

News websites: Discourse of a crime

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Abstract

Crime stories have always been prevalent in the media. Especially in the digital age, crime stories are getting more and more attention. In view of this, the current study seeks to find out how Canadian news websites portray crime stories. Using discourse analysis, the study investigates the methods used by three Canadian news websites — Global News, CTV News, and CBC News — to portray Paris attacks events that happened on November 13th, 2015. Based on the analysis, the study evaluates the degree of the news stories neutrality, specifically, their objectivity or bias. As a research method, discourse analysis focuses on "the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style . . . and the manner in which meaning is reproduced" (p. 28). Also, discourse analysis reveals concealed meanings within news texts by placing the text within context (Lupton, 1992; 1994). Focusing the analysis on the language used in the media texts, this study illustrates the extent of objectivity or bias in the media discourse about crimes, such as terrorism. Also, it discusses some of the implications of the chosen media discourse. In this regard, to better understand the media message, the study is based on the risk communication theory. Primarily, the study uses the risk communication concept of reflexive modernity which implies that, in a risk society, due to technological innovations, the delivery of 'bads' is greater than the delivery of 'goods' (Beck, 1992; 2011).

Keywords: crime news, terrorism, Paris attacks, news websites, digital media, risk communication.

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Introduction

The media are the main sites of crime discourse. In an era when the internet becomes the primary source of information, understanding how media use digital technology, like news websites, to portray crime news is paramount. Through the lens of risk communication theory, the current study is designed to scrutinize online Canadian media articles about Paris attacks and discuss how journalists represent these crime stories in the digital realm.

By scrutinizing terrorism-related news stories, the study is intended to help journalists, scholars, and laypersons to better acknowledge methods of crime news portrayal in the digital age. Also, it is meant to provide novel understandings about how these methods inform individuals' perceptions of the risks of terrorism and crime. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to give insight into the degree of the online news neutrality. In this respect, it assesses the extent of bias or objectivity of the news related to Paris attacks, published on the Canadian news websites.

The news websites are valuable sources for investigating crime news portrayal, such as terrorism, as these information sites have become popular choices for individuals to find out what is happening around the world. Therefore, the role of the news websites in covering issues of terrorism threat is clearly significant, offering valuable means for a timely research analysis. Paradoxically, although terrorism is a hot topic in the media worldwide, less research has been conducted so far, particularly in Canada, pertaining to news websites' methods of the portrayal

of terrorism-related stories. Hence, this study fills a gap in the literature by providing new understandings about news websites' approaches with regards to crime news and how terrorism is represented.

The method designed for this study is developed based on Lupton's (1994) discourse analysis theory. The discourse analysis method is purposefully chosen for the current study as this allows a thorough understanding of the news message by placing the text within context (Lupton, 1992; 1994). By analyzing the language used within media message, it is identified how the concept of terrorism is constructed in the online discourse, and how the reproduction of ideology occurs through the text news. Hence, this approach gives useful insights in regards to bias or objectivity of the news websites. However, as a qualitative investigation, discourse analysis generally counts on the researcher's own vision and interpretation of the world. Yet, unlike the quantitative methods, discourse analysis facilitates a critical investigation of the language used in the texts, which, in turn, permits the detection of the concealed meanings within the news message.

Nonetheless, the current study does not take into account for analysis videos, pictures, users' comments, links, or other characteristics of news websites. This means that the study may have missed pertinent information related to the extent of bias or objectivity of the news pertaining to the crime. Also, the media items selected for analysis do not represent the complete list of articles written on the topic of terrorism and crime. This means that the news articles chosen may have missed relevant data in regards to crime news portrayal. However, the purpose of the study is to generate an overall understanding of the methods used by the online media to portray crimes like terrorism and how these approaches inform and shape public's beliefs. To accomplish this goal, the study relies on the quality of the media exemplars selected, the

popularity of the analyzed websites, as well as on the thorough description of the news texts. In addition, to ensure the validity of the study, the media texts are saved both in a hyperlink format and in a Word document attached as an appendix at the end of this study.

Outline of the study

The current study begins with a literature review. This chapter encompasses and discusses journal articles relevant to the topic of crime and terrorism media portrayal. As well, it includes articles pertaining to media's objectivity and bias. Moreover, it presents scholarly views related to the risk communication theory, applicable to the crime news topic. Furthermore, to ensure literature review's validity and reliability, the steps taken in collecting data, eligibility criteria, search strategy, and data management for this chapter are described in detail.

The second chapter defines the methodology developed for the study. It presents the methods of data collection, data inclusion, and exclusion criteria, as well as the study's reliability, validity, and its limitations. Also, it describes the discourse analysis as the method chosen for the research.

The third chapter presents the findings of the analysis organized under several themes, as well as the discussion that arises based on these findings. Above all, using discourse analysis as a research method, the chapter shows how Canadian news websites portray crime stories related to Paris attacks. It also highlights the rhetorical devices used to communicate the themes identified during the analysis and the extent of news websites' objectivity and bias. Lastly, the study ends with a conclusion which summarizes the study and the key findings of the analysis.

Literature review

Background

Crime stories have always been prevalent in the media. The mass media's predilection to deliver an abundance of crime-related stories was signaled more than three decades ago. For instance, Dussuyer (1979) found that in Ontario, Canada, “murder, fraud, breaking and entering, major theft, and robbery appeared most frequently in the news” (p. 4). In the United States, the situation was no different. A study on crime stories covered by the New York Post in the past – in 1951 and 1968 – revealed that, in both years, there was an increase in stories about lethal violence (Humphries, 1981). In the nineties, the number of crime-related news was recorded as being even greater than before (Sacco, 1995; Burns & Crawford, 1999).

With the advent of the internet, crime stories continue to gain in popularity. In this respect, Dowler, Fleming and Muzzatti, (2006) revealed that in Canada, various forms of media, including television, film, video, and Internet services promote crime as entertainment, element “essential to the production of news in Canadian society” (p. 837). Moreover, a British study indicated that Twitter is now a significant information distribution platform for crime news (Lampoltshammer, Kounadi, Sitko and Hawelka, 2014). In this regard, the authors were concerned that, with the rise of social media, not only media accounts, but also users massively contribute to the proliferation of crime news (Lampoltshammer et al., 2014). Furthermore, another study showed that on newspapers’ web editions, in the US, “breaking topics”, such as accidents and crime register the most growth in content (Barnhurst, 2009, p. 5).

Alternatively, in a context where crime stories are becoming increasingly important in the media, terrorism-related news stories are prevalent (Poynting & Perry, 2007; Spencer, 2010), especially in the electronic media. This is concerning if the journalistic methods of news portrayal are not objective, but biased (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Helly, 2004; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Poynting & Perry, 2007; Lane, 2015). The media's choice to depict issues pertaining to terrorism may have dire consequences for average people (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Poynting & Perry, 2007; Lane, 2015). For instance, numerous scholars found that biased methods of framing crime news, in general, lead to interracial hate and discrimination (Helly, 2004; Poynting & Perry, 2007), fear of crime (Warr, 2000; Wu, 2000; Lane, 2015), victimization and moral panic (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Lane, 2015).

From this perspective, the literature review is built on key studies dealing with: (a) methods of crime coverage in the media; (b) audience perceptions in regards to crime news; (c) the role played by digital technology in the online crime news coverage and the implications of its use for both media and audience.

Eligibility criteria and search strategy for literature review

Both search and eligibility criteria were designed as an inverted funnel – starting with an overview of media and crime news issues and then narrowed down to a more specific search and topics focused on online crime news, terrorism, and methods of covering crime stories in the digital sphere.

Most importantly, to establish a comprehensive list of eligible studies, first, I conducted a preliminary research. Based on the results, I built the selection criteria. For instance, due to the limited relevant results related to news websites and online crime news focused on terrorism, I considered an extension of the search and eligibility criteria. Therefore, works eligible for

inclusion were those focused on mass media and crime news, in general, as well as studies focused on journalistic methods of crime news coverage, audience's reaction and perception of the news. Second, studies on digital journalism, tangent with my research question (methods of news coverage on news websites, public perception of the news, issues of bias and objectivity, etc.) were also included in the list of eligible studies. Third, works dealing with media and technology in general, and digital technology and news websites, in particular, were considered eligible. Lastly, studies examining the role of technology in the news presentation and public's reaction and perception of digital news were assessed as being feasible for the review.

The search was mostly performed on the University of Alberta libraries, Google Scholar, and databases, such as Academic Search Complete, Canadian Reference Centre, Communication, Mass Media Complete, and Library and Information Science Source. Relevant keywords (including phrases) were used in correlation with Boolean search strategies. For instance, I used the keyword (phrase) "*crime, media, and digital technology*" (in quotes) to find studies dealing with crime news portrayed on newspapers' web editions. As well, synonyms of these keywords were also applied to return relevant results. Because the search was conducted only in English (using keywords in English), the review comprises only studies available in this language. However, international studies available in English were also included in the review. Also, no restrictions have been set on the methodology used, theoretical frameworks applied, and the years when the studies have been conducted. Still, the quality of the studies has been established based on the author's reputation, peer-reviewing, the number of citations and downloads within Google Scholar and databases, as well as the studies' limitations, neutrality, and accuracy of their results. Additionally, the review counts on literature coming from various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, communications and journalistic studies.

Alternatively, studies that did not meet the above-mentioned eligibility criteria have been excluded. For example, studies focused on telecommunication, engineering, programming as well as papers centered on coding, designing websites, and marketing with the purpose to attract users and increase ROI for media businesses were not included in the review.

Data management

RefWorks was the main tool used to manage and extract data from libraries and databases. A total of sixty-seven (67) studies were identified as being relevant for the purpose of the review. The studies were then organized in an annotated bibliography; the annotations included descriptive notes about the abstract, research findings, conclusions, and limitations, as well as evaluative notes, summarizing how the studies are relevant to the literature review.

Synthesis of research findings and themes

Based on the annotated bibliography, five themes have emerged from the literature, including an explanation of the risk theoretical framework. To have a better interpretation of the literature, theoretical perspective of risk communication is explained first. Second, the review discusses how the internet has changed the news. Third, the review discusses issues related to objectivity and bias from the risk communication perspective. For the purpose of this study and based on the literature findings — routine, news values, authorities, and technological innovations, such as news websites — are highlighted as being the main elements influencing media crime news portrayal. Fourth, the paper looks at media communication strategies about terrorism. Lastly, the exploration is narrowed down to media discourse and discusses some of the issues involving the audience perceptions pertaining crime news, such as terrorism. The examination of the literature is followed by a summary of the literature review, which points out towards the key findings in the literature.

Theoretical framework: Crime as a risk

Risk communication theory took shape in the eighties when scholars began to be aware of the contours of a *risk society* (Beck, 1987; Giddens, 1990). The risk society represents "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself" (Beck 1992, p. 21). Thus, due to technological advancements, in today's society, people absorb a large amount of risk-related information (Perko, 2012). Subsequently, the current study is grounded in the literature of risk communication. Primarily, the concepts of risk communication are critical for this study for three reasons.

First, risk means danger (Giddens, 1990; Lupton, 1994; Beck, 1996). According to scholars, the risk — or danger — is on the rise in "the new electronic global world in which we live on the edge of high technological innovation and scientific development, but where no one fully understands the possible global risks and dangers we face" (Beck, 1996, p. 5).

Second, the risk communication perspective offers new understandings in regards to media technological innovations, like news websites, as these information sites can be accessed globally: "Risk societies involve the distribution of bads that flow within and across various territories and are not confined within the borders of a single society" (Beck, 2011, p. 2). This argument facilitates some understandings in terms of how Paris attacks are seen from a Canadian media perspective.

Third, several scholarly findings lead to the risk communication concept of reflexive modernity. *Reflexive modernity* implies that, in a risk society, due to technological innovations, the delivery of 'bads' is greater than the delivery of 'goods' (Beck, 1992; 2011).

For instance, there are numerous studies on news portrayal indicating that the media choose to emphasize the spectacular and dramatic to attract human interest at the expense of the quality and objectivity of information (Sampson, 1996; Franklin, 1997; MacLachlan & Golding, 2000).

Indeed, similar to the idea of reflexive modernity, the studies revealed that media do not diminish “the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself” (Beck 1992, p. 21), but tend to emphasize the ‘bad’ of a situation or a risk, such as issues related to terrorism. Consequently, scholars found that, due to the media’s emphasis on crime events, the audience manifests an increased sense of awareness about the crime risk that does not necessarily coincide with reality (Chermak, 1995; Wu, 2000; Greer & Jewkes, 2005). Hence, an audience constantly exposed to media crime stories, expresses clear signs of fear of crime (Warr, 2000; Wu, 2000; Lane, 2015), victimization, moral panic (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Lane, 2015). In addition, other studies indicated that the journalists’ chosen methods to portray news crimes, particularly terrorism-related news, often generate interracial hate and discrimination among people (Helly, 2004; Poynting & Perry, 2007). Therefore, because risks are in a reflexive relationship with technological advancements, and because digital media may contribute to the risk proliferation among nations, risk communication lens serves best for the purpose of this study.

Dual world: The internet has changed the news

Technological developments in the digital world have dramatically changed the production, distribution and consumption of news content. In the literature, it is commonly mentioned that the internet has redefined the news (Barnhurst, 2009; Chyi & George, 2001; Fass & Main, 2014;

Frijters & Velamuri, 2010). In this regard, media scholars are concerned by the fact that the rapid technological advancements lead to a higher “discrepancy between the real world and the news world” (Wu, 2000, p. 110). Therefore, it is not a surprise that the literature suggests that technological innovations, like news websites, generate risks for the online reader, such as reality distortion in regards to a crime (Barnhurst, 2009; Fass & Main, 2014).

It is remarkable that referring to a modern, risk society, Beck (1987) envisioned that due to technological advancements, “a doubling of the world takes place” (p. 154). By the same token, scholars signaled that the media currently offer dual-products, online versus print, for dual markets, local versus global, and online versus offline. (Chyi & George, 2001; Gasher & Gabriele, 2004). Furthermore, scholars noticed that the internet constantly changes the way the news are portrayed (Harper, 1998). For example, media researchers revealed that, due to real-time updates, it is not uncommon for a single online news story to be presented in several different versions in the course of a particular day (Fass & Main, 2014).

As expected, different versions of the same media story point towards the risk of reality distortion. Evidently, the news objectivity is at risk. For example, Fass & Main (2014) argued that providing different versions of one story influences information checking and journalistic in-depth investigation. Subsequently, crime news prevails in the digital age: “web editions favor breaking news and international, crime, and accident stories” (Barnhurst, 2009, p. 5).

Hence, because the relationship between media and the audience is reflexive, as the risk theory suggests, it is not a surprise that the most-viewed stories online relate to crime and conflict (Schaudt & Carpenter, 2009). Indeed, in the digital era, the stories that benefit most from growth in dynamic content and distribution among users through link sharing, are crime news. For instance, scholars revealed that breaking news, such as accidents and crime, recorded the

most growth in dynamic content, even though online hard news topics (business, international news, politics, etc.) have dynamic features (web news are generated in real-time) (Barnhurst, 2009).

Other research findings, too, indicated that crime stories constantly grow and are distributed/shared at a faster rate than others (Ketterer, 2001; Barabasi, 2004; Tremayne, 2004). For example, Tremayne et al. (2007), conducting a content analysis of the websites of twenty-four American newspapers, found that news topics, such as crime and accidents, “showed statistically significant growth from year to year” (p. 835).

As the literature suggests and the risk theory contends, by paying excessive attention to crime news, digital media tend to emphasize the ‘bad’ of a situation. Without a doubt, media telling two versions of one story lead to certain risks, such as subjectivity, or even lack of truth-telling, which may disrupt the media accuracy and online news credibility (Fass & Main, 2014). From a risk theory perspective, this is certainly a risk as objectivity is the basic norm of journalism (Middleton 1993; Sanders 2003; Enli, 2007).

Crime news: Objectivity

In the literature, there is a common concern that the media, in numerous occasions, fail to be objective (Hall et al., 1978; Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Chermak, 1995; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Dowler et al., 2006; Greer, 2007). Nonetheless, media scholars agree that news reporting is not at the journalists’ discretion, but rather factors such as institutions, routines, and conventions influence how the news are portrayed (Hall et al., 1978; Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Katz, 1987; Lupton, 1994; Chermak, 1995; Fox, 1997; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Dowler et al., 2006; Greer, 2007; Carpenter, 2008).

Still, objectivity is one of the most important norms of journalism (Middleton, 1993; Sanders 2003; Enli, 2007). Journalists rely on objectivity to frame stories, to decide how the news should be presented (Enli, 2007). However, as scholars and journalists have encountered difficulties in defining the ideal objectivity, they tend to refer more to balance and accuracy when bringing up issues related to objectivity: allotting equal attention to opposing viewpoints, getting the facts right, neutrality, fairness and dispassionate reporting (Reese 1990; Middleton, 1993; Sanders, 2003; Enli, 2007). Yet, unlike scholars who use theories for guidance, “in the absence of well-defined theoretical guideposts, journalists rely more heavily than scientists on routines as a basis and justification for description of reality” (Reese, 1990, p. 393).

Hence, in many instances, the routine is one of the reasons why media fail to be objective (Katz, 1987; Lupton, 1994; Carpenter, 2008). Besides routine, there are also a few issues mentioned in the literature as influencing objectivity. These are: news values (Hall et al., 1978; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Greer, 2007), authorities (Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Chermak, 1995; Dowler et al., 2006), and technological innovations, such as news websites (Barnhurst, 2009; Frijters, & Velamuri, 2010; Murdock, 2010).

News values. One of the main aspects that influence news production and objectivity of the news is the news value. *News values* are defined as being “those criteria that influence, often implicitly, the selection, production and prioritization of events as news” (Greer, 2007, p. 26). In this respect, scholars have argued that media bias begins when journalists favour certain stories to the detriment of others, based on the news value criterion (Hall et al, 1978; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Greer, 2007; Nelson & Nelson, 2013).

With regards to crime, researchers found that these news stories are preferred due to “the moral dilemmas it highlights [as] it indicates to people how they should live their lives”

(Jeweke, 2009, p. 23). Hence, crime stories, in particular, are newsworthy, as they entice human interest through violence (Hall et al., 1978; Humphries, 1981; Sacco, 1995; Burns & Crawford, 1999). In this regard, examining how fear is influenced by the media stories, Hall et al. (1978) stated that: “One special point about crime as news is the special status of violence as a news value. Any crime can be lifted into news visibility if violence becomes associated with it (p. 70).

Acknowledging this, it is no surprise that fear and terror enhance the newsworthiness of a terrorism-related story. Indeed, the media objectivity, balance, and accuracy can be questioned if media tends to emphasize the spectacular and dramatic (Sampson, 1996; Franklin, 1997; MacLachlan & Golding, 2000).

Authorities. Another issue which affects media objectivity is the relationship of power and control between authorities and media, and how they decide to represent different events to the public (Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Chermak, 1995; Dowler et al., 2006). For instance, Chermak (1995), found that “police attempt[s] to control media images” (Chermak, 1995, p. 23). In particular, the author noticed that, in Canada, police imaging control distorts the presentation of crime in the news media and that is why “the news media are part of the policing apparatus of society” (Chermak, 1995, p. 24). The author went on and said that “officials expend time and resources to make public and political opinion coincide with the department’s preferred response” (Chermak, 1995, p. 22).

Likewise, Sheley and Ashkins (1981) reached the same conclusion, revealing that, “ironically, the major source of crime news is police ... which signals reporters only about certain sensational offenses, crimes in which police have an interest or types of crime about which reporters have expressed an interest” (p. 493). Moreover, Dowler et al. (2006), looking at media construction of crime, indicated that, in Canada, “[crime-related events] are presented as

‘realistic’ portrayals of crime and justice which further blurs the lines between fiction and reality (pp. 837-838).

Without a doubt, these findings suggest that media objectivity is at risk as they portray “a shallow and incomplete picture because they prefer to pay more attention to dramatic and sensational stories and neglect the objective” (Deakin, 1987, p. 177). Consequently, from a risk communication perspective, by failing to be objective and counting mostly on news values such as violence, both media and police proliferate the risk of crime in the society (Chermak, 1995; Dowler et al., 2006; Sheley and Ashkins, 1981). As well, by emphasizing the ‘bad’ of a situation (Beck, 1992; 2011), as risk communication theory contends, there is the risk that media news portrayal of crime may not necessarily coincide with reality (Chermak, 1995; Wu, 2000; Greer & Jewkes, 2005).

Routine. Another issue scholars have agreed upon is that the objectivity of the news is influenced by *routine* (Carpenter, 2008; Katz, 1987; Lupton, 1994). In this regard, concerned with the media’s over-coverage of crime, researchers reasoned that one explanation for the crime news popularity might be both journalists’ and the public’s routine to look for the same subject all the time (Carpenter, 2008; Katz, 1987). Indeed, it is highly possible that media’s predilection to provide certain stories is determined by the audience’s preference for the sensational. Certainly, the other way around is also valid: The audience is used to search for dramatic stories, such as crimes, because media tend to offer them in abundance.

It is thought-provoking that risk communication literature suggests that the rapport industry- society is ‘reflexive’ (Beck, 1992) in a modern society. Definitely, media, as an industry acts on society and vice versa. This is a never-ending cycle that produces risks. Like the risk scholars, Carpenter (2008) — analyzing how routines influence online citizen journalism and

online newspaper content — has found that reporters’ “reliance on routines affects the diversity of content publicly available (p. 531). As well, Katz (1987), explaining the public interest in crime news, argued that crime news is mostly related to the ‘routine’ of a modern society (p. 58), and this reflects the “disturbing emotional experience on the self, on the mass level, day after day, throughout modern society” (Katz, 1987, p. 58).

Of course, the journalists’ routine can also be seen from a language perspective. As Lupton (1994) stated, the choice of language in the news is significant to determine the importance of an event as the selective use of language can “trivialize an event or render it important . . . or reduce it to a routine” (p. 22). This statement is significant as the language undeniably shows to what extent a news is objective or biased.

Technological innovations. Lastly, as already mentioned, in the literature, it is a common concern that crime news is on the rise with the advent of the internet (Dowler et al, 2006; Barnhurst, 2009; Murdock, 2010; Lampoltshammer et al., 2014). Also, scholars argued that objectivity is at risk in the digital era as crime stories are advertised at the expense of other news (Ketterer, 2001; Dowler et al. 2006; Tremayne, 2007; Barnhurst, 2009; Jewkes, 2009; Lampoltshammer, 2014).

Currently, digital technology offers endless possibilities to make a crime story significant and, at the same time, “media are behaving in a highly sensationalist manner” (Sacco, 1995, p. 57). Indeed, the internet’s dynamic content, through links, videos, graphics, text and sound, produce powerful effects in the users’ minds. In this regard, Ketterer (2001) found that web links elicit readers’ curiosities and determine them to spend more time reading crime news. Moreover, looking at the extent to which films, DVDs, websites and computer games influence the public’s behaviour, Jewkes (2009) reached the conclusion that “it is precisely the Internet’s domestication

and its advanced integration into everyday life in the ‘real’ world that has precipitated the growth of crimes” (p. 54).

This issue also concerned the risk scholar, Graham Murdock, who argued that “digitalized media have contradictory potentials. On one hand, they can enhance public engagement in information On the other hand, [digitalized media] generate a major new source of . . . risks” (Murdock, 2010, p. 158). Without a doubt, if digital media, in general, and terrorism-related news, in particular, intensify public engagement, then there is the risk that interracial hate and discrimination (Poynting & Perry, 2007; Helly, 2004) be also intensified. For instance, Poynting & Perry (2007), exploring the role of media in the anti-Muslim racism and violence in Australia and Canada after September 11, argued that:

60% of the people of Muslim heritage . . . reported that 'they experienced bias or discrimination since the 9/11 terrorist attacks', with fully a third saying their lives had worsened since 9/11, that they felt Canadians disliked them and that they were concerned about their own and their families' safety. (p. 156)

Hence, from a risk theory perspective, it can be argued that findings such as these may reveal some of “the possible global risks and dangers we face” Beck (1996, p. 5) in an electronic global world: bias, discrimination, insecurity, and depreciation of the quality of life. In consequence, Ulrich Beck was right – due to technological advancements, “the proliferation of risks has gone out of control” (Beck, 1992, p. 22).

Media, terrorism, and communication tactics

Besides the fact that news values, routines, authorities, and technological innovations influence media news portrayal, the literature suggests that construction of terrorism-related media stories serves best to the fundamentalists' purposes (Schmid, 1989; Hoffman 2006; Nacos, 2006; Spencer, 2010). Primarily, scholars contended that media the actively contribute to the development of terrorist attacks (Schmid, 1989; Hoffman, 2006; Nacos, 2006; Spencer, 2010). Additionally, researchers argued that media play a significant role in creating "patterns of discrimination and violence" (Moore, 1995) against 'the Other' (Poynting & Perry, 2007; Spencer, 2010).

More specifically, in the literature, the media are sometimes considered "the terrorist's 'accomplices'" (Schmid, 1989, p. 540) or the terrorists' best friend (Hoffman 2006, p. 183). On one hand, according to Nacos (2006), al-Qaeda training manuals instruct its followers to target "sentimental landmarks" as these acts would "generate intense publicity" (p. 213). On the other hand, Hoffman (2006) mentioned that "only by spreading the terror and outrage to a much larger audience can the terrorists gain the maximum potential leverage that they need to effect fundamental political change (p. 174). On the same topic, examining how terrorism is depicted in the media, Spencer (2010) concluded that "the modern news media, is the principal conduit of information about such acts, thus play a vital part in the terrorists' calculus" (p. 5).

Unfortunately, innocent people, in particular, Arabs or Middle Easterners, are directly affected by the media choice to depict terrorism-related issues. For instance, in their effort to deconstruct media communication strategies, scholars revealed that media tend to use metaphors to establish "boundaries between self and other" (Spencer, 2010). In this regard, Stockton (1994) identified several image themes that constantly depict physiological and psychological traits of

Arabs in the media: fanaticism, vengeance, savage leaders, hatred, and terrorism. These images help to differentiate white from not white (Spencer, 2010; Poynting & Perry, 2007). In this context, 'white' is a metaphor for "Western or non-Third-World looking" (Poynting & Perry, 2007). Similarly, Kelsey (2015) acknowledged that,

The military threat posed by 'Muslim' countries is an argumentative strategy which the broadsheet press frequently uses in order to convey a sense of 'Their' negativity ... 'They are Muslim' and 'They have weapons' – and on the basis of these premises, concluding 'They are dangerous and threatening to us' (p. 57).

Likewise, examining how the Arab Americans are depicted in the American media, Semaan (2014) discovered that Arabs are usually described in a pejorative way. The author focused his analysis on media caricatures as he noticed that these tend to represent different creatures when referring to Middle Easterners or Arabs, such as "rodents, cockroaches and other detestable animals" (Semaan, 2014, p. 18). That is why, Spencer (2010) argued that labels, such as terrorist, do not represent reality, but rather our interpretation of reality. The author concluded that "the terrorist is a social construction rather than natural fact (Spencer, 2010, p. 5). This statement is thought-provoking when considering Kelsey's (2015) argument that the media discourse is characterized by the tendency "to present the world's one billion Muslims as potential terrorists" (p. 58). As expected, the way media choose to portray stories, "fuel sentiments of suspicion and mistrust by shaping public perceptions in less than favourable ways" (Spencer, 2010, p. 5).

Media discourse: Perceptions

In the literature, however, there are long-standing debates whether media violence, such as terrorism, shapes the public perceptions and attitudes. Specifically, scholars do not agree whether media content and exposure to media violence have an impact on users' behaviour, perceptions, or emotions.

On one hand, research findings suggest that the methods used by the media to cover crime-related news stories, such as terrorist acts, may lead to serious consequences for the public (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Greer, C., & Jewkes, 2005; Krahe, 2014; Lane, 2015; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Warr, 2000; Wu, 2000). These are negative effects, such as distorted perceptions of reality (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004), leading to negative emotions and behaviour (McQuail & Windahl, 1993; Morgan & Signorelli, 1990; Warr, 2000; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Krahe, 2014; Lane, 2015).

In particular, in regards to the methods used to depict terrorism-related news stories, studies showed that individuals' lives are affected by interracial hate and discrimination (Helly, 2004; Poynting & Perry, 2007). For example, Poynting and Perry (2007) contended that it is obvious that a discourse "loaded with disparaging associations, suggesting inferiority, irresponsibility, immorality, and non-humanness provide both motive and rationale for injurious verbal and physical assaults on minority groups" (p. 157). Indeed, as Poynting and Perry (2007) have revealed, media discourse has the potential effects "to stigmatise or to demonise the Other" (p. 158); thus, to massively contribute to a culture that "bestows 'permission to hate'" (Poynting & Perry, 2007, p. 159).

In contrast, some critics consider that, currently, it is not enough evidence demonstrating that media crime news portrayal may influence peoples' perceptions, emotions, and attitudes,

and further research is still needed to reach a clear conclusion (Goodall & Hayes, 2009; Alia-Klein et al., 2014; Ferguson, 2015; Short, 2015; Slater). For instance, examining in a laboratory setting whether exposure to media violence has an impact on young users' behaviour, Krahe (2014) found that violent media noticeably influenced users' cognitions, emotions, and behaviour. However, Ferguson (2015) questioned Krahe's (2014) findings, asserting that laboratory-based studies are inconsistent because these cannot reproduce real-life media violence.

Still, Ferguson (2015) did not consider other studies, involving different methods of research, which undoubtedly identified media violence as having negative effects on the public. For example, in a qualitative study assessing the risk of fear of crime, Warr (2000) discovered "evidence [that] public perceptions on crime and media distortion of crime news is strikingly corroborative" (p. 468). Similarly, Jewkes (2009), verifying information from multiple studies, found out that "media and violent crime are naturally linked" (p. 3). Additionally, Weitzer and Kubrin (2004), conducting a telephone survey, concluded that "the greater one's exposure to the media, the more likely it is that one's perceptions of the real-world will match what is most frequently depicted in the media" (p. 3).

Considering these findings, it is hard to believe that the public's perceptions are not affected by the way media report crimes, such as terrorist attacks. Especially in the digital era, when people devote a considerable amount of time to the media and sees this as a credible, central source of information (Warr, 2000). Indeed, as Barabasi (2004) argued, we live in a world where "everything is connected to everything else . . . from the human brain to the Internet to the economy to our group of friends" (p. 1). So, believing that the media do not influence people's perceptions when they are obviously linked, may be less substantial.

Conclusion of the literature review

The current literature review is grounded in risk communication theory. It counts on various forms of research, coming from different fields, like psychology, sociology, media, and risk communication. It signals issues of lack of truth-telling, bias, as well as, hunt for sensationalism. Also, the review indicates that crime news stories have increased significantly in the digital age. Moreover, it shows that media choices to portray crime events depend on subjective matters, such as routine and news values. As well, it indicates that authorities and technological innovations, such as news websites play a significant role in the news production and news presentation. Furthermore, it identifies that media discourse and communication strategies about terrorism are considered in the literature as being part of the terrorists' calculus. Additionally, it shows that media depicting issues of terrorism are constructed in a way that negatively affects people of Arab origin, who are frequently associated with terrorists. Lastly, the review signals that the audience perceptions may be highly impacted by the methods of crime news portrayal, including terrorist acts, especially in the digital era.

Research question

It is noticeable from the literature reviewed above, that media portrayal of violence, crime, and terrorism is a complex issue that requires being examined from multiple perspectives to be well understood. In addition, it is also evident that due to the dynamic nature of digital technologies, like news websites, the effort to comprehend its implications becomes even more challenging. Perhaps this is why —despite news websites are valuable sources for investigating crime news portrayal — currently, there is little research indicating how news websites portray terrorism-related stories in Canada. Nonetheless, the aim of this study is to answer the following question:

To what extent are Canadian news websites biased or objective in covering crime stories related to November 2015 Paris attacks?

Methodology

Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to develop and implement a methodology, giving insight about the crime portrayal on Canadian news websites about Paris terrorist attacks. The method was developed based on Lupton's (1994) discourse analysis theory, which is mainly focused on "the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style . . . and the manner in which meaning is reproduced" (p. 28). The study also contains a thorough description of the methodology developed and applied to the Canadian websites, with the focus on the news referring to terrorist attacks that happened on November 13th, 2015 in the French capital city. The study also includes details about data collection, sampling methods, as well as its reliability and validity.

Introduction: Problem identification

Numerous people count on news websites to get information and form opinions about what is going on around them. Their preference for digital media is understandable: These offer rich, dynamic content, and frequent updates on real-time stories. However, this may be a double-edged sword: on one hand, people hugely benefit from the ease and open access to events; on the other hand, the internet is changing news stories (Harper, 1998; Chyi & George, 2001; Gasher & Gabriele, 2004). More specifically, multiple media observers have noticed that mass media currently take advantage of digital tools, such as news websites, to emphasize the spectacular and dramatic to the detriment of the quality and objectivity of information (Sampson, 1996; Franklin, 1997; MacLachlan & Golding, 2000; Collin & Hughes, 2011). Additionally, researchers remarked that crime news articles occupy a significant place on digital platforms (Sparks, Young

& Darnell, 2006; Tremayne et al., 2007; Schaudt & Carpenter, 2009; Lampoltshammer et al., 2014; Barnhust, 2009; Collin & David Hughes, 2011).

The over coverage of crime news online is concerning, especially in a context where media methods of framing news stories depend on subjective matters, such as institutions, routines, and conventions (Hall et al., 1978; Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Katz, 1987; Lupton, 1994; Fox, 1997; Chermak, 1995; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Dowler et al., 2006; Greer, 2007; Carpenter, 2008). Subsequently, online media's choice to depict issues pertaining to terrorism may have dire consequences for average people. On one hand, people of Arab origin are unfairly associated with terrorists (Spencer, 2010; Poynting & Perry, 2007). On the other hand, media shape public perceptions "in less than favourable ways" (Spencer, 2010, p. 5), leading to interracial hate and discrimination (Poynting & Perry, 2007; Helly, 2004), fear of crime (Lane, 2015; Warr, 2000; Wu, 2000), victimization and moral panic (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Lane, 2015; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). Hence, it is not a surprise that media discourse and communication strategies about terrorism nowadays are "a vital part in the terrorists' calculus" (Spencer, 2010, p. 5).

Therefore, in a context where the internet becomes the major source of information — a platform where crime stories, including terrorist acts, are becoming increasingly popular — understanding how online news depict issues of terrorism in Canada is paramount.

In view of this, the current study has been designed to scrutinize online Canadian media articles about Paris attacks and discuss how journalists represent these crime stories in the digital realm. Nevertheless, the aim of the study was not to establish the 'true' nature of terrorism and to determine what was 'right' or 'wrong' in constructing electronic news articles about terrorism. Rather, the study sought to understand the websites' interpretation of reality in regards to Paris

attacks from a linguistic perspective. The language itself was key in this pursuit as it is an active part in creating meaning and significance to the crime event.

Data collection

To answer the research question, I purposefully searched for news dealing with Paris attacks published on Canadian news websites. I decided to examine how the terrorist event from Paris was covered on Canadian websites because, undeniably, it shocked the entire world. Also, from a risk communication perspective, terrorism represents a global risk. As Ulrich Beck contended, by getting global reach, international events, such as war and terrorism, turned into threats not only for a nation state but extended to the whole of humanity (Beck, 2006). Other scholars, too, agreed with the Beck's idea and recognized that, especially after 9/11, the news was no longer foreign (Berglez, 2008; Nurmis, 2014). Also, digital news media facilitate global access to information. However, currently, there is a limited data available, including studies on terrorism portrayal, that show how the online news media, in general, and Canadian news websites, in particular, portray crime events, such as Paris attacks. Therefore, selecting articles published on three Canadian websites, the study generated insights about Canadian journalistic methods of crime portrayal. As well, it provided details about the extent of bias or objectivity within the news.

Accordingly, the present study focused on primary data taken from three Canadian media Internet editions, Global News (www.globalnews.ca), CTV News (www.ctvnews.ca), and CBC (www.cbcnews.ca). The websites were selected for analysis mainly due to their popularity among Canadians. For instance, according to Global News website, as part of Shaw media, twenty-five million Canadians a week count on them for news, information, and entertainment

(Shaw Media, 2014). Also, CTV boasts that it reaches more than twenty-three (23) million viewers each week and, as part of Bell Media, has more than two hundred (200) websites and over fifty (50) apps (Bell Media, 2016). As well, the CBC website was chosen because, as a national public broadcaster, “CBC/Radio-Canada holds itself to the highest standards of journalistic practices” (CBC/Radio-Canada, 2016).

Moreover, the news websites were selected for analysis as all three digital platforms showcase numerous news items dealing with crime stories, including Paris attacks. For instance, a search for "Paris attacks" (keywords in quotes) on the Global News website performed on January 26, 2016, yielded one hundred sixty-nine (169) news articles referring to or mentioning the terrorist event. Also, the same keyword searched on the CTV News website returned, on the same date, one hundred fifty-eight (158) results. Similarly, the CBC website yielded one hundred seventy-five (175) results.

Keywords and inclusion criteria

Next, the articles had to be screened since they were not all relevant. To refine the research, I used Boolean search methods in combination with these keywords: France, Paris, terror*, jihadis, ISIS, Islamic State, extremists, victims, etc. I purposefully selected nouns as keywords and avoided language descriptors, such as adjectives. By choosing nouns as keywords, I purposefully targeted news items that were variously framed and avoided receiving results of stories written exclusively in a dramatic, sensational style, such as features or opinions. Therefore, news briefs, news articles, as well as features and opinions, etc. were all considered relevant for analysis. News framing was essential for analysis because it provided insights about the degree of bias or

objectivity of the news. As Enli (2007) argued, the way the article is framed reveals the journalists' perceptions of newsworthiness, and how news should be presented (p. 49).

Consequently, based on this research method, I selected for analysis five (5) relevant articles from the Global News website, five (5) from the CTV News website, and five (5) from the CBC website. Because it was possible that due to the dynamics of digital platforms the articles to be deleted, I saved the articles both in a hyperlink format and in a Word document format.

Exclusion criteria

On the contrary, articles that did not mention the selected keywords in the headline (but only in the body of the text) were not considered for analysis as they proved to be less relevant for the analysis. For example, news items mentioning Paris attacks within the text, but not in the headline, mostly referred to other terrorist actions that took place in Jakarta, Istanbul, Beirut, etc.. Additionally, pictures, videos or other forms of digital media were not considered relevant for the study as the primary focus of the analysis was the structure, style and persuasive features of the text.

Research method: Discourse analysis

The research method chosen for the current study was discourse analysis. The method developed was grounded in Lupton's discourse analysis theory. According to Lupton (1994), discourse analysis is mainly focused on "the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style . . . and the manner in which meaning is reproduced" (p. 28). The study also counts on content analysis to determine some of the most used words within the crime news texts. However, for the purpose

of this study, the primary research method remained discourse analysis. Unlike content analysis that shows quantitatively how many times a word was mentioned within a news, discourse analysis reveals concealed meanings within news texts by placing the text within context (Lupton, 1992; 1994). “Textual dimensions are those which account for the *structures* of discourses, while contextual dimensions relate these structural descriptions to various properties of the *social, political or cultural context* in which they take place” (Lupton, 1992, p. 145). Subsequently, to understand to what extent Canadian news websites are objective or biased, discourse analysis method implied looking at the news text from two perspectives – the linguistic structure and the ideological or cultural context in which the meaning was reproduced.

Thus, the language structure component allowed identifying how the concept of terrorism was constructed in the online discourse, while the cultural context permitted recognizing how the “reproduction of ideology through the text” (Lupton, 1992, p. 145) occurred within the news. Using these perspectives, the analysis of the media news allowed a thorough understanding of the way media discourses can shape people’s beliefs in regards to the risk of terrorism. As well, it offered insights about the way media, authorities, and terrorists can determine how individuals are regarded and judged.

To assess the degree of the journalistic objectivity and bias from a linguistic standpoint, the analysis relied on identifying styles, choice of words, structures, and other journalistic methods used online by Canadian journalists to portray terrorism-related stories. Although bias and objectivity are abstract terms, I counted on previous scholarly findings, which delimit objectivity from bias through elements of accuracy, neutrality, fairness and dispassionate reporting (Reese 1990; Middleton 1993; Sanders 2003; Enli, 2007).

First, I considered that the news framing, the choice of words, and the figures of speech must indicate the informative purpose of the news and not the spectacular and the dramatic (Schaut & Carpenter, 2009; Dowler et al., 2006; Lupton, 1994; Collin & Hughes, 2011). Therefore, to be objective, the language used within news texts must be typically neutral. That means that use of descriptors was reduced and carefully selected. Second, the news message was centered on concrete aspects, such as strategies to counteract terrorism, methods of risk assessment, risk mitigation, etc. Subsequently, to be objective, the news was not focused on religion, ethnicity or other cultural or racial aspects that may lead to the association of innocent people with terrorists (Spencer, 2010; Poynting & Perry, 2007).

The former was, therefore, concerned with the textual dimension, the structure, the style, and the use of rhetorical devices, like metaphors. The latter indicated the context, the “reproduction of ideology through the text” (Lupton, 1992, p. 145), and the relation of the discourse structure to the social and cultural aspects.

Textual and contextual analysis. Hence, the degree of objectivity and bias was established based on textual representations and contextual implications of the news. The textual and contextual dimensions of the media discourse in regards to Paris terrorist attacks were examined in three stages.

First, I examined the topic of the story (e.g. dealing with threats, victims, countermeasures, etc.), and identified the sources of the data used within the news (official versus unofficial). Second, as discourse analysis facilitates data interpretation counting on a "patterned system of texts, messages, talk, dialogue or conversation" (Lupton, 1992, p. 145), I

looked for patterns at the text structure level. A special attention was given to the context, and how/whether the ‘reproduction of ideology’ occurred through social or cultural representations.

Objectivity	The actual journalistic choice to portray the news
1. The news informs, uses neutral language with fewer descriptors.	1. Neutral language versus loaded with descriptors
2. Official data, official sources	2. Official versus unofficial
3. The message is neutral, focused on concrete aspects, such as strategies to counteract terrorism. The main purpose of the news is to inform, and not to dramatize.	3. Positive aspects (e.g. effective counteraction) versus negative aspects (e.g. suggest that religion/ culture are to blame).

Hence, the main elements considered for analysis were: textual – the type of language used (neutral versus loaded with descriptors); and, contextual – the ‘reproduction of ideology through the text’. Third, based on the results of the analysis, the degree of objectivity or bias of the news websites was categorized as follows: biased, moderately biased, moderately objective, and objective.

Strategy: Inductive analysis

The strategy chosen for the study was inductive analysis. As Lupton (1994) argued, a key aspect of discourse analysis is that "the emphasis is upon looking for patterns in the texts for both

consistency and differences in the content" (Lupton, 1994, pp. 31-32). Nevertheless, to investigate the extent of the news websites' objectivity or bias, an inductive analysis was more appropriate as it diminished the researcher's risk of subjectivity within the investigation. In consequence, using an inductive approach, I established the themes based on the patterns found within texts and not based on my predetermined ideas about the researched topic.

Reliability and validity

As a qualitative analysis, the current study had the main purpose of generating understanding about the Canadian online crime news portrayal with the focus on Paris attacks. Yet, my interpretation was based on my own vision of the world, therefore, I do not assert that my insights are universal truths.

However, the study's reliability and validity count mostly on the quality and popularity of the exemplars. As well, it counts on the thorough description of the texts, and on the researcher's critical examination of the journalistic style and the persuasive methods used within online news texts. The study is also valid, reliable, and replicable for future studies as the articles were meticulously saved both in a link and a Word document format, ensuring the consistency and transparency of data interpretation. Also, to support data interpretation, a thorough description of data sampling and data management was provided.

Limitation

The current research was focused on electronic news texts and did not take into consideration other news websites' characteristics, such as videos, pictures, users' comments, links, etc. This means that the analysis may have missed relevant information pertaining to bias and objectivity

of the news. Also, the sample chosen does not represent the complete list of articles written on the Paris attacks or the terrorism topic published on Canadian News websites. This means that the study did not capture all the relevant data in regards to news portrayal. Also, the study looks only at the Paris attacks to understand the extent of bias and objectivity within crime news.

Although one type of crime can give a general understanding with regards to crime news portrayal, other types of crimes may have different representations in the online media. Hence, to have a clearer picture about how crime news is portrayed online and whether news websites are biased or objective in covering crime news online, such as Paris attacks, further research on the topic is required.

Conclusion of the methodology

The purpose of the study was to develop a methodology which gave insight about the crime portrayal on Canadian news websites. In particular, the methodology was designed to investigate the Canadian news websites' the degree of bias and objectivity in covering crime stories regarding Paris attacks. In this regard, details about data collection, sampling methods, and reliability and validity of the study were presented. For the purpose of this investigation, the objectivity of the news was assessed from a linguistic standpoint. The method developed was grounded in Lupton's (1992; 1994) discourse analysis theory, which mainly focuses on the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style, and the way in which the meaning is reproduced.

Findings and discussion

Introduction

This study examined three major Canadian news websites — Global News, CTV News, and CBC News — to determine how Canadian news websites portray terrorism-related crimes in regard to November 2015 Paris attacks. Specifically, the current research used discourse analysis to understand to what extent Canadian news websites are objective or biased in covering crime stories, such as Paris attacks. Discourse analysis is a research method which deals with the examination of discourse instances from a linguistic standpoint, identifying styles, choice of words, structures, etc. to understand how the meaning is reproduced in a certain ideological context. Subsequently, this study has implications for future research, drawing attention to the way media discourses portray issues, rendering them into cultural characteristics according to which people are represented, referred or categorized.

In this regard, the data indicates four major themes in the online news discourse of the three Canadian media accounts with regards to Paris attacks: (1) ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, in an ideological opposition; (2) terrorists and media, and the emotional factor of violence-based communication; (3) media, authorities, and strategies to counteract terrorism; (4) the risk of terrorist attacks as imminent threats. Based on the findings and the rhetorical devices used to communicate the themes, the study discussed issues related to news websites’ neutrality. In particular, the degree of objectivity or bias was determined based on textual representations and contextual implications of the news at the end of each theme.

Us versus Them

One of the most recurrent themes in the media texts is the ideological opposition between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. This theme contains two sub- themes: 1) *The foreign nature of terrorism*, and 2) *The cultural artifact of terrorism*. Both sub-themes reveal how the ideological concept ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ is distributed through the news texts within the Canadian online media. As well, it shows how the sociocultural context, including religion, culture, language, and ethnicity are used in the media discourse to reproduce the ideological division between East and West.

The foreign nature of terrorism. The data indicates that journalists frequently use *the foreign nature of terrorism* as a primary concept to portray the events related to Paris attacks on Canadian news websites. In many instances, the news websites, in particular, Global News and CTV news, refer to the attackers as *foreign fighters*. The terms ‘foreign terrorist’, and ‘foreign recruits’ are also used to refer to European individuals who joined terrorist organizations.

The concept of foreign terrorism is mostly evident within the online articles that describe the profiles of the perpetrators. For instance, a sentence excerpted from an online article posted on the Global News website, reveals how this concept was constructed and reproduced in the media discourse: “The hardscrabble area in the west of Brussels has long been considered a focal point of Islamic radicalism and recruitment of foreign fighters to go to Iraq and Syria” (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015). As noted, this sentence begins with the adjective, ‘hardscrabble’. According to the Oxford dictionary, the word has its origins in the early 19th century and it was originally used as a noun referring to a “place thought of as the epitome of barrenness” (Oxford dictionaries, n.d). Therefore, it can be argued that the adjective suggests that the terrorists belong to a barren and sterile place like the Syrian Desert, which covers portions of Syria, Iraq, Jordan,

and Saudi Arabia. Interestingly, two of these countries are mentioned at the end of the sentence. Hence, one can notice how the sentence subtly suggests that the attacker is foreign to Europe. Nevertheless, the Belgian capital, Brussels, is also mentioned. However, the journalists omit to indicate that the attacker was actually a European citizen, born in Belgium. Remarkably, it is mentioned that the attacker had grown up in Brussels: “The child of Moroccan immigrants who *grew up* [emphasis added] in the Belgian capital...” (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015).

Similarly, the CTV News website uses the same ambiguous expression —‘foreign fighters’— in the sentence: “a Brussels court found 30 people guilty of involvement in an operation to recruit foreign fighters for Syria” (Errazzouki, 2016). Likewise, the foreign nature of terrorism is accentuated in the following writings: “Ten days later, after his arrest on charges of trying to join *a foreign terrorist organization* [emphasis added]...” (Hinnant, 2016); “...tracking *foreign fighters* [emphasis added] and sources of illegal financing and firearms... (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016). Subsequently, both websites are ambiguous about the foreign nature of terrorism as it is not clear whether the terrorists are either foreign to Europe or foreign to the Middle East.

In contrast, the CBC tends to use more neutral terms when referring to the Paris attackers, such as ‘Islamic State fighters’, ‘French Islamic extremists’ and “French jihadists”. For instance, the website clearly mentions that “French-speaking Islamic State fighters, [are] primarily from France and Belgium (“Paris attacks: Foued..., 2015). Obviously, these constructions are more accurate as the Paris attackers were, indeed, European citizens.

Yet, perhaps a more objective perspective would have been if the online media looked at the attackers and at the terrorism issue, in general, from a global standpoint. After all, terrorism is characterized by its “transnational complexity” (Xu et al, 2014). Hence, using the term

‘foreign’ to describe terrorism and its perpetrators when discussing complex global events, such as Paris attacks, media discourse suggests that terrorism is external, and represents a threat that comes outside of the Western world.

However, this means that the media discourse “obscured the dissimilarity of events” (Kelsey, p. 56) in regards to Paris attacks. From this perspective, it makes sense to consider that the news websites lack the objectivity in their portrayal of the events pertaining to the French capital’s terrorist attacks.

The cultural artifact of terrorism. Besides the foreign nature of terrorism, the attackers’ ethnicity, religion, language, and culture are also used in the media discourse to reflect the ideological division between East and West. In this regard, expressions like ‘ethnically mixed’, as well as ‘scruffy and multiethnic’ are used on the Canadian news websites to suggest that the ‘otherness’ is unattractive, or even rough and dirty. Therefore, it does not represent the social ideals and characteristics of a Western society.

Ethnicity. The data indicates that ethnicity is used in multiple instances in the media discourse to reflect the division between East and West. An example in this regard is the following sentence excerpted from a Global News online article, describing one of the attackers: “The child of *Moroccan immigrants* [emphasis added] who grew up in the Belgian capital’s *scruffy and multiethnic* [emphasis added] Molenbeek-Saint-Jean neighborhood (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015). According to Online Etymology Dictionary, ‘scruffy’ gives a “[g]eneralized sense of ‘rough and dirty’ (n.d.). Further, the adjective ‘scruffy’ is connected to the adjective ‘multiethnic’ through the conjunction ‘and’, which, in this context, implies a causal relationship between the two words. Subsequently, the neighbourhood is ‘rough and dirty’ only because it is

multiethnic. Noticeably, the idea is enhanced by mentioning that the attacker is ‘the child of Moroccan immigrants’. This sentence presents evidence how the online media encourage repulsion among people, to look at each other with contempt based on the ethnicity, skin colour, origin or culture.

Similarly, another illustrative example is the Global News article, *From Paris suburb to bloody attack, portrait of IS jihadis*. The discursive structure of the news reveals how the ideological division between East and West occurs based on sociocultural issues. The journalist purposefully describes the attacker’s town as if this is separate from Paris, or even apart from France. Accordingly, the town is everything that Paris is not: unlovely but serviceable. In this regard, the news reads:

Drancy is a short ride from Paris on one of *the unreliable suburban trains* that feed into the city. *Ethnically mixed* [emphasis added], solidly middle class, the town has a mix of single-family homes and *unlovely but serviceable* [emphasis added] apartment complexes (Hinnant, 2016).

Religion. Likewise, describing the profiles of the terrorists and referring to the attackers’ religion, on the same website it is stated that: “Islam serving as *the glue that held them in the same orbit* [emphasis added]...” (Hinnant, 2016). Without a doubt, by putting the accent on the attackers’ religion, this sentence exemplifies what Thussu (2006) called a discourse that has a tendency “to present the world’s one billion Muslims as potential terrorists” (p. 6). Moreover, it can be argued that the metaphor reflects the Western stereotype according to which Islam is a “militant threat” (Kelsey, 2015, p. 64).

Likewise, another construction that reveals how the ideological division between Westerners and Easterners is encouraged within the online news texts using religion as a pretext

is: “to drive a wedge between European Muslims” (Hinnant, 2016). Interestingly, all three websites advertise this construction citing The Associated Press.

Language. Similarly, the attackers’ languages also play a key role in the online media discourse to reflect the ideology ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’. Interestingly, the languages spoken by attackers are used in the media discourse to highlight the foreign aspect of terrorism and not to portray the terrorism as a global issue. For instance, citing The Associated Press, all three online media state that: “[They] spoke fluently French. The two others – identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis – spoke in Arabic” ((Hinnant, 2016; Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016; ISIS threatens Britain..., 2016). Remarkably, the idea of ‘foreign’ fighters reappears in this text, as the ‘nom de guerre’ (the French expression for war name) is related to a foreign country, Iraq.

Culture. Also, the cultural division between East and West is emphasized through the use of pejoration, such as ‘mosquetization’, ‘Lebanonized’ and ‘Paris is Beirut’. Metaphors, such as ‘rancor bubbled’ are used to reveal that the sociocultural division in Europe reached its extreme points. Specifically, the CBC online article reads:

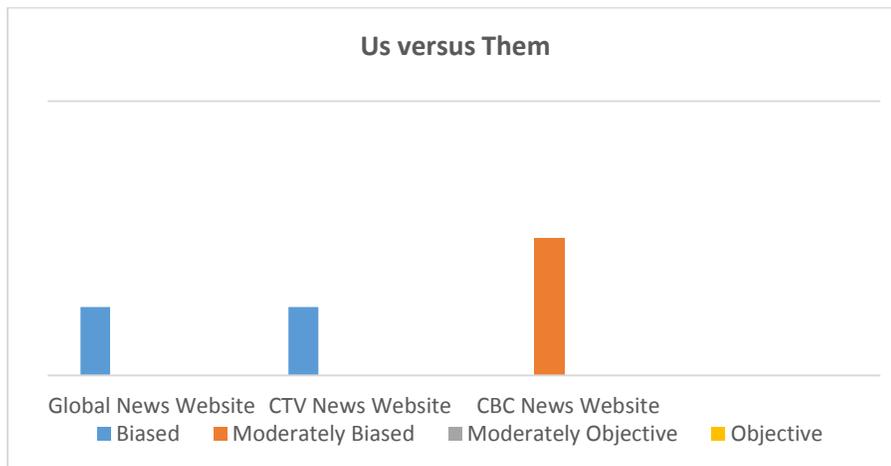
Marine Le Pen, leader of the extreme-right National Front, was discreet. But just below the surface, *rancour bubbled* (emphasis added).

On the right and the far right it was tweeted openly. "Tonight Paris is Beirut," one right-wing MP offered, referring to the attacks in Lebanon earlier this week. ‘Logical for a country becoming Lebanonized’

‘This is the result of a lax approach and the mosqueization of France,’ a far-right standard bearer said. (Murray, 2015)

As one can see from the text, the ‘rancour’ was not directed to the perpetrators, but to a foreign country and its culture. Also, the expression ‘rancour bubbled’ may indicate a long-

standing resentfulness and hate on the verge to erupt. By emphasizing the extremists' hate and aiding them to project the guilt on cultures and countries, the media certainly have their own contribution to the 'Us' versus 'Them' ideological polarization, encouraging hate among people.



Consequently, the analyzed texts show that the Canadian online media discourse reflects and contribute to the ideological division between East and West. In particular, Global News constructs its discourse to suggest that otherness is unattractive, unlovely, or even rough and dirty. Also, both Global News and CTV News tend to use ambiguous expressions, such as 'foreign fighters', 'foreign terrorists', and 'foreign recruits' to refer to European citizens who joined terrorist organizations. In contrast, the CBC website avoids these terms, calling the attackers, 'French jihadists', 'French Islamic extremists', etc.. Evidently, these expressions are more appropriate in the case of Paris attacks as the attackers were French. However, the CBC uses pejorative words meant to denigrate the Eastern world, such as 'the mosqueization of France' and 'country becoming Lebanonized'. Not surprisingly, all these expressions distract from the informative aspect of the news, projecting the criminals' culpability on religion, culture

or ethnicity. Subsequently, based on the analysis, both Global and CTV websites are *biased*, while the CBC website is *moderately biased*.

Media and terrorists: The emotional factor of violence-based communication

Another theme identified during analysis indicates that Canadian news websites show an avid interest in the terrorists' violence-based communication. In this regard, the analysis reveals that, in multiple instances, the Canadian online journalistic texts thoroughly describe the terrorists' videos, enhancing the perceived risk of terrorism. Interestingly, the data also reveals that all three Canadian websites mostly cite The Associated Press when referring to the attackers' recordings.

The websites' over coverage of violence and the journalists' preoccupation for the terrorists' videos are revealed in seven out of fifteen analyzed articles. In this regard, a special attention receives a video in which the perpetrators threaten that "whoever stands with the unbelievers 'will be a target for our swords.'" (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016). Remarkably, a thorough description of the video was provided on all three websites, Global News, CTV News, and CBC News. Specifically, six articles contain the same portrayal of the footage, mentioning The Associated Press as the source of information:

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour [...] as he holds a captive's head aloft. (Hinnant & Dahlburg; Hinnant, 2016; ISIS threatens Britain ..., 2016)

Once again, it is evident that the Canadian news websites' discourse based on the terrorists' violence inspires the 'Us' versus 'Them' mentality. As expected, this cruel scene accompanied by words, such as 'apostates' and 'unbelievers' can only bring contempt, disapproval, disgust and guilt for the Islamic ideology in the Western public eye. Definitively, by overemphasizing the terrorists' violence-based communication, the news media assists in the cultural production of bias toward Easterners. Besides, by offering the possibility for the terrorists to advertise their criminal actions, the media themselves are guilty of spreading the terror among people. Without a doubt, as the literature suggests, media in general, and the Canadian news websites, in particular, play "a vital part in the terrorists' calculus" (Spencer, 2010, p. 5). Indeed, without the publicity offered by the media, the terrorists' goal to spread terror could not reach a large audience.

In addition, the fact that the media are guilty of enhancing the risk of terrorism by spreading the terrorists' messages is well-illustrated by a media item, published on the Global News website. In this regard, it can be noticed that the discourse is focused on spreading terror, and not on informing the public. In this regard, the following fragment reveals how journalists are zealously searching for the terrorists' materials in order to make them public, to distribute the terrorists' dreadful communications:

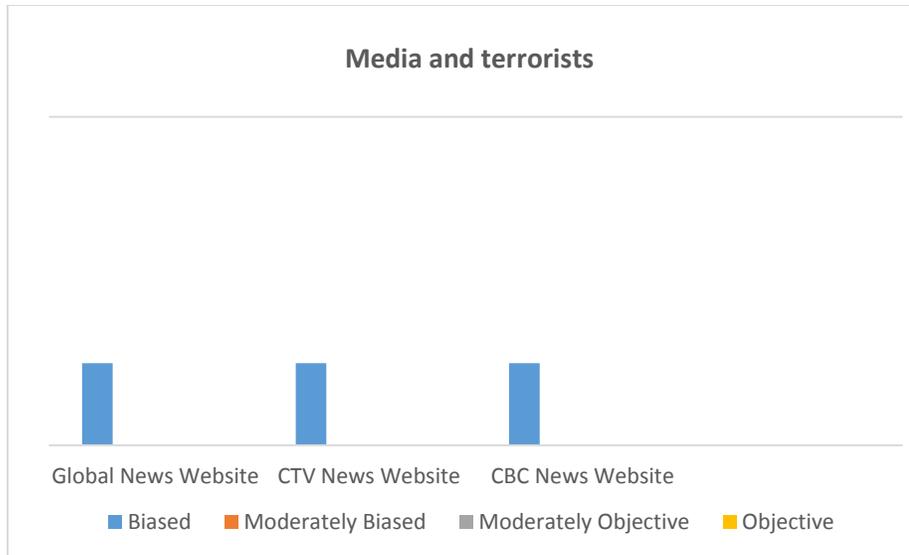
Independent journalists Etienne Huver and Guillaume Lhotellier, visiting the Turkish-Syrian frontier, obtained photos and video last year of Abaaoud's exploits across Syria. The material included footage of him and his friends loading a pickup truck and a makeshift trailer with a mound of bloodied corpses. (Satter & Dahlburg, 2016)

Remarkably, the data also indicates that, throughout the examined articles, the term 'video' was mentioned eighty-four (84) times. Besides this term, other related words referring to

the terrorists' propaganda materials meant to emotionally disturb the audience are used within the online news texts. These are: 'pictures', 'graphic', 'footage', 'material shot', 'recording', and 'photos'. These words are usually associated with adjectives, such as 'grisly', 'horrendous', 'though', etc. Indeed, the finding that news websites' discourse is constructed around the terrorists' violent messages confirms other scholars' idea stating that, in the digital era, people absorb a large amount of risk-related information, including terrorism (Perko, 2012).

However, it is not surprising that all three Canadian news websites manifest interest in the terrorists' videos. As seen in the literature review, scholars signaled in multiple instances that media give a special attention to violence due to its news value (Hall et al., 1978; Humphries, 1981; Sacco, 1995; Burns & Crawford, 1999). Certainly, by thoroughly describing these videos in multiple occasions, media offer emotional stories which help them maintain their audience (Spencer, 2010). On the other hand, "terrorists gain the maximum potential leverage that they need" (Hoffman, 2006) to spread the terror among people.

As a result, the analysis of the Canadian news websites confirms the risk communication concept of reflexive modernity implying that, in a risk society, due to technological innovations, the delivery of 'bads' is greater than the delivery of 'goods' (Beck, 1992; 2011). Indeed, due to the ease of access to the media, the terrorists' materials are spread out in an instance all over the world, from France to Canada.



Therefore, it is obvious that the Canadian news websites tend to overuse the terrorists' violence-based communication which seriously impacts the objectivity of the news. Based on the data, it is evident that the news websites' discourse centered on the terrorists' videos may enhance the perceived feeling of terror among individuals. Hence, the analysis reveals that all three websites — Global, CTV, and CBC — are *biased*.

Media and authorities: Strategies to counteract terrorism

This theme shows how the complex relations among media, press agencies and authorities influence the crime news portrayal. It also indicates that these relations may influence the ideological formation, and individuals' risk perception of terrorism. The theme contains two sub-themes: 1) *One version of the story: The Associated Press*, and 2) *Imprecise actions: Authorities*.

One version of the story: The Associated Press. The data shows that Canadian news websites, in particular, Global News and CTV News, tend to display the news stories word-for-word as they came from the Associated Press, with little or no revisions to the text. In this regard, in many instances, there is no difference noted between the texts published on the two websites. For example, the text of the Global News story, *EU police warn more attacks by Islamic State militants likely* is identical to the CTV's news, *European police warn more terrorist attacks likely, 'particularly in France'*. Moreover, the CTV website broadcasts the same news twice with different headlines. For example, the story *ISIS video shows 9 Paris attackers committed atrocities before attack* displays the same text as the story *ISIS video details planning of Paris attacks, highlights atrocities* (see appendix A).

This finding confirms the “special status of violence as a news value” (Hall et al., 1978). Certainly, it shows that the Canadian media's routine to reproduce verbatim the press agency news “affects the diversity of content publicly available (Carpenter, 2008, p. 531). Eventually, this finding adds on to the Katz's (1987) argument according to which crime news portrayal is directly related to the ‘routine’ of a modern society (p. 58). Evidently, by constantly relying on intermediaries like press agencies to deliver news stories to the public, the news websites negatively affect peoples' perceptions in regards to the risk of crime.

However, unlike other previous scholarly findings, according to which an online news story is presented in several different versions (Fass & Main, 2014), the Canadian news websites — in particular, Global and CTV — do not modify the stories nor check the information gotten from the press agency. Evidently, this finding shows that the news objectivity is highly impacted as multiple sources and factual accuracy verification are necessary to ensure the news' neutrality and objectivity.

Imprecise actions: Authorities. In addition, the data indicates that news websites tend to quote both official sources and unofficial sources in the electronic news articles referring to Paris attacks. The analysis of the online articles reveals that there is an obvious preoccupation of the officials in regards to the risk of terrorism. Yet, the authorities, in many instances, although they acknowledge the risks, they mostly speculate in regards to the perpetrators, and their plans and actions. For instance, within the online texts, the institutions' imprecise approaches are revealed by the verbs, like 'believe', 'predicted', and 'conjectured'. Among them, the verb 'believe' is predominant.

In this regard, both Global News and CTV News websites, using The Associated Press as the main source of information, cite Gilles Kepel, a political scientist, who states that: *I do not believe* [emphasis added] that they will have a significant amount of new sympathizers after those videos *I believe* [emphasis added] that it's not really a display of strength (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016). Similarly, both Global and CTV news websites mention that several experts from the European Union's chief agency for law enforcement co-operation allege that: “. . . [I]t is nearly impossible to exactly *predict* [emphasis added] when and where the next terrorist attack will take place, and what form it will take” (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016).

By the same token, all three Canadian websites, citing The Associated Press, mention that “Abdelhamid Abbaoud . . . *was believed* [emphasis added] to be the leader of the attacks . . . (Hinnant, 2016; Shprintsen & McKenna, 2016; Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016; Hinnant, 2016); “one French official told The Associated Press, Abaaoud *is believed* to have links to earlier terror attacks” (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015); numerous independent analysts *have conjectured* [emphasis added] that as Islamic State has increasingly lost ground in Iraq and Syria (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016); “identified by French authorities on Monday as the *presumed mastermind* [emphasis

added] of the attacks ... (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015), “Samir Bouabout *is believed* [emphasis added] to be in Syria still” (Hinnant, 2016). Interestingly, the verb ‘to believe’ was mentioned twenty-nine (29) times throughout the online articles.

With regards to the verbs used by authorities in their discourse, the findings point towards one of these two issues: One, either the authorities were taken by surprise by the terrorists’ actions in Paris so they needed to adopt an ambiguous discourse to hide their incapacity to face the attacks; or two, the officials knew about the risk of terrorist attacks in Paris, yet they failed to counteract. Subsequently, they purposefully decided to broadcast their unclear position by offering vague information to the public. Therefore, this finding suggests that the authorities tenaciously maintained an unclear discourse to create confusion and to proliferate the risk pertaining to terrorism. Hence, this finding confirms other scholar findings (Sheley & Ashkins, 1981; Chermak, 1995; Dowler et al., 2006) that indicate that the relationship of power and control between authorities and media do not aid in informing the public about crime issues, but proliferate the risks of creating wrong perceptions around the matter.

Accordingly, this finding may also explain why both Global News and CTV News websites refer to The Associated Press as the sole source of information in regards to Paris attacks: It is likely that The Associated Press receives exclusivity on certain topics, such as issues of terrorism as the press agency serves best the officials’ interest.

Evidently, the data shows that relying on a single source of information, the news websites present ‘realistic’ portrayals of crime and justice which further blurs the lines between fiction and reality” (Dowler et al, 2006, pp. 837-838). Accordingly — if there is a connection between media violence and peoples’ beliefs and attitudes as multiple studies have previously exposed — it is highly likely that the crime portrayal on Canadian news websites may facilitate

victimization, moral panic (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Lane, 2015; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007), interracial hate and discrimination (Poynting & Perry, 2007; Helly, 2004). The degree of these consequences for average individuals in relation to Canadian news websites is not known as this is not the purpose of this study. However, this data signals the urgent need for more studies to understand how Canadian news websites' crime portrayal affects the average individuals.

Certainly, the issues around terrorism media portrayal can be even more complex, especially if the authorities' discourse is ambiguous, unclear, and speculative mainly because resolving terrorism is not one of the officials' top priorities. In this regard, the data shows that the authorities' measures are voluntary or less determined. For example, the Global news website reads:

Cazeneuve [French Interior Minister] also called for the European Union to adopt rules already in place in France that allows the government to block websites it believes recruit extremist fighters or encourage terrorism. In December, the EU launched an "internet forum" to detect and counter harmful material online. *But the program is voluntary* [emphasis added] (France wants more..., 2016)

Likewise, significant insights in regards to the lack of effective counteractions are offered by the CBC journalists. In this regard, a journalistic investigation reveals the unprepared official reaction to the crisis:

'This is an act of war.... France will be merciless toward the barbarians.' Those were the words of French President François Hollande on the dark morning after. *But the actions of his government sent a different message* [emphasis added]. A national state of emergency; schools, museums and theatres closed until further notice in the Paris region; a ban on public marches and demonstrations — all this spoke of *a government on the*

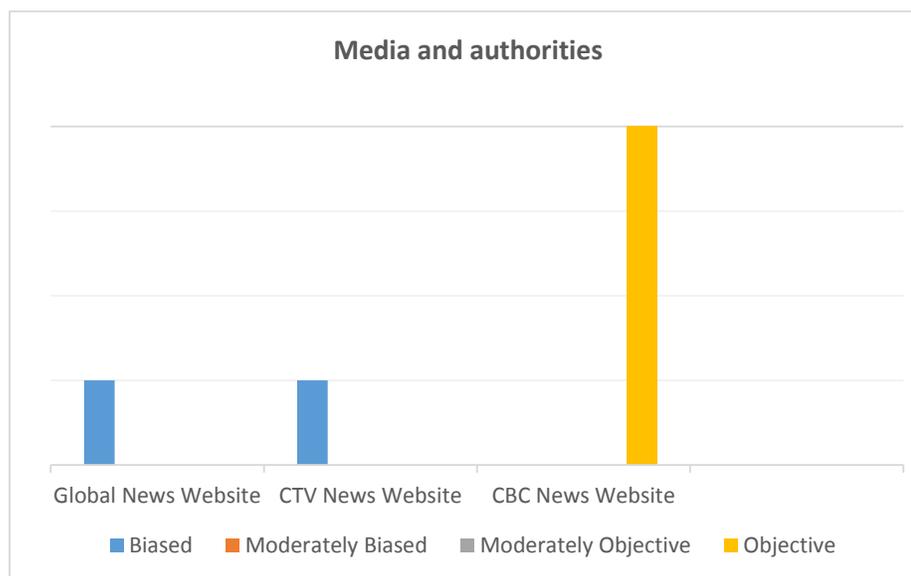
defensive, unsure of where and when the next attack might come [emphasis added].

(Murray, 2015)

Similarly, the fact that resolving terrorism issues is not on the officials' top priority list is revealed by a CBC investigation. In this regard, a CBC online article, quoting a former French intelligence official, reads that:

Police services around the world also knew the names of most of the attackers long before Nov. 13, they *were aware [emphasis added]* that a major attack had been planned for Paris, and they even had intelligence that a concert hall would be a target. *And yet they failed to stop it [emphasis added].* (Shprintsen & Terence McKenna, 2016)

Hence, by conducting their own investigation and analysis, and not relying only on a press agency, CBC News offered different perspectives, and, therefore, valuable insights on the issue of Paris attacks. Evidently, the CBC news online articles are more accurate and fair, succeeding to maintain a dispassionate reporting of the events.



Consequently, the data indicates that all three websites reflect the officials' speculation with regards to terrorism threats. However, the CBC journalists use various sources and conduct their own investigations. Therefore, the CBC website offers more insights about events compared to Global and CTV News websites. Consequently, CBC is *objective*. In contrast, Global News and CTV News websites are *biased* as they use only one source of information, which, in most cases, is reproduced verbatim. Evidently, relying on a single source visibly affects the news neutrality as it does not allow the reader to see the story from different angles.

The risk of terrorist attacks as imminent threats

Lastly, another theme identified during analysis is related to the risk of the terrorist attacks as imminent threats. The data shows that Canadian News websites use numerous descriptors, which impacts the news objectivity. It also indicates that the authorities' discourse in the media is focused on the risk and imminent threats than on counteractions and strategies against terrorism.

The data indicates that all three websites suggest that both authorities and media warn that another terrorist attack is likely to happen again. Specifically, most of the articles warn that terrorist attempts will take place in Europe, particularly, in Britain and France. For example, the sentence "[t]he group also threatens Britain" is mentioned by all the media accounts on their websites (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016; Hinnant, 2016; ISIS threatens Britain..., 2016). Likewise, the Global News and CTV News websites read that "there is every reason to expect that IS . . . will undertake a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe again, but particularly in France, intended to cause mass casualties among the civilian population." (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016). Similarly, the CBC, citing a senior investigating judge with responsibility for terrorist acts, argues: "ISIS

have both the ambition and the means to hit us much harder and to organize much bigger actions, in no way comparable to the ones up to now” (Murray, 2015).

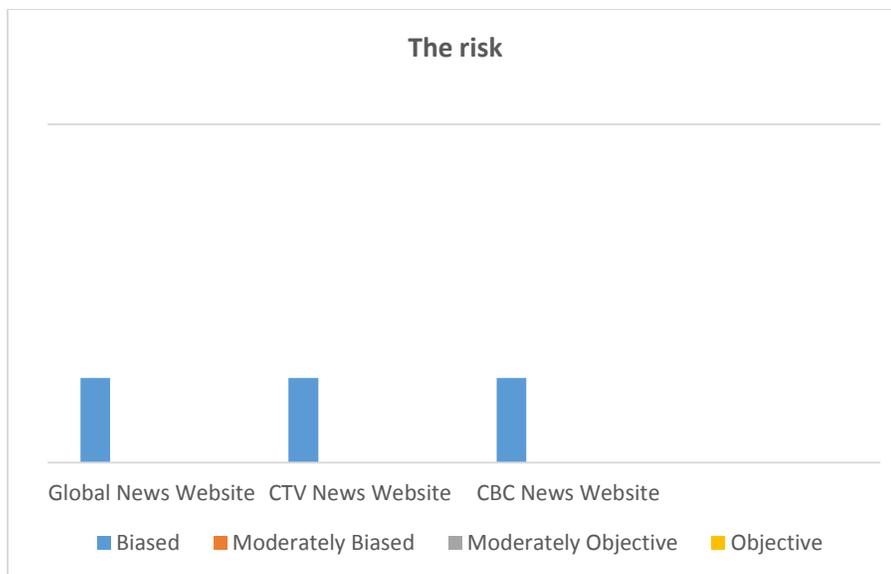
Also, several figures of style that signal the immediate threat are used on all three websites. For instance, both Global and CTV websites use the epithets ‘threatening fresh bloodshed’ and ‘soft targets’ to refer to the terrorists’ next victims; the metaphors, ‘to sow fear’ and ‘Mumbai method’ to draw attention to the extent of the risk. Likewise, the risk is signaled by descriptors such as ‘a stark warning’ and ‘sobering conclusions’ on Global and CTV websites. Likewise, CBC uses the metaphor “when country's nightmare became reality, *the French intelligence establishment was trapped in the dark* [emphasis added]” (Murray, 2015) to describe what happened in Paris on the night of the attacks; and ‘mission impossible’ to show the authorities’ incapacity to face the threats. Still, all three websites quote the French president: ‘No threat will give France pause I am aware of the threat and that we will not concede,’ Hollande said” (Hinnant, 2016; ISIS threatens Britain . . . , 2016). However, it is evident that this statement does not refer exactly to the officials’ plan to counter terrorism.

Evidently, these figures of style indicate that the media message is obsessively focused on risks. The news websites’ texts crowded with verbs like ‘threatens’, ‘hit’, ‘undertake a terrorist attack...’ can only accentuate the peoples’ perceptions concerning the terrorist threats. Subsequently, it can be expected that issues of interracial hate and discrimination to increase, leading to a higher discrepancy between ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ or ‘East’ versus ‘West’. This is alarming, especially in a context where other academic findings revealed that within the online realm, crime stories continuously grow and are distributed/shared at a faster rate than others (Barabasi, 2004; Tremayne, 2004; Ketterer, 2001). Indeed, the finding confirms the Beck’s

statement pertaining to a risk society and reflexive modernity, which states that technological innovations of a modern society tend to emphasize the 'bad' of a situation or a risk.

The finding is also concerning, especially if seen in contrast with the outcome of the previous section according to which the authorities discourse is unclear about counteraction (e.g. voluntarily) or attackers' intentions (e.g. who are believed..., presumed, etc.). Certainly, this strengthens the idea that media discourse of terrorism is focused more on the negative aspects and less on the positive aspects (counteraction versus culture, religion, risks, etc.). Once again, it can be argued that, due to technological advancements, the delivery of 'bads' is greater than the delivery of 'goods' (Beck, 1992; 2011) on Canadian news websites. Indeed, as the risk literature contends, due to digital innovations, such as websites, "a doubling of the world takes place" (Beck, 1987, p. 154). With regards to Canadian news websites, this means that due to media crime portrayal, the actual risk of terrorism does not coincide with peoples' perceptions about terrorism. Certainly, the media messages are not intended to inform, but 'to sow fear' among readers, which negatively influences the news objectivity.

Nonetheless, the reason behind media's unclear discourse and authorities' intentions are uncertain. However, it is possible that the officials' endeavour to accentuate the risk perceptions can be reasoned "so the need for foreign policies to avoid further 'terrorist' attacks is widely understood and so military actions rising from such policies are deemed justified" (Sabido, 2009, p. 68). Or, it may be that the authorities don't have other option, but to adopt "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself" (Beck 1992, p. 21).



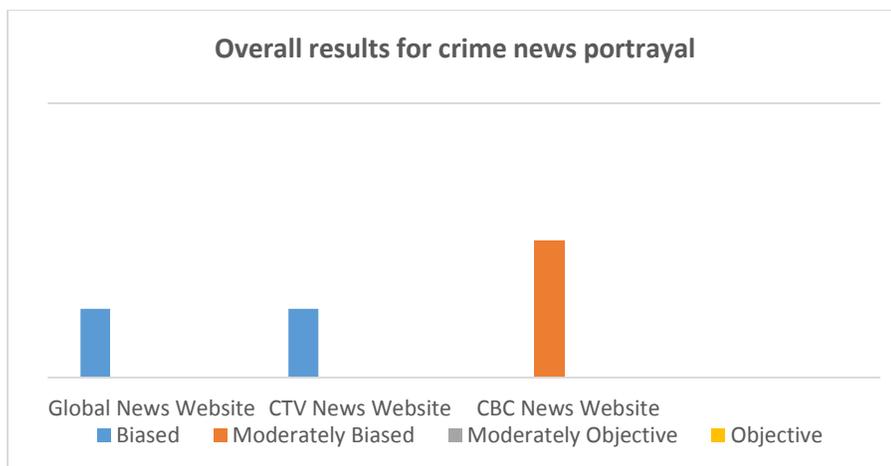
Therefore, it is evident that the abundance of the descriptors used by all three websites to depict the risks related to terrorism can only increase peoples' feelings in regards to criminals' atrocities and terror. Certainly, this issue signals the lack of objectivity of the all three Canadian websites. Hence, Global News, CTV News and CBC News are *biased* when discussing the risks of terrorist attacks. Alternatively, applied to news websites, this finding confirms the risk literature stating that technological innovations can easily enhance the 'bads' of a society.

Summary of the findings and discussion

The results show that Canadian news websites tend to use numerous descriptors when portraying Paris attacks crime stories. For instance, when describing the attackers' place of origin, "scruffy and multiethnic" (Satter & Dahlburg, 2015) are the words used within a Global News website article. In addition, both Global and CTV websites give a "stark warning" (Hinnant & Dahlburg, 2016) in regards to the eventual upcoming "lethal attacks on soft targets" (Hinnant & Dahlburg,

2016). Similarly, the CBC News website refers to a “mission impossible” (Shprintsen & McKenna, 2016) when talking about the authorities’ options to counteract terrorists. Through the use of such descriptors, the spectacular and the dramatic are evidently accentuated in the online news stories which noticeably impacts the news objectivity.

Additionally, the data points out that, in many instances, the message is focused more on the profiles of the attackers, blaming their language, culture and religion for their atrocious deeds. In contrast, the media discourse is less centered on strategies to counteract terrorism or other measures to protect the population.



Consequently, corroborating the data from all four themes, the results show that the CBC website is *moderately biased*, while Global News and CTV News are *constantly biased* in the portrayal of Paris attacks events. However, although the CBC News website visibly encourages the ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ discourse, overusing the violence-based communication, the CBC website allows the online readers to see the crime events from various angles. Primarily, the CBC news website uses information from press agencies as well as pieces of evidence collected

by the CBC journalists themselves. Evidently, this method of news portrayal allows a richer perspective concerning terrorism issue.

Alternatively, both Global and CTV are biased for three reasons. First, both use the Associated Press as their sole provider of the information regarding Paris attacks. This certainly affects the news neutrality as different perspectives are necessary to comprehend the complex implications of terrorism. Second, both websites, Global and CTV, tend to use numerous descriptors to portray the crime events. This issue also affects the news objectivity as, through descriptors, the spectacular and the dramatic of the events are exaggerated. Third, by providing thorough depictions of the videos released by the terrorists, the websites are biased as they seem to serve more the terrorists' interests and less the audience's need to be informed.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine how Canadian news websites portray crime-related stories. Specifically, the current research sought to answer the following question:

To what extent are Canadian news websites biased or objective in covering crime stories related to November 2015 Paris attacks?

In view of this, the study begins with a literature review. This chapter gives a theoretical basis for the research, identifying the key studies in regards to media portrayal of crimes and terrorism. It also establishes the risk communication theory as a theoretical framework. To ensure that the literature review is replicable, valid and reliable, the steps taken in collecting data, eligibility criteria, search strategy, and data management for this chapter are described first.

Second, the literature review chapter continues with the explanation of the theoretical perspective of risk communication. It defines the key terms, key concepts, such as 'risk' and

‘reflexive modernity’. Third, the review presents the key studies which were organized based on the following themes: *Dual world: The internet has changed the news* is the first theme, which presents how technological innovations impact the news production, distribution, and consumption of the news. The second theme refers to *Crime News and Objectivity*. Primarily, this theme discusses issues related to objectivity in relation to news values, authorities, routine, and technological innovations. The third theme deals with *Media, Terrorism, and Communication Tactics*, in which is presented several key findings in regards to media stories pertaining to terrorism issues. Lastly, the fourth theme, entitled *Media Discourse: Perceptions*, describes how media violence and crime stories impact the audience. A summary of the key findings within the literature is presented at the end of this chapter.

The next chapter describes the methodology applied to this study. Specifically, this chapter presents the discourse analysis as the method chosen for the current research. In addition, it describes the methods of data collection, data inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as the study’s reliability, validity and its limitations. Discourse analysis was selected as this method allows discovering the concealed meanings of the journalistic texts. The method developed was grounded in Lupton's (1992; 1994) discourse analysis theory, which mainly focuses on the choice of words, the figures of speech and the style, and the way in which the meaning is reproduced. The study relies on fifteen articles published on the Canadian news websites, Global News, CTV News, and CBC News. The Canadian websites were purposefully selected due to the limited number of studies available concerning the terrorism portrayal in Canadian online news media.

The following chapter presents the findings and the discussion of the study. Based on the findings, this chapter presents four themes: (1) *Us and Them, in an ideological opposition*; (2)

terrorists and media, and the emotional factor of violence-based communication; (3) media, authorities, their assumptions, and strategies to counteract terrorism; (4) the risk of terrorist attacks as imminent threats. In particular, using discourse analysis as a research method, the chapter shows how Canadian news websites portray crime stories related to Paris attacks. It also highlights the rhetorical devices used to communicate the themes, and the extent of news websites' objectivity and bias.

Corroborating the data found during the analysis of each theme, the overall results showed that Canadian news websites tend to use various descriptors when portraying crime stories, such as Paris attacks. In addition, the findings revealed that the news websites tend to focus more on the cultural differences between East and West and less on the informative aspects of the news stories. In this regard, the results indicated that the CBC News website is *moderately biased*, while Global News and CTV News are *constantly biased* in covering crime stories related to Paris attacks. However, unlike Global and CTV websites, the CBC News website articles comprised information from press agencies as well as facts collected by the CBC journalists themselves. This approach allows the online reader to have a richer perspective concerning the terrorism issue. In contrast, both Global News and CTV News used The Associated Press as their single source of information, which, in most instances, was reproduced verbatim. This method of crime story's portrayal obviously impacts the neutrality of the news.

Lastly, the reliability and validity of the study count mostly on the quality and popularity of the exemplars. As well, the study's validity relies on the thorough description of the texts, and on the researcher's critical examination of the journalistic style and the persuasive methods used within online news texts. As a qualitative study, however, the scholarly interpretation was based on the researcher's own vision of the world, which, evidently, cannot be considered a universal

truth. Besides, the research was focused on electronic news texts and did not take into consideration other news websites' characteristics, such as videos, pictures, users' comments, links, etc. Therefore, the analysis may have missed relevant information pertaining to bias and objectivity of the news. Also, the sample chosen was focused on specific crime, Paris terrorist attacks. As a result, the media items selected did not represent the complete list of articles written on the crime topic published on Canadian News websites. Therefore, the chosen articles may have missed relevant data in regards to the news portrayal of crimes.

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Appendix: News Articles

Global News

1. [France wants more legal power to demand data from tech companies](#)

By Staff January 26, 2016 8:20 am

PARIS – France’s government wants to increase the legal tools available to demand data from overseas tech companies during cybercrime investigations.

In a speech Tuesday, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said the measure would be introduced next week. It would expand the criteria allowing France to quickly access data for cybercrimes committed overseas if the victim is in France.

READ MORE: France could ban public Wi-Fi following terror attacks, report says

Cazeneuve also called for the European Union to adopt rules already in place in France that allows the government to block websites it believes recruit extremist fighters or encourage terrorism. In December, the EU launched an “internet forum” to detect and counter harmful material online. But the program is voluntary – a public-private partnership that includes the union’s 28 interior ministers, major Internet firms, Europol, the EU’s counterterrorism co-ordinator and the European Parliament.

2. [EU police warn more attacks by Islamic State militants likely](#)

By Lori Hinnant and John-Thor Dahlburg January 25, 2016 1:14 pm

PARIS – Europe’s top police agency issued a stark warning Monday: Islamic State extremists will keep attempting lethal attacks on soft targets in Europe as the militant group increasingly goes global.

Some 2 1/2 months after suicide bombers and gunmen killed 130 people in Paris, the Europol agency said, “there is every reason to expect that IS, IS-inspired terrorists or another religiously inspired terrorist group will undertake a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe again, but particularly in France, intended to cause mass casualties among the civilian population.”

The sobering conclusions reached by experts from the European Union’s chief agency for law enforcement co-operation and EU member states make clear that many, perhaps virtually all in Europe, may be at risk.

“Without reliable intelligence on the intentions, activities and contacts and travels of known terrorists it is nearly impossible to exactly predict when and where the next terrorist attack will take place, and what form it will take,” the Europol report said.

Hours before the report was issued, a new video was released by the Islamic State group celebrating the killers who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in the French capital – while also threatening fresh bloodshed.

READ MORE: Facing tough times, Islamic State group forced to cut militant salaries

The grisly recording ends with one militant holding a severed head, footage of British Prime Minister David Cameron giving a speech, and an IS warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers “will be a target for our swords.”

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath.

All but two of the attackers were from Belgium and France and spoke fluent French. The two others – identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis – spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were shown standing behind bound captives, described as “apostates,” who were either beheaded or shot.

“Soon on the Champs-Elysees,” says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb, as he holds a captive’s head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the French national stadium. The video glorifying the Kalashnikov-wielding gunmen and suicide bombers responsible for that carnage was probably also meant as a recruitment tool.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said Monday’s Europol report did not go markedly beyond previous warnings and was not intended to sow fear but “to look lucidly at reality.”

READ MORE: While Canada plans to pull jets, U.S., allies agree to intensify fight against Islamic State

Gilles Kepel, a political scientist who wrote “Terrorism in France,” said even if Islamic State extremists carry out new attacks in Europe, the video shows the group is increasingly desperate and likely on the wane – in part because of the indiscriminate killings Nov. 13.

“They emphasize their ability to be cruel, to kill all their opponents and to terrorize everyone. But what is very striking is that I do not believe that they will have a significant amount of new sympathizers after those videos,” he said.

“I believe that it’s not really a display of strength. It’s rather a display of weakness. Terrorism has its political economy of sorts. You have to terrorize people. On the one hand, you have to spread terror, but at the same time you have to gather sympathizers. If you’re not able to have the two going together, then the model fails,” he added.

But releasing the video draws attention anew to attacks that terrorized central Paris and shows the group’s ability to turn Europeans against their homelands in a relatively short time, said

Magnus Ranstorp, a counterterrorism expert at the Swedish National Defence College. The youngest of the group, a 20-year-old, had been in Syria only since February.

“They were not only battle-hardened but they were cruel. Their threshold for killing was low. They wouldn’t blink to kill,” Ranstorp said. He said the video’s release two months after the attacks fell into a typical delay by Islamic State’s propaganda apparatus.

Expert reviews conducted by Europol on Nov. 29 and Dec. 1 concluded that the Islamic State “is preparing more terrorist attacks,” including copycats of the so-called Mumbai method of coordinated bombings and shootings by multiple teams of assailants that claimed 164 lives in India’s financial capital in November 2008.

“The attacks will be primarily directed at soft targets, because of the impact it generates,” the Europol report said. “Both the November Paris attacks and the October 2015 bombing of a Russian airliner suggest a shift in IS strategy toward going global.”

Numerous independent analysts have conjectured that as Islamic State has increasingly lost ground in Iraq and Syria, including to a U.S.-led international coalition and the Russian military, it has lashed out at its foes abroad.

IS commanders are given tactical freedom depending on local circumstances, making it much harder to detect plots, the report said. That degree of liberty, it said, makes it harder for law enforcement “to detect such plans and identifying the people involved at an early stage.”

Calling the danger of extremist violence “the most significant in over 10 years,” Europol on Monday also officially opened a new European Counter Terrorism Center at its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. Europol director Rob Wainwright said the new unit will have 40-50 experts in counterterrorism and deal in intelligence-sharing, tracking foreign fighters and sources of illegal financing and firearms, and assisting EU countries in counterterrorism actions and investigations.

Wainwright told a news conference in Amsterdam that over 5,000 EU nationals have been radicalized by fighting with Muslim extremists in Iraq and Syria, and that many have returned home to present a clear and present danger to public safety.

“The current threat demands a strong and ambitious response from the EU,” Europol’s chief said, referring to the experts’ warnings of IS plans for “large-scale attacks on a global stage with a particular focus on targeting Europe.”

The IS video released Sunday was shot before the men sneaked back into Europe and contains no footage of the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attack cell.

Instead, it was assembled from material shot before the men left for Paris, news video and amateur video. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One militant, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

Kepel, an expert in Islamic extremism, predicted the Islamic State's long-term prospects were dim not just in Europe, but in the very territory it most wants to control in Iraq and Syria.

Wages of the fighters have been cut in two because the militants "have no access to the smuggling of oil – the oil rigs have been bombed and destroyed," he said. "That's one thing. And the morale is not very high. This is one of the reasons they try to boost the morale with those horrendous videos."

Though graphic, it left Parisians uncowed in the neighbourhood where the carnage unfolded the night of Nov. 13, including at the Carillon cafe, where gunman targeted customers out for the evening.

"It's part of their propaganda. This is one of their methods. Of course it's pretty strong because pictures carry a lot of weight," said Gerard Faure. "But I don't think that here, people I know in this neighbourhood, Parisians as a whole are not really afraid."

—

Dahlburg reported from Brussels.

PARIS – A new video released by the Islamic State group purports to show the extremists who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris committing atrocities in IS-controlled territory while plotting the slaughter in the French capital that left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. The group also threatens Britain.

3. [*New Islamic State video shows Paris attackers were versed in atrocity*](#)

By Lori Hinnant January 25, 2016 4:00 am

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. It also is likely meant to serve as a recruitment tool to rally followers to the extremists' sinister cause.

All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath. Seven of the attackers – four from Belgium and three from France – spoke fluent French. The two others – identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis – spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as “apostates,” who were either beheaded or shot.

“Soon on the Champs-Elysees,” says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb near the French national stadium, as he holds a captive’s head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the national stadium.

Immediately after the attacks, French President Francois Hollande imposed a nationwide state of emergency that is to remain in place until Feb. 26. Hollande has asked for an extension and reiterated that request Monday.

“No threat will give France pause in what it must do against terrorist. And if I have taken steps to extend the state of emergency, it is because I am aware of the threat and that we will not concede,” Hollande said in response to the video.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said the government is studying the video but would not comment on its contents.

The video was apparently filmed before the men slipped back into Europe and contains no footage shot by the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attacks and who died in a police raid on an apartment near the Stade de France.

Instead, it was assembled from news video, amateur video and material shot before the men left for Paris. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One of the suicide bombers that night, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

According to the anti-Islamic State activist group Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, Brahim Abdeslam and two other attackers were trained in Raqqa, the extremist group’s stronghold and the capital of its self-proclaimed caliphate.

In the video, as in other Islamic State propaganda trying to drive a wedge between European Muslims and their governments, the men say it is a religious duty to join them.

They threaten more attacks in Europe, and the footage closes with one of the militants holding a severed head and footage of Cameron giving a speech – with a text in English warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers “will be a target for our swords.”

The video was released by Alhayat, the Islamic State group’s media arm. (article 3, see more <http://www.alhayat.com/>)

4. [*From Paris suburb to bloody attack, portrait of IS jihadis*](#)

By Lori Hinnant January 19, 2016 6:44 am

DRANCY, France — Even under extended police questioning, Samy Amimour never hid his disdain for France, his desire to leave, or his belief that the apocalypse was near. But he told investigators he would not kill: “I am against the murder of innocents, no matter where they are.”

Three years later, Amimour returned from Syria, gunned down dozens of innocents at a rock show, and died inside the Bataclan with a suicide belt strapped to his body.

Court documents, transcripts of hours of investigator interviews, and phone and bank records seen by The Associated Press trace the path of Amimour and two of his closest friends from the Paris suburb of Drancy to Syria’s war zone.

Amimour and Charaffe El Mouadan, the trio’s charismatic leader who would take the nom de guerre Souleymane, would end up dead. The third, Samir Bouabout, is believed to be in Syria still.

Drancy is a short ride from Paris on one of the unreliable suburban trains that feed into the city. Ethnically mixed, solidly middle class, the town has a mix of single-family homes and unlovely but serviceable apartment complexes. Amimour grew up on the third floor of a small building; the tidy houses of his two friends are a short walk away.

A shared love of soccer drew them together as young adolescents, with Islam serving as the glue that held them in the same orbit over the years to come. By 2012, they were in their mid-20s, each living with his parents. El Mouadan told investigators joblessness suited him, by allowing him to perform his daily prayers.

“The time when I was working for a company I couldn’t practice my religion correctly. That’s why I want to leave and live in a Muslim country,” he said.

Amimour was the only one with steady work — after a stint as a mail sorter, and brief jobs at H&M and the Carrefour grocery chain, he was hired as a bus driver in 2011. His routes took him through the neighborhoods of his childhood, with of the stops just outside his apartment complex. By most measures, it was a good job.

He hated it.

On Oct 5, 2012, Amimour handed in his resignation letter in person. Ten days later, after his arrest on charges of trying to join a foreign terrorist organization, a seemingly astonished officer asked him why he had quit his job.

“There are a lot of things in the job that don’t mesh with my personality,” he said. “I was often pushed to the edge by frequent aggressions and provocations by passengers. Physically also. Since I stopped I have far less back pain and I didn’t want to be destroyed by the age of 35.”

But his resignation was prompted as well by plans he and his two friends had hatched to leave France. El Mouadan did most of the legwork, making inquiries about Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and making Facebook contact with another French speaker who encouraged him to go to Mali.

It was El Mouadan who first signed up for a shooting class in early 2012 at a gun club with ties to the police. He told his friends to sign up as well, suggesting they first shave their beards in order to get the required doctor’s certificate. Both signed up for a class in April.

For reasons unexplained, El Mouadan and Amimour each took out loans of 20,000 euros (\$21,700) loans, parking the money in their accounts.

Traveling to North Africa in late spring of 2012, El Mouadan sent his new wife links to jihadi videos to watch while he was gone: “Once we get things clear and you’ve seen the videos and you understand everything, you will change how you think.” In May, he promised to take her to live in the mountains and “go to war.”

That summer, French investigators took notice of the three, carrying out surveillance operations that included posting officers at their homes and even snapping high definition photos of El Mouadan at the Paris airport. In early October, the inquiry shifted to high gear, with increasingly frantic requests for GPS tracking, phone and bank records and, in the case of Amimour, work and vacation schedule.

They were arrested at dawn on Oct. 15, undergoing days of questioning in custody about their planned trip before they were finally released.

Amimour was unambiguous about France: “There is a sense of oppression toward the Muslim community, of stigmatization by the media, that weighs on everybody. For example at work you cannot do prayers at the moment they need to be done. If a woman wants to wear a veil, it’s a problem. If you want to grow a beard, that also. And then there is an environment that doesn’t conform to Islam. Which is normal in a non-Muslim country, but difficult to live for a Muslim.”

He talked about the apocalypse, which he said he sensed was near, echoing a central tenet of the Islamic State group that he would ultimately join, and he said he wanted to prepare by “becoming more religious and protecting myself geographically. To distance myself from major cities and their evils.”

All three young men denied they meant any harm. All three left for Syria less than a year later.

Investigators have not publicly pinpointed when Amimour returned to France. His family apparently learned he had returned only after he was identified as one of the suicide attackers inside the Bataclan on Nov. 13, 2015.

Survivors of that terrifying night said two of the gunmen — one of them possibly Amimour — surveyed their bloody work and debated what to do next.

“Should we call Souleymane?” one asked, according to French media. “We will deal with this our own way,” came the response.

A total of 130 people died that night, most of them at the rock concert.

U.S. airstrikes killed El Mouadan on Dec. 24, the military said, describing him as an Islamic State leader with direct links to the Nov. 13 bloodshed who “was actively planning attacks against the West.”

5. [Who is Abdelhamid Abaaoud? Belgian jihadi ID'd as mastermind of Paris attacks](#)

By Raphael Satter and John-Thor Dahlburg November 16, 2015 6:48 am

BRUSSELS – Once a happy-go-lucky student at one of Brussels’ most prestigious high schools, Saint-Pierre d’Uccle, Abdelhamid Abaaoud morphed into Belgium’s most notorious jihadi, a zealot so devoted to the cause of holy war that he recruited his 13-year-old brother to join him in Syria.

The child of Moroccan immigrants who grew up in the Belgian capital’s scruffy and multiethnic Molenbeek-Saint-Jean neighborhood, the fugitive, in his late 20s, was identified by French authorities on Monday as the presumed mastermind of the attacks last Friday in Paris that killed 129 people and injured hundreds.

What’s more, one French official told The Associated Press, Abaaoud is believed to have links to earlier terror attacks that were thwarted: one against a Paris-bound high-speed train that was foiled by three young Americans in August, and the other against a church in the French capital’s suburbs.

“All my life, I have seen the blood of Muslims flow,” Abaaoud said in a video made public in 2014. “I pray that Allah will break the backs of those who oppose him, his soldiers and his admirers, and that he will exterminate them.”

Belgian authorities suspect him of also helping organize and finance a terror cell in the eastern city of Verviers that was broken up in an armed police raid on Jan. 15, in which two of his presumed accomplices were killed.

WATCH: Footage captures moment gunshots heard at Bataclan, band flees stage

The following month, Abaaoud was quoted by the Islamic State group's English-language magazine, Dabiq, as saying that he had secretly returned to Belgium to lead the terror cell and then escaped to Syria in the aftermath of the raid despite having his picture broadcast across the news.

"I was even stopped by an officer who contemplated me so as to compare me to the picture, but he let me go, as he did not see the resemblance!" Abaaoud boasted.

There was no official comment from the Belgian federal prosecutor's office about Abaaoud's reported role in the Paris attacks, but Belgian police over the weekend announced the arrest of three suspects in Molenbeek, his old neighborhood, and were carrying out numerous searches there Monday.

The hardscrabble area in the west of Brussels has long been considered a focal point of Islamic radicalism and recruitment of foreign fighters to go to Iraq and Syria.

Abaaoud's image became even grimmer after independent journalists Etienne Huver and Guillaume Lhotellier, visiting the Turkish-Syrian frontier, obtained photos and video last year of Abaaoud's exploits across Syria. The material included footage of him and his friends loading a pickup truck and a makeshift trailer with a mound of bloodied corpses.

Before driving off, a grinning Abaaoud tells the camera: "Before we towed jet skis, motorcycles, quad bikes, big trailers filled with gifts for vacation in Morocco. Now, thank God, following God's path, we're towing apostates, infidels who are fighting us."

Huver told The Associated Press Monday the video was too fragmentary to say much about Abaaoud's character, but that he detected some signs the Belgian was moving into a leadership role.

"On the one hand I'm surprised," Huver said of Abaaoud's prominence. "On the other hand, I saw that there were beginnings of something . You can see that he's giving orders. You can feel a charismatic guy who's going up in the world ... You can see a combatant who's ready to climb the ranks."

CTV News

6. [ISIS video details planning of Paris attacks, highlights atrocities](#)

Lori Hinnant

Published Monday, January 25, 2016 4:55AM EST

PARIS - A new video released by the Islamic State group purports to show the extremists who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris committing atrocities in IS-controlled territory while

plotting the slaughter in the French capital that left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. The group also threatens Britain.

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. It also is likely meant to serve as a recruitment tool to rally followers to the extremists' sinister cause.

All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath. Seven of the attackers - four from Belgium and three from France - spoke fluent French. The two others - identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis - spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb near the French national stadium, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the national stadium.

Immediately after the attacks, French President Francois Hollande imposed a nationwide state of emergency that is to remain in place until Feb. 26. Hollande has asked for an extension and reiterated that request Monday.

"No threat will give France pause in what it must do against terrorist. And if I have taken steps to extend the state of emergency, it is because I am aware of the threat and that we will not concede," Hollande said in response to the video.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said the government is studying the video but would not comment on its contents.

The video was apparently filmed before the men slipped back into Europe and contains no footage shot by the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attacks and who died in a police raid on an apartment near the Stade de France.

Instead, it was assembled from news video, amateur video and material shot before the men left for Paris. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One of the suicide bombers that night, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

According to the anti-Islamic State activist group Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, Brahim Abdeslam and two other attackers were trained in Raqqa, the extremist group's stronghold and the capital of its self-proclaimed caliphate.

In the video, as in other Islamic State propaganda trying to drive a wedge between European Muslims and their governments, the men say it is a religious duty to join them.

They threaten more attacks in Europe, and the footage closes with one of the militants holding a severed head and footage of Cameron giving a speech - with a text in English warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers "will be a target for our swords."

The video was released by Alhayat, the Islamic State group's media arm.

7. [*ISIS video shows 9 Paris attackers committed atrocities before attack*](#)

Lori Hinnant

Published Sunday, January 24, 2016 5:55PM EST

Last Updated Sunday, January 24, 2016 7:02PM EST

PARIS -- New video released by the Islamic State group on Sunday shows the extremists who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris committing atrocities in IS-controlled territory while plotting the slaughter in the French capital that left 130 people dead and hundreds injured. The group also threatened to attack Britain.

The 17-minute video shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning was planned in Syria. The video was provided online by the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites.

All nine militants seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath. Seven of the attackers -- four from Belgium and three from France -- spoke fluent French. The two others -- identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis -- spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb near the French national stadium, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the national stadium.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said the government is studying the video but would not comment on its contents. France's Interior Ministry and the Paris prosecutor's office had no immediate comment.

The video was filmed before the men sneaked back into Europe and contains no footage shot by the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attacks.

Instead, it was assembled from material shot before the men left for Paris, news video and amateur video. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room

One militant, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

According to the anti-Islamic State activist group Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, Brahim Abdeslam and two other attackers were trained in Raqqa, the extremist group's stronghold and the capital of its self-proclaimed caliphate.

In the video, as in other Islamic State propaganda trying to drive a wedge between European Muslims and their governments, the men say it is a religious duty to join them. They threaten more attacks in Europe, and the footage closes with one of the militants holding a severed head and footage of Cameron giving a speech -- with a text in English warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers "will be a target for our swords."

8. [*European police warn more terrorist attacks likely, 'particularly in France'*](#)

Lori Hinnant and John-Thor Dahlburg

Published Monday, January 25, 2016 2:23PM EST

Last Updated Monday, January 25, 2016 3:03PM EST

PARIS -- Europe's top police agency issued a stark warning Monday: Islamic State extremists will keep attempting lethal attacks on soft targets in Europe as the militant group increasingly goes global.

Some 2 1/2 months after suicide bombers and gunmen killed 130 people in Paris, the Europol agency said, "there is every reason to expect that IS, IS-inspired terrorists or another religiously inspired terrorist group will undertake a terrorist attack somewhere in Europe again, but particularly in France, intended to cause mass casualties among the civilian population."

The sobering conclusions reached by experts from the European Union's chief agency for law enforcement co-operation and EU member states make clear that many, perhaps virtually all in Europe, may be at risk.

"Without reliable intelligence on the intentions, activities and contacts and travels of known terrorists it is nearly impossible to exactly predict when and where the next terrorist attack will take place, and what form it will take," the Europol report said.

Hours before the report was issued, a new video was released by the Islamic State group celebrating the killers who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in the French capital -- while also threatening fresh bloodshed.

The grisly recording ends with one militant holding a severed head, footage of British Prime Minister David Cameron giving a speech, and an IS warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers "will be a target for our swords."

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath.

All but two of the attackers were from Belgium and France and spoke fluent French. The two others -- identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis -- spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were shown standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the French national stadium. The video glorifying the Kalashnikov-wielding gunmen and suicide bombers responsible for that carnage was probably also meant as a recruitment tool.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said Monday's Europol report did not go markedly beyond previous warnings and was not intended to sow fear but "to look lucidly at reality."

Gilles Kepel, a political scientist who wrote "Terrorism in France," said even if Islamic State extremists carry out new attacks in Europe, the video shows the group is increasingly desperate and likely on the wane -- in part because of the indiscriminate killings Nov. 13.

"They emphasize their ability to be cruel, to kill all their opponents and to terrorize everyone. But what is very striking is that I do not believe that they will have a significant amount of new sympathizers after those videos," he said.

"I believe that it's not really a display of strength. It's rather a display of weakness. Terrorism has its political economy of sorts. You have to terrorize people. On the one hand, you have to spread terror, but at the same time you have to gather sympathizers. If you're not able to have the two going together, then the model fails," he added.

But releasing the video draws attention anew to attacks that terrorized central Paris and shows the group's ability to turn Europeans against their homelands in a relatively short time, said Magnus Ranstorp, a counterterrorism expert at the Swedish National Defence College. The youngest of the group, a 20-year-old, had been in Syria only since February.

"They were not only battle-hardened but they were cruel. Their threshold for killing was low. They wouldn't blink to kill," Ranstorp said. He said the video's release two months after the attacks fell into a typical delay by Islamic State's propaganda apparatus.

Expert reviews conducted by Europol on Nov. 29 and Dec. 1 concluded that the Islamic State "is preparing more terrorist attacks," including copycats of the so-called Mumbai method of coordinated bombings and shootings by multiple teams of assailants that claimed 164 lives in India's financial capital in November 2008.

"The attacks will be primarily directed at soft targets, because of the impact it generates," the Europol report said. "Both the November Paris attacks and the October 2015 bombing of a Russian airliner suggest a shift in IS strategy toward going global."

Numerous independent analysts have conjectured that as Islamic State has increasingly lost ground in Iraq and Syria, including to a U.S.-led international coalition and the Russian military, it has lashed out at its foes abroad.

IS commanders are given tactical freedom depending on local circumstances, making it much harder to detect plots, the report said. That degree of liberty, it said, makes it harder for law enforcement "to detect such plans and identifying the people involved at an early stage."

Calling the danger of extremist violence "the most significant in over 10 years," Europol on Monday also officially opened a new European Counter Terrorism Center at its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. Europol director Rob Wainwright said the new unit will have 40-50 experts in counterterrorism and deal in intelligence-sharing, tracking foreign fighters and sources of illegal financing and firearms, and assisting EU countries in counterterrorism actions and investigations.

Wainwright told a news conference in Amsterdam that over 5,000 EU nationals have been radicalized by fighting with Muslim extremists in Iraq and Syria, and that many have returned home to present a clear and present danger to public safety.

"The current threat demands a strong and ambitious response from the EU," Europol's chief said, referring to the experts' warnings of IS plans for "large-scale attacks on a global stage with a particular focus on targeting Europe."

The IS video released Sunday was shot before the men sneaked back into Europe and contains no footage of the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attack cell.

Instead, it was assembled from material shot before the men left for Paris, news video and amateur video. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in IS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One militant, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

Kepel, an expert in Islamic extremism, predicted the Islamic State's long-term prospects were dim not just in Europe, but in the very territory it most wants to control in Iraq and Syria.

Wages of the fighters have been cut in two because the militants "have no access to the smuggling of oil -- the oil rigs have been bombed and destroyed," he said. "That's one thing. And the morale is not very high. This is one of the reasons they try to boost the morale with those horrendous videos."

Though graphic, it left Parisians uncowed in the neighbourhood where the carnage unfolded the night of Nov. 13, including at the Carillon cafe, where gunman targeted customers out for the evening.

"It's part of their propaganda. This is one of their methods. Of course it's pretty strong because pictures carry a lot of weight," said Gerard Faure. "But I don't think that here, people I know in this neighbourhood, Parisians as a whole are not really afraid."

9. [Another Belgian charged in Paris attacks probe](#)

Published Friday, January 22, 2016 10:50AM EST

BRUSSELS -- Belgian authorities have announced terrorism charges against another Belgian arrested in the investigation of links to the November attacks that killed 130 people in Paris in November.

The Federal Prosecutor's office said Friday a man identified as Zakaria J., born in 1986, had been placed in custody by the investigating judge. He was charged with terrorist murder and participation in the activities of a terrorist group.

The suspect was arrested Wednesday during police raids in the Brussels neighbourhood of Molenbeek, where several Paris attackers had lived or stayed. There was no immediate word on the status of a second man detained Wednesday, a Moroccan identified only as Mustafa E. No weapons or explosives were found during the searches, authorities said.

10. [Morocco arrests Belgian man linked to Paris attackers](#)

Samia Errazzouki

Published Monday, January 18, 2016 11:23AM EST

Last Updated Monday, January 18, 2016 1:44PM EST

RABAT, Morocco -- Moroccan police have arrested a Belgian man of Moroccan descent, saying he is linked to the Islamic State group and had a "direct relationship" to the attackers who killed 130 people in Paris two months ago, the Interior Ministry said Monday.

The man had travelled to Syria with one of the Paris suicide bombers, where he received military training and built relationships with IS field commanders, "including the mastermind" of the

Paris attacks, and others who threatened attacks in France and Belgium, the ministry said in a statement.

The statement identified the suspect only by the initials J.A., and didn't explain his suspected relationship to the Paris attackers.

But Belgian federal prosecutor Eric Van der Sypt told The Associated Press the suspect's name is Gelel Attar, a dual Belgian-Moroccan national previously convicted in Belgium of involvement with a terrorist group. The letters G and J are represented by the same letter in Arabic script.

Several of the Islamic extremists who targeted a Paris rock concert, stadium and cafes on Nov. 13 had Moroccan origins and links to Belgium.

The Moroccan ministry said in a statement that the man was arrested Friday in the town of Mohammedia, near Casablanca, after travelling through Turkey, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. It said the suspect is under investigation.

At least one of the Paris attackers remains at large.

Morocco has emerged as a key ally for European investigators trying to piece together the geography of the Nov. 13 attacks. The head of Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, dubbed the "Moroccan FBI," told the AP in a recent interview that his country put French and Belgian police on the trail of the network behind the Paris attacks.

Several of the attackers lived in the Brussels neighbourhood of Molenbeek, home to many immigrants of Moroccan descent.

Last July, a Brussels court found 30 people guilty of involvement in an operation to recruit foreign fighters for Syria. Some were already in Syria when the trial took place.

Among them: Abdelhamid Abaaoud, ringleader of the Nov. 13 Paris attacks, and Chakib Akrouh, a fellow resident of Molenbeek identified last week as the suicide bomber who blew himself up inside the suburban Paris home in which Abaaoud and his female cousin attempted in vain to hide out from police.

Van der Sypt told the AP Attar was convicted in absentia of taking part in the activities of a terrorist group and sentenced to five years in prison.

Pieter Van Ostaeyen, who monitors the activities of Belgian jihadis and extremists, said Attar, 26, was also from Molenbeek, and that he left Belgium for Syria on Jan. 4, 2013 in the company of Akrouh. He reportedly returned to Belgium that May 28, then travelled to Morocco. Despite being arrested there, he managed to return to Syria, Van Ostaeyen said.

He said Attar also used the name Abou Ibrahim.

CBC News

11. [Paris attacks: Did intelligence fail in France? - World - CBC ...](#)

Alex Shprintsen • Terence McKenna • CBC News January 25, 2016

'If we have 130 people dying in Paris on a Friday in a terrorist attack, it is because the system didn't work'

Following a series of deadly attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, Claude Moniquet, a former French intelligence official, summed up the performance of the security services this way: "Very clearly, if we have 130 people dying in Paris on a Friday in a terrorist attack, it is because the system didn't work."

There are many examples of security breakdowns prior to the carnage, and much has been made of them. But there are a number of others that have received less public attention.

One involved police reaction around the Bataclan concert hall.

Three men, armed with AK-47 assault rifles and explosive vests, attacked the Bataclan, where more than 1,000 people had gathered to see the American band Eagles of Death Metal. At the end of the night, 89 had been killed and more than 100 wounded.

The attack began around 9.40 p.m., but it wasn't until about 12.20 a.m., almost three hours later, that heavily armed French SWAT units stormed the concert hall.

A Bataclan security guard who tried to help people escape said he was hoping for police help much earlier. "They all arrived too late," said Jean-Pierre Betelli.

"Let's just say it was already late for us, because the people who were calling them were in the process of dying," he said. "They [the police] didn't move from their [street] corner to help. They didn't move."

The police were also reticent about helping the wounded outside.

"I heard a woman who was lying there and who was asking for help," said Patrick Zachmann, a freelance photographer who happened to be outside the Bataclan during the attack. "So I told the police there is a wounded woman who is asking for help. And they said, 'we know, we know, but we cannot do anything right now for her.'"

The police had also cordoned off much of the neighbourhood, making it difficult to get help to those who had been hiding in nearby apartments.

Daniel Psenny is a Le Monde journalist whose apartment window faces the Bataclan on a side street. He filmed the famous video of people running out during the shooting, and ended up

being shot himself. He and another wounded man hid in his apartment, where he continued to bleed for hours. But police wouldn't let anyone help them.

"It was very scary. If it took too long, we wouldn't make it," Psenny said. "I mean, it's almost absurd — here you have all the police, all the help, all the ambulances, all the firemen. But no one could come to get us, so we waited for three hours to be liberated."

Another big question about police performance has to do with Salah Abdeslam, the Belgian-born logistical leader of the entire operation, which involved three teams of jihadists. One of Abdeslam's logistical tasks for the operation was to rent cars, and he used his real name. One car used in the attacks, a black Volkswagen Polo, was parked illegally in front of the Bataclan. Police knew it was the attackers' car, and it was towed away soon after the final assault.

Abdeslam, meanwhile, had called some friends in Brussels after the attacks, and they drove to Paris to pick him up and take him back to Belgium. During the trip, their car was stopped three different times along the highway. The French police checked his documents, but they seemed to have nothing on Abdeslam and let him go each time.

The French police had many hours to make the connection between the rented car as Abdeslam was last detained along the highway around 9 a.m. the day after the attacks. Somehow they failed, and Abdeslam is now one of the most-wanted men in the world.

Police services around the world also knew the names of most of the attackers long before Nov. 13, they were aware that a major attack had been planned for Paris, and they even had intelligence that a concert hall would be a target.

And yet they failed to stop it.

But as Moniquet puts it, the West is in a new place now, simply overwhelmed by the numbers of active and potential ISIS terrorists.

"Society must understand that it's extremely difficult to do the job at the moment, because for two decades, intelligence and police services used to deal with a few dozen, maybe a few hundred people on the whole European continent," he said. "Maybe 500 were sympathizers of al-Qaeda 10 years ago. Today we have approximately 10,000 sympathizers of the Islamic State, which makes it mission impossible."

12. [ISIS threatens Britain in video that purports to show Paris attackers' last statements](#)

Jan 25, 2016 12:51 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 25, 2016 5:37 AM ET

A new video released by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria group purports to show the extremists who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris committing atrocities in ISIS-controlled territory while plotting the slaughter in the French capital that left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. The group also threatens Britain.

The 17-minute video, released Sunday, shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. It also is likely meant to serve as a recruitment tool to rally followers to the extremists' sinister cause.

All nine men seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath. Seven of the attackers — four from Belgium and three from France — spoke fluent French. The two others — identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis — spoke in Arabic.

Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot.

"Soon on the Champs-Elysees," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb near the French national stadium, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

The Nov. 13 attacks targeted a packed concert hall, a restaurant and cafe, and a soccer match at the national stadium.

Strike ISIS "again and again"

Immediately after the attacks, French President François Hollande imposed a nationwide state of emergency that is to remain in place until Feb. 26. Hollande has asked for an extension and reiterated that request Monday.

"No threat will give France pause in what it must do against terrorist. And if I have taken steps to extend the state of emergency, it is because I am aware of the threat and that we will not concede," Hollande said in response to the video.

Speaking in India, Hollande said France and its allies will strike ISIS "again and again."

"ISIS is provoking us in the worst possible way," he said.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said the government is studying the video but would not comment on its contents.

No footage from attacks

The video was apparently filmed before the men slipped back into Europe and contains no footage shot by the attackers during the days of terror that began Nov. 13 and ended only on Nov. 18 with the death of Abdelhamid Abbaoud, who was believed to be the leader of the attacks and who died in a police raid on an apartment near the Stade de France.

Instead, it was assembled from news video, amateur video and material shot before the men left for Paris. The video did not specify where the nine men were filmed, but it was believed to have been in ISIS-controlled territory in Syria. Abbaoud is seen simply speaking in a room.

One of the suicide bombers that night, Brahim Abdeslam, is seen at a makeshift shooting range. Abdeslam, whose brother Salah fled Paris that night and remains at large, blew himself up at a Paris cafe where he was the only victim. Salah Abdeslam is not seen in the video.

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In the video, as in other Islamic State propaganda trying to drive a wedge between European Muslims and their governments, the men say it is a religious duty to join them.

They threaten more attacks in Europe, and the footage closes with one of the militants holding a severed head and footage of Cameron giving a speech — with a text in English warning that whoever stands with the unbelievers "will be a target for our swords."

The video was released by Alhayat, the Islamic State group's media arm.

13. [Morocco arrests Belgian man linked to Paris attackers](#)

Moroccan government says suspect detained Monday near Casablanca

Thomson Reuters Posted: Jan 18, 2016 10:48 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 18, 2016 12:27 PM ET

Moroccan authorities have arrested a Belgian national of local origin directly linked to the attackers who carried out the Paris shootings and bombings in November that killed 130 people, the government said in a statement on Monday.

The Interior Ministry gave only the suspect's initials in Arabic and said he fought in Syria with al-Nusra front before joining the Islamic State.

The suspect, whose initials could be translated to J.A. or G.A., was arrested on Jan. 15 in the city of Mohammedia, the statement added. "He went to Syria with one of the suicide bombers of Saint Denis," it said.

Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a 28-year-old Belgian militant who authorities said was the ringleader of the Paris attacks, was killed with other suspects days after when police raided a house in the Saint Denis suburb.

Investigations showed that during his stay in Syria he has built solid ties with Islamic State leaders including the ringleader of the Paris attacks.

The suspect was trained to handle different weapons and guerrilla tactics but left Syria through Turkey, Germany, Belgium then Netherlands from where he came to Morocco.

Morocco provided the tip-off that enabled French police to locate Abaaoud, has been holding Abaaoud's brother Yassine since October and has issued an arrest warrant for Salah Abdeslam, who is suspected of taking part in the attacks and is on the run.

14. [Mohamed-Aggad, deceased, ID'd as a Bataclan attacker](#)

Posted: Dec 09, 2015 4:19 AM ET Last Updated: Dec 09, 2015 12:48 PM ET

It took a text message from Syria to a mother in northeast France to reveal the identity of the third killer at the Bataclan concert venue in Paris: Your son died as a martyr Nov. 13.

For nearly four weeks, police had failed to identify the third gunman who stormed the concert venue along with two French Islamic extremists, killing nearly three-quarters of the total 130 people who died in the Paris attacks.

Then, about 10 days ago, Foued Mohamed-Aggad's mother in Strasbourg received a text message in English announcing her son's death "as a martyr" — a typical way that the Islamic State group notifies families of casualties. She gave French police a DNA sample which showed that one of her sons was killed inside the Bataclan, his brother's lawyer said, confirming an account by French officials, who requested anonymity to release details of the investigation.

"Without the mother, there would have been nothing," said the lawyer, Francoise Cotta.

France may consider public Wi-Fi ban during emergencies

Eagles of Death Metal return to Bataclan concert site

The news announced Wednesday further confirms that the deadly Paris attacks were carried out largely, if not entirely, by Europeans trained by Islamic State extremists.

All the Nov. 13 attackers identified so far have been from France or Belgium, native French speakers who wanted to join ISIS extremists. The Bataclan attackers, who carried automatic weapons and wore suicide vests, were responsible for the worst of the carnage.

Mohamed-Aggad left Strasbourg for Syria in December 2013, a French judicial official said, at a time when about a dozen young men from the eastern French city headed to the war zone. Some returned of their own will — including his brother — telling investigators they were disgusted by

what they had seen. Their suspected recruiter for ISIS, Mourad Fares, is also under arrest in France. All are charged with terror-related offences and face trial.

Cotta said Mohamed-Aggad had told his family months ago that he was going to be a suicide bomber in Iraq and had no intention of returning to France. She told The Associated Press that Mohamed-Aggad was flagged as a radical but there was no warrant for his arrest.

"What kind of human being could do what he did?" his father, Said, told The Parisien newspaper. "If I had known he would do something like this, I would have killed him."

The other two Bataclan attackers, Omar Ismail Mostefai and Samy Amimour, were also French. Two of the three gunmen detonated their explosives when police special forces moved in, while the third was shot by an officer and his explosives went off.

French-speaking Islamic State fighters, primarily from France and Belgium, tend to live and fight together. Mohamed-Aggad's arrival in Syria coincides approximately with that of the two men who died with him inside the Bataclan, and with that of the suspected architect of the attacks, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who was widely believed to be a leader of the francophone combat unit.

ID work to do

There is still identification work for the police to do. One of the Paris attackers, who was killed along with Abaaoud on Nov. 18 in a police raid on a hideout nearby, remains unidentified. Two of the suicide bombers at the French national stadium carried Syrian passports that are believed to be fake. France has released their photos in hopes of identifying them.

"What is important is that the investigation is progressing, that the accomplices are found out, that arrests happen," French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said Wednesday.

"This will all take time. And in the face of the terrorist threat that is unfortunately here, we need to carry on with this work of tracking down terrorists because we are at war with radical Islam, with Daesh," he said, using an Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group, which claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Attackers who struck Paris that night included three suicide bombers at the stadium, a squad who shot at bars and restaurants, a suicide bomber at a restaurant and the three gunmen at the Bataclan.

But the Bataclan was by far the deadliest attack. The three gunmen came in shooting, opening fire on the audience and the band, Eagles of Death Metal, according to police and witness accounts. Most of the victims were gunned down in the first few minutes, with a handful held hostage for nearly three hours, until the final police assault.

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When country's nightmare became reality, the French intelligence establishment was trapped in the dark

By Don Murray, CBC News Posted: Nov 14, 2015 11:46 AM ET Last Updated: Nov 14, 2015 5:22 PM ET

Bloody Friday was the nightmare scenario that had preyed on the minds of French police, judges and military and intelligence chiefs.

"I'm convinced that the men of ISIS have both the ambition and the means to hit us much harder and to organize much bigger actions, in no way comparable to the ones up to now," said Marc Trévedic, who was until earlier this year a senior investigating judge with responsibility for terrorist acts.

"The darkest days are ahead of us. The real war that ISIS wants to wage on our soil hasn't yet started."

Trévedic said that about a month ago.

Yet when the nightmare became reality last night, the French intelligence establishment was trapped in the dark, apparently unaware of the number of assailants and the careful planning that resulted in the worst domestic attacks in the country's history.

"This is an act of war.... France will be merciless toward the barbarians."

Those were the words of French President François Hollande on the dark morning after. But the actions of his government sent a different message. A national state of emergency; schools, museums and theatres closed until further notice in the Paris region; a ban on public marches and demonstrations — all this spoke of a government on the defensive, unsure of where and when the next attack might come.

France has much to fear. Officials number at least 570 French jihadists who have managed to get to Syria to fight. One anti-terrorism police officer described them as time-bombs if and when they return to France.

Just 10 months ago, masked men attacked the office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and then a Jewish kosher supermarket. In three days, 20 people were killed, including the three assailants. They were jihadists and their targets were Jews as well as journalists who had printed cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad.

In response, the French government sent soldiers into the streets to permanently patrol in front of the new offices of Charlie Hebdo as well as synagogues and Jewish schools.

I live about 10 minutes away from the Charlie Hebdo attack and there is a Jewish college on our street.

On each school day since the January killings, a squad of four to six heavily armed soldiers has stood guard in front of the school. What was reassuring in the first weeks took on a grimmer hue as summer stretched into autumn. If the soldiers were still there, the government must believe that the danger had not receded.

And it hadn't.

'Tonight Paris is Beirut'

The morning after the latest bloody attacks, France was frozen. Three days of national mourning were decreed. Political leaders from left to far right lined up to express solidarity with President Hollande. The campaign for countrywide regional elections, to be held in three weeks, was temporarily suspended.

Marine Le Pen, leader of the extreme-right National Front, was discreet. But just below the surface, rancour bubbled.

On the right and the far right it was tweeted openly. "Tonight Paris is Beirut," one right-wing MP offered, referring to the attacks in Lebanon earlier this week. "Logical for a country becoming Lebanonized."

"This is the result of a lax approach and the mosqueization of France," a far-right standard bearer said.

ISIS, in a communiqué in French, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The message hinted that most of the suicide attackers were French. It also directly linked the attacks to French participation in the anti-ISIS bombing campaign in Syria.

Taken together with the poisonous right-wing tweets, the mixture is explosive. Soon, the political truce will be broken. A backlash against French Muslims can be expected along with stoked-up right-wing rhetoric decrying the flood of Syrian refugees and migrants into Europe.

The next weeks and months in France will not be pretty.

Attackers adjust tactics

It is a grim and terrible irony that, despite the military show of force day after day in the streets around the January attack, much of Friday night's carnage took place just steps away. The Bataclan concert hall is less than 200 metres from the Charlie Hebdo offices, where most of its journalists were slain.

The attackers clearly adjusted their tactics. Rather than targeting specific people — Jews, journalists — they targeted anyone at all. The goal was indiscriminate killing, mass bloodshed.

It could have been much worse: The three suicide bombers at the soccer stadium managed to kill only themselves and one other person. But the men wielding submachine guns and killing people in cafés and at the Bataclan were horrendously effective.

There was a slightly unreal calm in the streets just south of the killing zone on Saturday. People lined up at the butcher's. Cafés were far from empty.

Televisions blared the news that everyone knew. Few commented on the attacks unless asked. And then, a shrug and talk of carrying on, of the bitter taste of the aftermath, of a feeling akin to a hangover.

For these people, wars used to be faraway events brought closer by television reports in two-minute slices. I myself used to go to war zones to work and then leave, shedding the experience like the skin of another life.

It's quite a different and unnerving sensation to hear the sirens in the night, to see the wounded being carried away on stretchers in the next street and to realize that the war zone is now on your doorstep.