thus, public and academic discourse has produced schemas that are linked to the act, the perpetrators and the motive. Thus, it is concluded that, "Islamic terrorism" is a frame that produces a mental model of terrorism. Thus, any schemas related to the act, perpetrators, or the motive that occur in the discourse are able to activate the model of 'Islamic terrorism', because 'by receiving and processing information, individuals develop memory traces.

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