Fact or framing?

**An analysis of five national Dutch newspaper articles on the assaults of 31 December 2015 in Cologne**



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# Executive summary

In January 2016, several newspapers reported on the sexual assault of women at Dom Square in Cologne. The aim of this study was to find out, whether the sexual assaults that occurred in Cologne in 2015 were the result of facts or framing. The scope of this research is based on 87 letters to the editor, and articles which were published in five Dutch newspapers from 5-17 January 2016. This research was drawn from the academic database LexisNexis. The Dutch newspapers which were selected for this research were: *Trouw*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *NRC Handelsblad*, *The Telegraaf* and *The Volkskrant*.

The definition of framing, which is used in this research, was provided by Stanton. The author defines framing as, “the act of shaping and forming a story so that it resonates with a particular viewpoint” (Stanton, 2007, p. 236). Two types of frames have been identified: the episodic frame, and the thematic frame. According to Iyengar, the episodic frame “leads to the blaming of individuals, typically politicians for social problems” (as cited in Ott & Mack, p.68). However, the thematic frame “tends to hold all of us responsible for social ills” (idem). The definition of a fact in this research was established by Patterson and Wilkins. These authors determined whether information was presented with, “no apparent bias” (Wilkins & Patterson, 2008, p.126).

In this research, two types of methods were used. Journalists from the five selected newspapers were approached in order to gather qualitative research. However, this approach yielded no results. The quantitative research was based on 87 articles and letters to the editor. These articles were organized around 16 different themes and how frequently each theme was mentioned in the selected newspapers. Ultimately, three main themes were selected: refugees (immigration), sexual assault and women. A discourse analysis was carried out on the denominations “refugees” and “women”.

The conclusion of this research states, that the facts that have been confirmed are the date and location of the sexual assaults. The time of the assaults was determined to be after 11 P.M. on 31 December 2015. The location of the assaults was Dom Square in Cologne. It also concludes that additional research is needed. This study recommends practicing more ‘slow journalism’ and spending more money on editors abroad. This is merely an initial assessment; however, newspapers could also print disclaimers when not all of the facts surrounding an event are known at the time of publication.

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# List of abbreviations

AD – Dutch national newspaper “Algemeen Dagblad”

NRC – Dutch national newspaper “NRC Handelsblad”

TG – Dutch national newspaper “The Telegraaf”

TR – Dutch national newspaper “Trouw”

VK- Dutch national newspaper “The Volkskrant”

EU – European Union

MS – member state of the European Union

UNHCR – The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Introduction

In January 2016, the media paid considerable attention to the sexual assaults and other crimes which were committed in Cologne. The available evidence seems to suggest, that the women who were present at Dom Square in Cologne reported sexual assault and theft. After 14 days, over 500 reports had been submitted relating to the assaults. On 16 January, Sterre Lindhout wrote an article in The Volkskrant. The article concluded, that at that point, 652 reports had been submitted (Lindhout, S., 2016, VK-22).

The aim of this study is to find out, if the reporting of the sexual assaults in Cologne has shown any indication of facts or framing. According to media scholar Richard Stanton, framing is, “the act of shaping and forming a story so that it resonates with a particular viewpoint” (Stanton, 2007, p. 236). According to Patterson and Wilkins, the presentation of information with, “no apparent bias” is the definition of a fact (Wilkins & Patterson, 2008, p.126). This study draws on research previously conducted by Brambilla-Hall, Teo, and Berg (Teo, 2000; Brambilla-Hall, 2010; Berg, 2014). The scope of this research is based on articles that were published on the assaults in Cologne between 5 January and 17 January 2016. According to the data available, which was accessed via the LexisNexis database, a total of 87 articles and letters to the editor have been published. The data gathered on these articles can be found in Appendices I and II and the results section. It should be noted that letters to the editor, should be excluded from scientific research. However, Stanton’s reasoning may prove to be an argument for the inclusion of these letters. Stanton proposes that, “letters to the editor are an underrated but highly valuable tactic in the strategic campaign. A letter has the capacity to introduce an issue or event to stakeholders or to keep alive an issue that begins to fall away before it is supposed to” (Stanton, 2007, p.56). Stanton’s evidence on the importance of these letters, has led to the inclusion of the material in this dissertation.

The five newspapers selected for this research are, *The Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, NRC Handelsblad, Trouw and The Volkskrant*. The articles that have been obtained from these sources may be essential to finding out whether the reporting on the assaults, was based on facts or framing. According to data published by the CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics), the Netherlands currently has upwards of 17 million inhabitants ("Bevolkingsteller", 2016). The evidence available seems to suggest, that 10 million people are currently regular readers of the newspapers selected for this research ("AD, de Persgroep", 2016;"de Volkskrant, de Persgroep", 2016; "Oplage Telegraaf daalt, maar bereik neemt toe", 2016; "Trouw, de Persgroep", 2016; "NRC Handelsblad", 2016). A key limitation of this research is the fact that, apart from the articles in Geenstijl, internet reporting has not been explored any further. Due to insufficient time and resources, media broadcasts about the assaults have not been considered.

With this research, the author hopes to illuminate the importance of journalism in modern society. The research aims to elaborate on the differences, between the limitations that traditional journalism provides, as opposed to internet reporting. It also aims to find out how often the episodic and thematic frames have been part of the newspaper articles, on the assaults in Cologne.

As previously mentioned in this introduction, Stanton’s definition of framing has been selected for this research. To make this concept more manageable, Iyengar’s theory of framing has also been included. This author has split the concept of framing into two different definitions. In Iyengar’s view, “episodic and thematic news frames strongly influence how citizens assign responsibility for social problems. Whereas the episodic frame leads to the blaming of individuals, typically politicians for social problems, the thematic frame tends to hold all of us accountable for social ills” (as cited in Ott and Mack, 2010, p.68). Wilkins and Patterson argue objectivity is to “inform accurately and with no apparent bias” (Wilkins & Patterson, 2008, p. 126). The authors support this theory by indicating that the message should contain facts and information (idem). Therefore, the main subject of this dissertation is:

**Fact or framing? An analysis of five national Dutch newspaper articles on the assaults of 31 December 2015 in Cologne.**

The main question of this research has been divided into three sub questions. The questions will be summarised in the conclusion of this dissertation.

1. What are the main recurring themes in these five newspapers?

This question will be the focus of the methods section in this dissertation. It shall feature data on these themes, and an explanation of the selection of each theme in the articles on the assaults.

1. Have the newspaper articles indicated a particular type of frame when reporting on the assaults in Cologne?

The results section may indicate whether the episodic or the thematic frame has been used by various journalists who work for these five Dutch national newspapers.

1. Are there any similarities in the various ways these assaults were reported on, and do such similarities indicate factual information?

The conclusion will reveal the answers to the above questions, and determine whether the way these assaults were reported on, are based on fact or framing.

Figure 1.1 presents the number of articles and letters published on the assaults in Cologne from 5 January until 17 January 2016.

Figure 1.1: Articles and letters to the editor published by newspaper from 5 January until 17 January 2016 on the sexual assaults in Cologne.

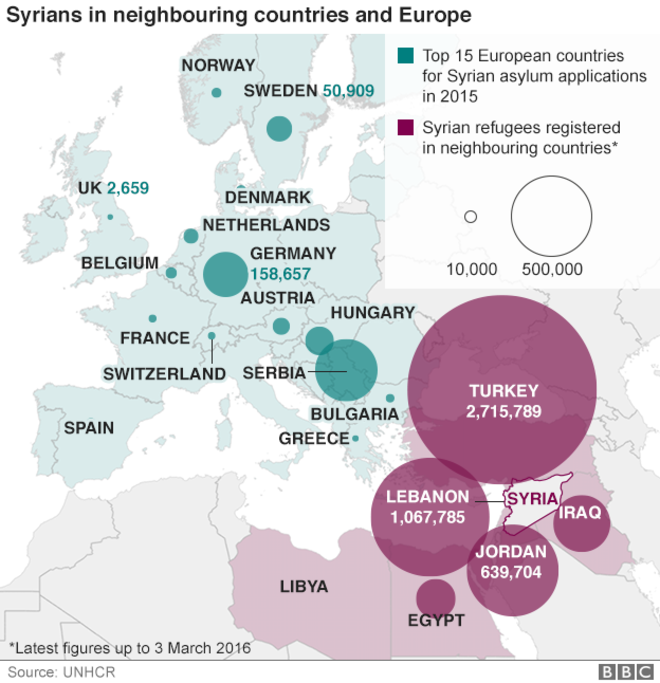
To summarise this dissertation, the following paragraph has been organised with the use of several subsections. The historical and political background to the assaults will be explored in the theoretical framework. Further research into this area includes the definition of a refugee, the workings of the internal market and the Dublin regulation. In the literature review, this study draws on research conducted by Brambilla-Hall, Teo and Berg. Secondly, it mentions the definitions of framing, and adds several (possible) influences to traditional journalism. The website *GeenStijl* has been selected, even though internet media is not the main focus of this dissertation. This website has been selected because it is not controlled by an editor, or politics of traditional journalism. For example, *GeenStijl* uses a moderator, but this person is only able to delete malicious comments*.* A closer look at the website data of *GeenStijl*, provided by TMG media, reveals that this website has 2 million daily visitors (TMG, 2016). Furthermore, the methods section explains the selection and results of the quantitative and qualitative research. The first question will be answered using quantitative research. At the same time, this section explains how the articles for the quantitative research have been obtained. The results of this research can be found in Appendices I and II. To simplify the results, these 16 themes have been divided into four separate groups. The 16 themes are, crime, sexual assault, sexual violence, verbal assault, theft, safety, women, police, education, politics, immigration, deportation, xenophobia, religion, culture, gender equality and Islam. Only three themes have been selected, as the scope of each separate theme could be the subject of a dissertation. In this dissertation, the three selected themes are, women, refugees (immigration), and sexual assault. In addition, the results section provides the data on the episodic and thematic frame of the articles. A summary of Appendix III is provided as well. A similar comparison is conducted using the words “girl” and “woman”. Moreover, newspapers have published articles on the press conference by the German mayor of Cologne. The quotes from this press conference are gathered in this section. In the analysis section, the discourse research shall focus on the use of four words: *girl*, *woman*, *asylum seeker* and *refugee*. These words may help to determine, what type of frame occurred in relation to the assaults in Cologne. In the conclusion, the three abovementioned sub-questions will be answered.

# Theoretical framework

Based on the evidence that is currently available, this theoretical framework attempts to explain the situation in Europe prior to the assaults in Cologne. Since 2011, Syria has been engaged in a civil war. The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) claims that “4.5 million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict” (Rodgers, Gritten, Offer & Asare, 2016). In the past five years, the European Union has accommodated Syrian refugees. According to data provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 38% of refugees in Europe in 2016 are citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic. Under the Geneva Treaty, Syrian citizens are entitled to protection from other countries (UNHCR, 2016).

The definition of a refugee is premised on an assumption established in the Geneva Treaty. The Geneva Treaty states that a refugee is a citizen who is “unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, 2016, p. 3). Figure 1.2 shows that Syrian refugees have fled to Europe. According to the BBC, only 10% of these Syrian refugees have fled to European countries (Rodgers, Gritten, Offer & Asare, 2016). A major drawback to this approach is that it omits illegal immigration. It is possible, that the true number of refugees exceeds the number the UNHCR has mentioned.

Since the objective of this research is to separate fact from frame, evidence has been collected on the use of the words “refugee” and “asylum seeker” in Appendix III. The first two paragraphs of this framework establish that Syrian refugees are entitled to protection by the European Union. For this research, it is important to know why and how the refugees came to Europe, because they have been mentioned in relation to the articles on the assaults. In addition, it is imperative for this research to establish which terms were used for the perpetrators of the assaults.

Figure 1.2: Chart showing the number of Syrian applications for asylum in 2015 (BBC, 2016)

If Syrian refugees enter the European Union, they are instantly subject to EU legislation. According to article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, regulations are binding legislative acts, adopted by the European Union (van Ooik, R.H. & Vandamme, T.A.J.A, 2010, p.126). The data appears to suggest that the first law refugees come into contact with is the Dublin regulation (343/2003). This regulation prevents asylum seekers from applying for residency in more than one member state at the same time. Under the Dublin regulation, refugees apply for citizenship by providing their fingerprints to the authorities of these countries, to start the asylum procedure (Christodoulakis, 2003).

As border patrols were abolished in 1993, citizens of the European Union are allowed to migrate freely. This principle is recorded in article 45, which allows for the free movement of “goods, services, capital, and people” (van Ooik & Vandamme, 2010, p. 46). European Union member states use the internal market for exactly these purposes. Therefore, this research develops the claim that this regulation has also provided opportunities for refugees to travel further into other European Union member states. Since border patrols have been abolished, refugees are free to cross the border.

The TFEU also mentions the Geneva Treaty. In article 78 of this Treaty, there is an explanation of the common asylum policy within the EU. Moreover, article 79 continues this to develop the issue, but also mentions that “the Union shall develop a common immigration policy, aimed at ensuring, at all stages, the efficient management of migration flows, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in member states, and the prevention of, and enhanced measures to combat illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings” (van Ooik & Vandamme, 2010, p. 54, 55). Since the EU is currently unable to meet these goals, NGOs have tried to step in by providing healthcare and food for refugees.

For example, Vrij Nederland has written an account on two Syrian-Kurdish citizens, Yasser and Aya. The article indicates that refugees are aware of the services each member state could provide, should they choose to reside there. “[..]Syrian citizens, who had taken these routes, told him not to provide other European countries with his fingerprints” (idem). This account indicates that refugees are aware of the Dublin regulation and know how to use this regulation to their advantage.

In 2016, the European Commission drew up a plan to relieve some pressure from three member states that received a total of 120,000 asylum applications. According to the Commission, these member states were Greece, Hungary and Italy (European Commission, 2016). On 9 January, Robert Fico, the Slovakian Prime Minister, said “Not only are we refusing mandatory quotas, we will never make a voluntary decision that would lead to the formation of a united Muslim community in Slovakia” (Fenton, 2016). However, evidence suggests that other member states shared Fico’s opinion on the redistribution of refugees (Goclowski & Heneghan, 2016). According to BBC News, “Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary voted against accepting mandatory quotas” (BBC News, 2015). The course of action of these member states is in conflict with the Geneva Treaty, as all Syrian refugees are entitled to seek refuge in the European Union.

In contrast to Fico’s response, Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, decided differently. In 2015, she surprised friend and foe alike by 'opening the doors' to refugees in order to set an example for other European countries (The Guardian, 2015; Yohannes, 2015; Smale & Surk, 2015; Millward, 2015). The results in both Merkel’s case and Fico’s indicate that the response to the influx of refugees was subject to different opinions from heads of state throughout the European Union.

# Literature review

This literature review, explains the theoretical background of the sexual assaults that took place in Cologne. It mentions research previously conducted on newspaper discourse analysis, and mentions one dissertation on internet reporting. The review also mentions the concept of framing and Orientalism. Moreover, the review further explains the theories on discourse. Other themes that are explained in this dissertation are examples, and theories on the limitations that reporters may experience. These terms are, pack journalism, yellow journalism, and a code of conduct for Dutch journalists. Finally, the review mentions the agenda-setting purpose that a newspaper may use to its advantage.

The research draws on dissertations conducted by Brambilla-Hall, Berg, and Teo. These scholars have investigated discourse analysis in newspapers. In Brambilla-Hall’s dissertation, speech acts in three different newspapers in the United Kingdom concerning 2010 student protests are investigated (Brambilla-Hall, S., 2012). The author is inclined to investigate whether the reporting on the student protests was politically influenced by the news outlets he investigated. Teo uses discourse analysis in his dissertation in order to identify racism in two Australian newspapers (Teo, 2000). For the data concerning internet reporting, Berg’s dissertation on the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul, Turkey, was consulted (Berg, 2014).

The current literature on framing defines the term in several different ways. The key concept is best defined by Stanton, who states that framing is "the act of shaping and forming a story so that it resonates with a particular viewpoint” (Stanton, 2007, p. 236). Iyengar’s theory separates the concept of framing into the episodic and the thematic frame. In the episodic frame, politicians are generally blamed for the situation at hand; in the thematic frame, society is blamed for social ills (as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p. 68).

According to Edward Said’s geopolitical view (Orientalism), Western countries are able to ‘shape’ reporting on people of non-Western origin. Said argues that “There is power in the ability of Western countries to create particular understandings of the rest of the world, or to classify weaker countries and their inhabitants” (as cited in Flint, C., 2012, p. 97). In her article on the assaults in Cologne, Stoter-Boscolo elaborated on this concept. The author provided statistical data on violence and assault. She also added data on whether women were able to get divorced in certain Islamic countries (Stoter-Boscolo, 2016, Tr-15). However, in the same article, she mentions that she has never been assaulted sexually and that “Most Arab and North-African men are not violent or criminal in nature”, adding that she has “never observed this type of behavior in them” (idem). Given this example, Stoter-Boscolo’s views may have been grounded in Said’s definition of Orientalism. Stoter-Boscolo’s article is written on the premise that the culprits who assaulted women in Cologne were men of Islamic origin. To support her case, she provides data on divorce rates and violence against women in Islamic countries. In addition, she uses anecdotal evidence of her experiences in the Middle East that men “are not like that”. Edward Said has explained the assumption that “by this he meant the institutionalised assumption of non-Western cultures as ‘uncivilised’, ‘backward’, ‘child-like’ and even ‘barbaric’ and ‘primitive’ in such a manner that it pervaded government, academic and popular culture circles” (as cited in Flint, C., 2012, p.97).

A closer look at the literature collected indicates that there are several definitions of discourse. Firstly, Genette writes, discourse is “the actual words, written or spoken, used to tell a story” (as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p.112). In the reporting on the assaults, journalists tried to recreate the ‘story’ of which incident occurred at what time. Therefore, this definition has been selected as discourse. The critical analysis of James Paul Gee may also prove to be useful in this context. Unlike Genette, Gee does not focus on how language works, but aims instead “to speak to, and perhaps intervene in, institutional, social or political issues, problems and controversies in the world” (Gee, 2014, p.9). Secondly, the theoretical framework is based on Hartley’s definition of discourse. Hartley writes that discourse “[…] is best understood as the different kinds of *use* to which language is put. Hence, in order to understand a discourse, we need to look more closely at the social, political and historical conditions of its production and consumption, because its ‘determinants’ will shape what it says, the way it develops, the status it enjoys, the people who use it, the uses to which it is put and so on” (Hartley, 1982, p.6). Hartley’s quote is related to the importance of the thematic framework, which has focussed on the political and historical context of this dissertation. This definition also corresponds with the basic premises of Gee’s theory of discourse analysis. Thirdly, reporters are also able to influence a story by using a certain set of quotes in an article. Van Ginneken states that news agencies “[…] do not say ‘this or that is the case’ but ‘so-and-so said there and then that this or that is the case’. In this way, the statement of someone’s point of view can be transformed into a ‘fact’ or factoid” (van Ginneken, 1997, p.103).

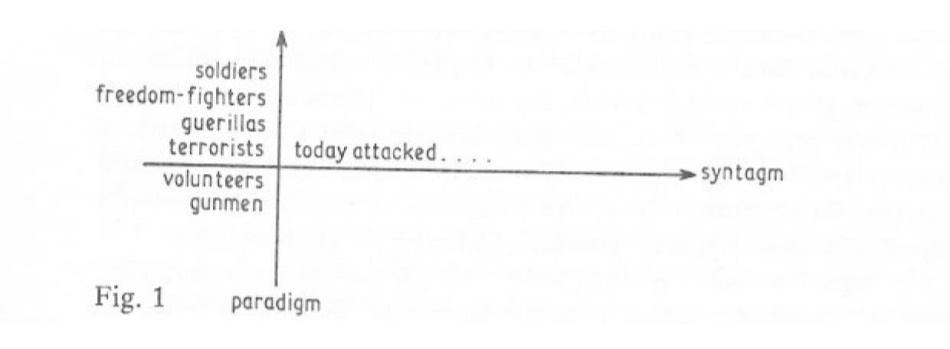


Figure 1.3 Paradigm and Syntagm (Hartley, 1982, p. 20)

In Fig. 1.3, the illustration of a news report is provided. In order to provide a deeper explanation of this chart, Barthes’s theory may add something to this figure. According to Barthes, “the word lion evokes the mental image of a large cat” (as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p.105). In Hartley’s figure, a soldier may evoke the image of a man with a weapon wearing a uniform. Barthes then states that “connotation is second-order signification and operates at the level of ideology and myth” (idem). Barthes adds that even though the word lion is just a word, the mental image “will evoke other associations (new signifieds) such as ‘courage’ and ‘pride’” (idem). Figure 1.3 could also be applied to Hartley’s theory. A soldier may fight for the notion of nationalism, as an extension of the government. On the contrary, guerrillas could be a unit of (unorganized) citizens who may be in conflict with the government or any other form of authority. Both terms may have a positive or a negative connotation. In a practical setting, the consensus view of these two authors appears to be that the concept of a soldier is supposed to bring peace to citizens. However, a guerrilla fighter may attempt to go against a soldier’s philosophy. On the contrary, if the government is corrupted, the guerrilla fighter may provide the same sense of security to citizens as the accomplishments of a soldier in times of peace. In the analysis section, the words associated with asylum seekers and refugees (the perpetrators) and women and girls (victims) will be investigated. Figure 1.3 may help explain the kind of discourse that has been used in relation to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as women and girls, on the basis of Genette’s and Barthes’ definition of discourse.

With the use of discourse, this study aims to address the gap between pressures journalists face and the representation of the truth in a factual manner. It also mentions the limitations of traditional journalism and briefly, mentions internet reporting.

Journalists may be subject to other external pressures as well. For example, deadlines mean time limits. According to Randall, the time span until a deadline for journalists is only 15 hours. Due to this limitation, he proposes that newspapers issue a disclaimer: “Every daily newspaper ought to print a disclaimer in each issue. It would read something like this: ‘This paper, and the hundreds of thousands of words it contains, has been produced in about 15 hours by a group of fallible human beings, working out of cramped offices while trying to find out what happened in the world from people who are sometimes reluctant to tell us and at other times, positively obstructive’” (Randall, 2011, p.16). In his book, *The Universal Journalist,* he also provides a case study of the suicide of an Australian news anchor:

What, you may ask, was the story of a sad and common occurrence doing in a newspaper 11 time zones away? The answer was in the picture that accompanied the story. The person who had taken their own life was a young Australian television newsreader. She was young, female, and crucially for the editor that ran the story, strikingly pretty. She would not have looked out of place as the love interest in a Hollywood movie, and this, I think is the sole reason this article was printed. If the subject had been over 40, or anything less than beautiful, or male, then the story would simply not have been published 11,000 miles away (Randall, 2011, p.34).

Randall mentions, that people who are used for news stories or features must conform to various “social, age, gender and attractiveness standards” (Randall, 2011, p.35). In the news articles on what happened on New Year’s Eve in Cologne, only three newspapers have published interviews with men (Loonen, P. & Bakker, A., 2016, TG-6; De Graaf, P., 2016, VK-1; Lindhout, 2016, VK-22; Wierd, D., 2016, AD-10). The newspapers that took this approach are *Algemeen Dagblad*, *The Telegraaf,* and *The Volkskrant*. As a result of this selection, three newspapers have published accounts of men who may have been present at Dom Square at the time of the assaults. In the reporting, the identity of the perpetrators took precedence over the interest of women. In fact, these reports lacked witness accounts of other men, who might have a different perspective than the women who were present. This is assumed, given that these men were not being attacked.

Another factor that may influence reporting is the concept of “pack journalism”. Given that the assaults took place in Germany, though the articles used in this research were published in Dutch newspapers, pack journalism was a relevant concept. This term could be linked to Randall’s theory on deadlines. Journalists may feel pressed for time, and in order to make a deadline, they may exchange information and choose to follow the frame that other reporters have chosen.

These are the factors that may influence reporting as set out by the definition of pack journalism:

1. The lack of transportation may force journalists to share rides.

2. The lack of accommodations may allow journalists to share food, drink, and conversation.

3. There may be a limited number of improvised guides or translators. (van Ginneken, 1997, p.135).

In the eighteenth century, *The Morning Journal* was owned by William Randolph Hearst and yellow journalism abounded. The basic premises of this theory are based on the assumption that the journalists who were employed by Hearst were influenced by the world view of the paper’s owner (Ott & Mack, 2010, p.56; Randall, 2011, p.17). According to Ott & Mack, Hearst’s yellow journalism was known as: “a style that lacked any social responsibility and privileged sensational and even fabricated stories and photos” (2010, p. 56). It should be noted that whereas van Ginneken has established other pressures that may be at work (deadlines etc.), the work ethic of reporters at *The Morning Journal* indicated that there is no objectivity in this type of reporting.

Furthermore, Patterson and Wilkins have provided an explanation for the lack of editors abroad: “Good journalism is often expensive, and in an era of static subscriptions and sometimes unreliable revenues, few newsrooms enjoy budgets as large as in past years. […] newspapers have pulled back on overseas correspondents, leaving coverage of foreign news to the wires and CNN” (Patterson & Wilkins, 2008, p. 221). A major drawback to this approach is the fact that at the time of the assaults, no reporters were present. Therefore, the secondary data that Dutch reporters had access to was provided by the German police force and other German media outlets.

In 2007, Pleijter and Frye published a report on the necessity of a behavioural code for journalists in the Netherlands. This view is very much in line with Ott and Mack, who agree that journalists are the link between civilians and politics (Pleijter and Frye, 2007, p. 9; Ott & Mack, 2010, p.42). These authors have acknowledged that journalists have to practice social responsibility towards their audience. The consensus view appears to be that journalism should have a set of rules, in relation to ethics and the representation of facts. However, the report contends that in the Netherlands, “anyone can call themselves a journalist” (Pleijter and Frye, 2007, p. 17). This concept is most likely to be linked with the freedom of speech, which is established in article 7 of the Dutch constitution ("Artikel 7: Vrijheid van meningsuiting; censuurverbod - Nederlandse grondwet", 2016). As a response to the assaults in Cologne, various Dutch citizens have written letters to the editor.

The relevance of this research is proven by the fact that media audiences may use news items to shape their world view. After the assaults in Cologne occurred, various people in politics responded to the event. According to Ott and Mack, media outlets have the power to keep certain issues out of the press and to set the agenda for others (Ott & Mack, 2010, p.42). The authors also added: “In addition to gatekeeping and agenda-setting, the major media conglomerates exercise an important framing function. Framing describes the viewpoint or perspective that is employed by the news and entertainment media when covering social and political issues […] media frames create particular windows through which audiences view issues” (idem). This also aligns with Stanton’s definition of framing, though it adds the public as a participant in the framing of political or social issues. Van Ginneken’s and Ott and Mack’s approaches have been selected since newspapers have chosen to omit or write about these responses. Therefore, the analysis of the newspaper articles may provide an indication of what kind of issues a newspaper would like its readers to think about. These thoughts may be influenced by the selection of quotes as well.

After the assaults in Cologne, Dutch websites reported on the event. As mentioned by Pleijter and Frye, Dutch citizens are allowed to voice their opinion. Article 7 of the Dutch constitution, affirms this claim ("Artikel 7: Vrijheid van meningsuiting; censuurverbod - Nederlandse grondwet", 2016). An example of a website which does not adhere to the rules set out by Pleijter and Frye, is *Geenstijl*. According to statistical data, this website generates 2 million unique visitors per month (TMG, 2016). The site reports on *GeenStijl.nl* on the assaults in Cologne could be considered offensive but direct. The results of these articles can be found in Appendix IV. The website’s reporting has been included to provide a view that is not purely based on traditional journalism.

Reporters, who are bound to an institution, must answer to both a journalistic code and external interests. Although the yellow journalism of the 1800’s has been replaced by a more responsible form of journalism, the opinion of the editor and advertisement agencies may continue to influence reporting. The editor is in charge of the newsworthiness of each item, and which letters to the editor are most likely to reach the general public. Moreover, letters to the editor can be used to “keep a story alive” (Stanton, 2007, p. 84). In addition, advertisement revenues are pivotal to keeping the newspaper from going bankrupt. In an ideal situation, journalists are free to write articles about current events without being subjected to censorship by external stakeholders. However, due to the Dutch constitution, and the fact that anyone can call themselves a journalist, people other than journalists are also entitled to voice their opinion. Without freedom of speech in the Netherlands, the use of letters to the editor and articles on *Geenstijl* would not have been part of this dissertation.

In conclusion, this literature review has identified previously conducted research on newspaper discourse. The definition of framing has been provided, as has a definition of what is understood to be a fact. An example of Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism was illustrated by a news article by Stoter-Boscolo. The review included various definitions of discourse and included limitations of journalism due to external pressures. Finally, the agenda-setting power a newspaper possesses was elaborated upon.

# Methods

In this section, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in relation to the dissertation is explained. The section focuses on how the materials for this research were obtained. It also focuses on who has been approached for interviews, and which method was used for this approach. The selection method used to determine the 16 themes identified in Appendix II are justified in this section.

This research has made use of qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the quantitative research, data was obtained through use of the LexisNexis database. This is a database that stores articles and journals from various academic sources. According to the data gathered from this database, 127 articles and letters to the editor concerning the assaults in Cologne are available. The data generated by this quantitative research can be found in Appendix I. In this Appendix, it is clear that after 17 January, there is a lack of comparative material. Therefore, it was decided to omit the letters to the editor and articles published on the assaults after this date. In conclusion, the scope of the quantitative research is based on 87 items, which have been published on the sexual assaults in Cologne from 5 January until 17 January 2016. In this research, the articles and letters are subject to a special type of code. Given that newspapers have reported on the assaults in numerous articles, these articles have received a special ‘code’. For example, newspaper articles that were published by *The Volkskrant* have been coded as ‘VK’. The corresponding number has then been added so that there is no confusion about the article. This also applies to The *Telegraaf* (TG), *Algemeen Dagblad* (AD), *Trouw* (TR) and *NRC Handelsblad* (NRC).

For the qualitative approach in this dissertation, journalists who have written articles on the assaults in Cologne were approached. These are examples of journalists who have received a personal e-mail, Patrick Loonen, Sterre Lindhout, Brenda Stoter-Boscolo and Vincent Bijlo and Sjoerd de Jong. For this research, each journalist was affiliated with a different newspaper. The selection of these journalists has been based on whether they have reported at least once on the assaults in Cologne. The e-mails requested the opinion of the reporters on the articles that were written in relation to the assaults in Cologne. One exception was made: the Ombudsman was approached for NRC Handelsblad, on the base of an article he wrote on 9 January, in which he explained the status of the investigation. However, this approach has not yielded any replies from these reporters.

In the methods section, the 87 articles which were published between 5 and 17 January will be categorized into 16 different themes. Of these 16 themes, the three themes that were identified will benefit from additional research. In this research, the three selected themes are sexual assault, refugees (immigration) and women.

After the articles on the assaults were obtained, they were subjected to a close reading. During this first reading, the type of frame was determined for each individual article. This means that the episodic or the thematic frame was determined. In addition, the “who, what, where, when and why”, as explained by van Ginneken and Randall, (van Ginneken, 1997, p. 138; Randall, 2011, p. 51) were considered.

In Appendix IV the articles that were published on *GeenStijl* can be found. These articles have not been close read or determined by theme, as the rest of the articles in this research. It should be noted that the writers who have posted articles, as well as the Dutch citizens who commented on them, are not bound to journalistic conventions. The articles are important because they do not have to summarize to save column inches, as traditional newspaper articles must. However, if a comment breaks the rules set by the website, a moderator may choose to delete it.

The 16 themes that were identified in the 87 articles have been divided into four groups.

Group 1. Crime, sexual violence, verbal assault, theft

Group 2. Safety, women, police, education

Group 3. Politics, immigration, deportation, xenophobia / racism

Group 4. Religion, culture, Islam, gender equality

These groups are explained in brief in the following section:

**Group 1. Crime, sexual violence, verbal assault, and theft**

Given the number of separate crimes that have been mentioned in various news articles, a division was made. Drug dealing, purse snatching and pick-pocketing have been identified as various types of crime. However, the crimes that have involved physical contact with women have been grouped under sexual violence. The crimes that have been mentioned are groping, sexual assault and rape. In this context, verbal assault is limited to words with sexual implications, such as “fuck” and “whore”. These words and many more may have been used against women at Dom Square and at Cologne Central station. Lastly, theft is mentioned in a separate category. This is because various newspapers have identified sexual assault as a means to an end, meaning that the perpetrator merely wanted to steal something, and in doing so, sexual assault occurred.

**Group 2. Safety, women, police, education**

The themes of “safety” and “women” could be broadly applied as well. However, in this context, it indicates whether the feeling of safety for women is discussed. For example: Do women avoid certain places? Do they pay more attention to how they are dressed? In short: do they have the confidence to live their lives without having to fear being assaulted (verbally or sexually) in a public space. However, safety also refers to the vigilante groups that sprouted up on Facebook following the assaults in Cologne, in which voluntary civilian watches have been put together to protect women. Oftentimes, statistics on how often women are sexually assaulted indicate that the assault of women is not exclusively happening in Cologne. Safety and women have been grouped together, as the articles on the assaults have often indicated that these two themes are related. The police were mentioned separately, although it could be argued that this theme is involved with safety as well. In fact, the police are closely related to politics and safety. Despite the fact that reporting shows that the police force in Cologne has been chronically understaffed and overworked, they are blamed by politicians and the general public for not acting appropriately. Furthermore, in the newspapers and police reports, it is clear that the police did not have the means or manpower to protect everyone that night.

The final theme in this section is education. In this context, education refers to the way the host country’s values are imposed on asylum seekers. The German Chancellor and the Dutch Prime Minister have both indicated that they intend to teach German and Dutch values to the incoming asylum seekers. These values might not correspond with the rules to which migrants accustomed in their own countries. This might include equal treatment of women or respect for homosexuals. It should be noted that refugees who have been acknowledged by the country are granted this education. However, those who are refused to take part in the asylum procedure, are exempt from this type of education. But there are groups that nevertheless linger in Germany, instead of leaving. Secondly, it is about the education of the people who have once settled in Germany and have second- or third- generation children living in Germany. Clearly, it is a challenge to educate a large group of migrants, especially when the people who are receiving the education are unwilling or unable to take part in the process.

**Group 3. Politics, immigration, deportation, xenophobia / racism**

The third group of themes starts with politics. Within this debate, many politicians have been reported on by journalists. If an article mentions a quote from a person who practices politics, it has been added to this theme. This includes Henriette Reker (mayor of Cologne), Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany), Thomas de Mazière (German Federal Minister of Internal Affairs) and Dutch politicians such as Geert Wilders (Dutch Party for Freedom) and Eberhard van der Laan (Mayor of Amsterdam). Immigration is related to people who are fleeing to Germany. There are two types of people who come to Europe for asylum. The first group consists of those immigrating to Europe to improve their quality of life (economic immigration). The second group includes those who have fled their home countries due to war or because they are persecuted for their personal beliefs (political asylum). In brief, deportation is the act of sending people home to their native countries. This could have a number of causes. The assaults in Cologne have sparked a debate about sending criminal asylum seekers “back home”. Various letters to the editor and quotes in articles have made this quite obvious. Deportation is also related to politics because politicians have to discuss the asylum debate before they can send criminal asylum seekers and refugees home. Xenophobia and racism are defined as the prejudice or dislike of what is foreign. This definition fits actions and quotes towards asylum seekers and immigrants. Whenever a newspaper reports on an attack on an asylum center or attacks towards immigrants, these two themes have been selected. The same criteria have been applied to quotes on this matter, which may indicate hate or fear of migrants.

**Group 4. Religion, culture, Islam, gender equality**

This group starts with the concept of religion. The theme has been applied whenever there is an indication, that the culprits behind the assaults in Cologne may have shared a certain religious background. This is an example of a quote which indicates a theme, “non-believers are seen as lesser humans, so it does not matter what you do with them” these quotes refer to the Islam, which is explained later in this paragraph (Stoter-Boscolo, 2016, Tr-15).

The methods section of this dissertation has explained the selection and the scope of its qualitative and the quantitative research. Due to the limitations listed in the introduction of this dissertation, of the 16 themes identified, three themes have benefitted from additional research. These are women, refugees (immigration) and sexual assault. Other than this division, the episodic or thematic frame has been determined for each newspaper article and letter to the editor. During the first reading, the conventions for a news article, as set out by van Ginneken and Randall, were employed. The authors asked “who, what, where, when and why” (van Ginneken, 1997, p. 138; Randall, 2011, p. 51).

# Results

As can be seen in the methods section of this dissertation, several themes have been part of articles written by journalists at these newspapers. In the next section, the themes that have returned in almost 80 percent of the articles shall be mentioned organized by newspaper. Secondly, the results of the 16 identified themes can be found in Appendix II. Iyengar’s theory of the episodic and thematic frame will be part of the results obtained from this research. His theory shall be demonstrated by using quotes from the five newspapers as well. In addition, witness accounts of men who have been interviewed have been included. Moreover, the discourse analysis which focuses on the terms *woman, girl, asylum seeker* and *refugee* are part of this section. Finally, the development in reporting on the assaults in the second week is discussed.

Out of the 87 articles that have been the object of a close reading in order to identify 16 different themes, these themes have returned in over 80 or almost 80 percent of the time. In *Algemeen Dagblad*, these themes are sexual assault (85%) and immigration (80%). In *NRC Handelsblad*, these themes are immigration (100%) safety (93%), sexual assault (86%) and women (86%). In *Trouw*, these themes are sexual assault (93%), immigration (93%), safety (86%), and politics (86%). In *The Telegraaf*, the themes are sexual assault (100%) and politics (83%). In *The Volkskrant*, these themes are women (80%), and immigration (76).

In Appendix II, the results of the quantitative research can be found. Due to the limitations on privacy, e-mails that have been sent to reporters may not be included. Despite the efforts that have been made to contact these journalists, no reply has been received.

Figure 1.3 was created using Iyengar’s theory of framing. Iyengar reports that the episodic frame “leads to the blaming of individuals, typically politicians for social problems” (as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p.68). He contends that the thematic frame, “tends to hold all of us accountable for social ills” (idem).

Figure 1.3 Type of frame by newspaper:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Type of frame, sorted by newspaper* | *Number of articles* | *Episodic news frame in percentages* | *Thematic news frame in percentages* |
| *De Telegraaf* | 12 | 66,67% (8) | 33,33% (4) |
| *Trouw* | 15 | 73,33% (11) | 26.67% (4) |
| *NRC Handelsblad* | 15 | 73,33% (11) | 26,67% (4) |
| *Algemeen Dagblad* | 21 | 57,14% (12) | 42.86% (9) |
| *The Volkskrant* | 25 | 80% (20) | 20% (5) |

As shown in Figure 1.3, the five newspapers which were the focus of this research have published at least ten articles on the assaults in Cologne a piece. Starting on January 5th, the number of articles appears to be different for each newspaper. The two newspapers that have published the same number of articles are *Trouw* and *NRC Handelsblad*. The data also reveals that politicians and other individuals are considered to be the cause of the assaults. In the reporting, several articles about Angela Merkel’s lenient asylum policy voice the possibility of the Chancellor being responsible for the asylum problem. The German Minister of Internal Affairs, Thomas de Maizière was mentioned in relation to the assaults. However, it should be noted that the Minister is not mentioned in *The Telegraaf*, and that he is only mentioned once in *NRC Handelsblad* and *Algemeen Dagblad* (Valkenberg, S., 2016, NRC-11; Wierd, D., 2016, AD-13). On the contrary, *The Volkskrant* and *Trouw* have reported on De Maizière more often. Despite the fact that *Trouw* published 15 articles, five of these articles have mentioned the German Minister of Internal Affairs (Jonker, S., 2016, TR-1; Chaotische en beschamende situatie, 2016, TR-4; Jonker, S., 2016, TR-5; Jonker, S., 2016, TR-8, Claus, S., 2016, TR-9).

Moreover, the quantitative research revealed different quotes from the selected newspapers. For example, in *NRC Handelsblad,* a 28-year old woman said, “Within a distance of two hundred meters, I was groped over a hundred times” (Lijendekker, 2016, NRC-2). This example is a witness account from one of the women who were present at Dom Square; she was quoted in a German radio program. In addition, *Trouw* published quotes as well, "Arab men think they get away with it. That's how it works in the Middle East."(Verbij, 2016, TR-3). This quote may serve as supportive of the argument that there is no doubt about the ethnicity, culture or religion of the perpetrators, even if evidence appears to be lacking.

It should be noted, that only two out of five newspapers published interviews with men who were present at the time of the assaults. The first article was published in *The Telegraaf*. The article was written using the quotes from Leotrim from Kosovo. In *The Telegraaf*, Leotrim provides a witness account of what he saw on that evening. Leotrim calls the assaults “shocking” and says that “the three women, who were walking in front of us, were attacked by Syrians with bottles of liquor. They stole their bags and phones. One woman was taken to a corner by the cathedral, where they undressed her” (Loonen, P., 2016, TG-6). Leotrim adds that “the culprits are part of another culture, a culture where there is no respect for women” (idem). It should be noted that because of the fact that his witness account was used in the newspaper, van Ginneken’s theory about the choice of quotes may apply. These quotes help the newspaper to “frame” the culprits without mentioning that “so-and-so” was the case, as van Ginneken’s theory explains (van Ginneken, 1997, p.103). The refugee, as Loonen calls him in the article, continues by stating that, “I know these people are from Syria, I could recognize the language from the asylum center” (idem). The article tries to remain objective by explaining these quotes in a general context. A possible explanation may have been that, according to Leotrim, this is a, “weekly ritual” and that “they will probably never catch the people who committed the assaults because a lot of asylum seekers possess false passports, which state that they are from Syria, even though they are from North-Africa” (idem). *The Volkskrant* has published an account of two Syrian-Kurd refugees who were present at the time of the assaults (Lindhout, S., 2016, VK-22). However, these refugees were not sober, and it might, therefore, be hard to believe that whatever they say actually occurred. On the other hand, both refugees have stated that they, “did not come here to cause trouble”. Zana adds that he has seen, “a lot of people fighting, but stuff with women, sexual things I did not see” (idem). The quotes by the woman who talked to the radio channel and the refugee that was interviewed paint a different picture. During the assaults, the woman may have been preoccupied with the crimes that were committed against her, while the male refugee in this witness account may be able to see these assaults from a broader perspective.

Given that no Dutch reporters were present at the time of the assaults, the sources of these quotes may have been provided to them by the German media or police. Take, for example, the case discussed in the previous paragraph, in which a German radio program has been consulted for primary source material. If hypothetically, reporters had been present at Dom Square, they might have been able to obtain primary source material for themselves. Since no reporters were present at the time of the assaults, it is possible that that those Dutch reporters were unable to obtain primary source materials. Therefore, these reporters would only be able to obtain secondary source material. Thus, the information that was made available to the reporters at this point in time may have been inconclusive or may have been tampered with.

The availability of information about the culprits increased during the second week of reporting on the assaults. In the first week, the media focussed on the episodic frame. The data gathered at the time seemed to suggest that the mayor of Cologne (Henriette Reker), the German police Chief (Wolfgang Albers) and the German Chancellor (Angela Merkel) were mentioned often. A closer look at the data indicates that these political figures were linked to the assaults, and quotes by these political figures have been reported as well. The accumulated data was grouped under the themes, “politics”, “immigration” and “police”.

In the second week of January 2016, newspapers used the episodic frame to write about developments in the political sphere in relation to the assaults in Cologne. In *Algemeen Dagblad*, Albers is mentioned once, on 12 January. In this article, German police Chief’s position is described in relation to the information that he has provided to other sources (Duk, W., 2016, AD-13). The newspapers report that the German police Chief has been dismissed. Albers falsified data by stating that New Year’s Eve had been “a quiet night” and by omitting data about the identity of the culprits. In *The Telegraaf,* Ralf Jäger, the German state Minister, stated that the police refused to ask for backup on that night. In addition, Jäger pointed out that most of the crimes had been committed by migrants (Lonig, M., 2016, TG-8). In terms of evidence*, Trouw* is the only newspaper that attempts to explain why Albers refused backup from another German police unit. According to the newspaper, “The corps could not get a good overview of the situation around the main station, and this is the reason why they turned down an offer from the national police for ‘much needed’ reinforcement” (Jonker, S., 2016, TR-8). In addition, Jonker adds a quote from Jäger, who claimed at a press conference “that the vast majority, of the now 19 suspected asylum seekers mainly come from countries like Morocco and Algeria” (idem). Jonker acknowledged that the statement was contrary to what the mayor of Cologne and the German police Chief publicised in a statement a week prior.

In addition, *NRC Handelsblad* wrote about their inability to report directly from Cologne. On 9 January, Sjoerd de Jong, Ombudsman for *NRC Handelsblad*, wrote an article on this topic. According to De Jong, “The news on social media first started to run by that time, and information was made available at the press conference that the German police force gave on Monday. That night, news manager Herman Staal and acting correspondent Marc Leijendekker had just arrived in Berlin” (de Jong, 2016, NRC-7). This explanation is in line with Wilkins and Patterson’s theory, which admits the absence of an editor abroad (Patterson & Wilkins, 2008, p.221).

On the other hand, misuse of a frame can result in the destruction of an innocent person or a group of people. In the case study of Wen Ho Lee vs. *The New York Times,* the result of a misguided frame is elaborated upon. Lee’s defense stated: “[…] I believe that Mr. Trulock (the reporter) improperly targeted Dr. Lee due to Dr. Lee’s race and national origin,” (Patterson & Wilkins, 2008, p. 221). The case study shows similarities to the assaults in Cologne because there appears to be a lack of information on the culprits. Moreover, the events in Cologne are able to discredit a group of (recently arrived) immigrants. The reporting may also be used to breed xenophobia, just like Trulock’s reporting in the case against Wen Ho Lee.

As shown in Figure 1.3, at least 50% of the news items have been written using an episodic news frame. This figure indicates that these five newspapers have reported on sexual assaults, theft and rape in Cologne in 2015. Moreover, the 16 themes used in the methods section have shown that the thematic frame was not used merely to report on the assaults, but also to elaborate on the problems prior to the event. Figure 1.3 could indicate that all of the newspapers have published articles with an episodic frame. At least 50% of all the articles written about the assaults in Cologne do more than retell what occurred on New Year’s Eve. Moreover, as stated in the introduction, the thematic frame is related to more than just the event (Iyengar as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p. 68). In this frame, trends are also being used, such as the circumstances of the possible perpetrators. In addition, special attention is given to women and safety. Safety for women also means the ability to protect oneself and counting on protection from the police, in addition to counting on government protection from sexual crimes. The criteria for this frame would have been that the article does not merely focus on the events in Cologne, but also on underlying “problems” the newspaper has identified. For example, the occurrence of mass assaults in Sweden, Egypt, and the Netherlands was reported on as an exception, not a trend. Other issues which are included in these articles and letters to the editor are the issues of education, integration, gender equality, xenophobia, and immigration.

The episodic frames which all newspapers have used are related to quotes from Henriette Reker, the mayor of Cologne, quotes from Wolfgang Albers, the police Chief, and sometimes even quotes from Dutch politicians, such as Eberhard van der Laan, the mayor of Amsterdam.

The research has also indicated that several comments have been made about the statement which Mayor Henriette Reker made after the assaults. Other than the threats to journalism, which have already been mentioned, the use of words can be equally important. In the literature review, Hartley has noted that discourse is shaped by political, social, and historical contexts. These statements shall be explored in the analysis section of this dissertation. This is why a discourse analysis of two terms shall be analyzed as well. Various articles have used the words “asylum seeker” and “refugee”. Appendix III shows the frequency with which newspapers used these terms. The following table is a summary of the data, which is presented in the Appendix:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | Asylum seeker | Refugee |
| *Algemeen Dagblad* | 40 (53%) | 35 (47%) |
| *NRC Handelsblad* | 21 (57%) | 16 (43%) |
| *Trouw* | 28 (31%) | 69 (61%) |
| *The Volkskrant* | 25 (23%) | 82 (77%) |
| *The Telegraaf* | 15 (68%) | 7 (32%) |

Figure 1.6: The term asylum seeker or refugee, recorded in five Dutch national newspapers

Figure 1.6 and Appendix III provide evidence for different discourse among these five newspapers. The Appendix indicates that *NRC Handelsblad* and *Algemeen Dagblad* have used the terms “asylum seeker” and “refugee” almost equally, whereas *The Telegraaf*, *Trouw,* and *The Volkskrant* have used these terms in other ratios. *The Telegraaf*, uses the term *refugee*, 68% of the time, whereas *asylum seeker* is used in only 32% of the cases. *Trouw* used the term *refugee* 69% of the time and *asylum seeker* was used in 28% of these articles. Other terms that were used to describe the perpetrators were “Arab” and “North-African men”.

According to data gathered on the term “refugee”, *The Volkskrant* is the newspaper that uses this term most often. In this newspaper, the word refugee or asylum seeker has often been associated with whether they were the culprit on New Year’s Eve, the refugee debate, politics, the Geneva Treaty, refugee status, registration, eviction of criminal refugees and crime. In the initial report in *The Telegraaf*, this group was reported to be innocent (Springelkamp, C., 2016, TG-1). However, after the German police force admitted that “despite earlier messages that this was not the truth, officers have attested that there have been refugees among the culprits” (Johan, J., 2016, TG-2). It should be noted that the first article in *The Telegraaf*, mentions the culprits as “1,000 tipsy men. Men of North-African origin and criminals from the Middle East, but not refugees” (Springelkamp, C.,2016, TG-1). *The Volkskrant* appears to agree with the number of men that was stated in *The Telegraaf* (de Graaf, P., 2016, VK-1). However, there appear to be some non-corresponding elements in this reporting. *Trouw* used terms such as “large groups of drunk men” (Jonker, S. 2016, TR-1). Other newspapers took the same approach in this matter, by being vague about nationalities and using large numbers of men to illustrate how bad the situation must have been (Yesilgoz, D., 2016, NRC-1; Duk, W., 2016, AD-1).

Numerous scholars have written about the way a story is reported. Van Ginneken explains the simplest way by quoting Hartley, and mentioning that he speaks of “‘hoorah’ and ‘boo’ words” (as cited in van Ginneken, 1997, p.147). Barthes’s theory has also indicated that a single word may be able to allow the reader to look for associated words. These words are not written. By way of example, he describes how the word “lion” may be associated with pride or courage (as cited in Ott & Mack, 2010, p.105). In terms of discourse, this would mean that the term “refugee” is a hurrah word since it invokes the need to protect someone who merits this protection under the Geneva Treaty. However, the term ‘asylum seeker’ may invoke the thoughts of an opportunist, an economic migrant or someone who may be less deserving of protection. The neutral term between these two groups of citizens, was “migrant”, a term used by Ralf Jäger, the German state Minister.

A change in the discourse on women can also be observed. The following table is a summary of how many times the word *woman* has been used, as opposed to the word *girl*. It is important to distinguish these terms because of the fact that the word *girl* may have been used to elicit sympathy from the reader. For example, when newspapers were relating to the assaults in Sweden, the term *girl* has been used more often, because the women at the festival were known to be under 18 years of age. In addition, women have been recorded as the victim of sexual assaults on several accounts. For example, *Algemeen Dagblad* has explained that in Egypt, 98% of the women have experienced some sort of sexual assault (van ‘t Ho, 2016, AD-2). In addition, in an EU-wide survey on violence against women, data was collected on experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women in all 28 EU Member states. The research is based on a random sample of women in the general population. The survey results help to contextualize its thematic focus’s findings with respect to refugee women’s and girls’ experiences of violence. The survey conducted by the FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), based on interviews with 42,000 women, indicates that one in three women (33%) has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 ("Thematic focus: Gender-based violence | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights", 2016). The CBS in the Netherlands has also published data on sexual crimes ("CBS StatLine - Cliënten van Slachtofferhulp; type, delict, herkomst, leeftijd en geslacht", 2015). Rutgers adds that 14% of the women between the ages of 15 and 70 have experienced rape (Kenniscentrum seksualiteit, 2014) and that the culprit is often an acquaintance or partner. However, newspaper articles in *NRC Handelsblad*, *The Volkskrant* and Rutgers agree that not all sexual crimes are reported (Beintema, N, 2015; Barbier, J., 2015). The articles and statistics do indicate that women are often troubled by men (and possibly) forced to commit non-consensual sexual acts. In contrast, NOS has published data which proves that the number of statements that have been made on sexual violence is on the decline. In conclusion, the NOS claimed that the police were the cause of the decline in reports of sexual assault.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Newspaper** | **Woman** | **Girl** |
| Trouw | 144 (91.13%) | 14 (8.86%) |
| NRC Handelsblad | 75 (90.36%) | 8 (9.63%) |
| The Telegraaf | 37 (92.5%) | 3 (7.5%) |
| The Volkskrant | 147 (93.03%) | 11 (6.9%) |
| Algemeen Dagblad | 108 (92.30%) | 9 (7.69%) |

Figure 1.7: Word choice of *woman* or *girl* in these five Dutch national newspapers

The results section has provided data on the discourse which was selected by the five Dutch newspapers. It has mentioned which themes prevailed in the majority of the articles and explained how the reporting on the assaults developed in the second week of January in 2016. In addition, the results section included interviews of male witnesses to the assaults in Cologne.

Analysis

By using the episodic frame, journalists may have blamed the mayor of Cologne and the German police Chief for the assaults. A similar inconsistency in reporting was stated in the case of Wen Ho Lee vs *The New York Times.* In this situation, a Chinese-American citizen was framed for (supposedly) accessing nuclear codes. He was incarcerated for nine months on false charges (Patterson & Wilkins, 2008, p. 221).

At the press conference of 5 January in 2016, Henriette Reker, the major of Cologne, advised women to “keep men at an arm’s length” (Connolly, 2016). This statement elicited various responses by the five Dutch newspapers discussed here. It is peculiar that a mayor of a city as large as Cologne would ask women to stay away from men. *The Telegraaf* quoted someone who was of the opinion that the advice was obviously “the world turned upside down” (de Brouwer, E., 2016, TG-10). In *The Telegraaf,* Patrick Loonen, discusses the reactions to Reker’s speech on sexual violence and the theft committed against hundreds of women. He concludes that Reker’s advice was “stupid” and adds that the advice has given birth to “a tempest of criticism” (Loonen, P., 2016, TG-5). On 6 January, reporter Marc Leijendekker wrote an article in *NRC Handelsblad* on the press conference of Henriette Reker as well. Leijendekker reports that “Reker’s advice has given birth to skepticism” (Leijendekker, M., 2016, NRC-2). In the article, he also writes that “people derived pleasure from her advice on Twitter” (idem). Even though the language that the reporter used in this newspaper was less direct, it indicates that the advice is not to be taken seriously, because it is impractical. In *Trouw,* Saskia Jonker added that Reker’s advice at the press conference, “provoked an angry response” (Jonker, S., 2016, TR-1). In *Algemeen Dagblad,* Reker’s advice is contended by “critics who argue that in adopting this approach, Reker succumbs to street terror” (Duk, W., 2016, AD-3). It should be noted that Loonen, Jonker, and Duk do not explicitly mention who responded negatively to Reker’s press conference. Finally, in *The Volkskrant*, de Graaf combines what has been previously reported by writing about the “tempest of criticism”, and adding that “advising women to stay away from crowds” would be the world turned upside down (de Graaf, P., 2016, VK-1).It means that women are buying items to protect themselves (e.g. pepper spray) whereas the problem lies with men who cannot behave themselves publicly and privately around women. Since this is a negative response to a political figure, these articles seem to have been written with the use of the episodic frame.

The literature review featured the Wen Ho Lee’s case study. The Chinese-American had been framed by a reporter (Notra Trulock) and even served time in jail. This case study has been selected, because of what Charles Washington recorded in the affidavit. The document stated that Lee had been targeted by Trulock because of his “race and national origin” (Patterson and Wilkins, 2008, p.64). In the reporting on the assaults in Cologne, there has been a lack of information on the identity of the assailants. Days after the assaults occurred, newspapers were unable to pinpoint who exactly had committed the assaults. The initial reports featured vague descriptions such as “Arab men” and “men of North-African descent”. The UNHCR identifies these countries as part of North-Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia (“North Africa | Global Focus”, 2016). However, the discourse relating to Arab men is quite vague. Some newspapers define these men as being “of Arab descent” or having an “Arab appearance”. This type of reporting is also in line with Said’s writing. The people who have committed the assaults are not of Western descent, but it is not clearly defined who they are, though it is quite possible that the newspapers withheld this information until more was released by the German police force.

Ott and Mack believe that the concept of culture is ideological. According to these authors “[…] cultures we inhabit teach us to see the world in some ways and no in others. The attitudes, practices, and artifacts of our everyday lives encourage us as individuals to interpret the world according to certain frameworks of culturally based knowledge” (Ott & Mack, 2010, p. 126). Flint’s ideas about contemporary Orientalism confirm that people from Iraq and Afghanistan have been dehumanized since the start of the invasions in 2000. The author adds that the methods employed are “either by making them invisible by just not mentioning them, or by portraying them as ‘savages’ beyond our civilised codes and not deserving of political or economic support” (Flint, C., 2012, p. 80). This phenomenon might have occurred during the reporting on the assaults in Sweden.

This case, which has been mentioned in several Dutch newspapers, was reported in the light of the event in Cologne. The group that had been assaulted was depicted as helpless. The Afghani people, who were the supposed perpetrators, were kept out of the media. What’s more, additional reporting revealed that girls were discouraged from making a statement (van der Mee, 2016, AD-14; Molest op festival: Zweden ontdekt nu eigen 'Keulen', 2016, NRC-13). In comparison, evidence has suggested that the same happens in the Netherlands. An article published by the NOS states that “the police gives women a horror scenario to discourage them from making a statement”, adding that the two-week period for reflection should not be mandatory, when a woman decides to make a statement ("'Aantal aangiften verkrachting meer dan gehalveerd'", 2015). The data proves that before the assaults in Cologne occurred, women were being assaulted throughout the European Union. However, in Europe, there was no reporting on a mass assault of this scale. The FRA data in the results section reminds us that at least 33% of the women in the European Union have been victims of sexual assault. The research is not complete, despite this data, because not all sexual offenses are reported. Several articles revealed other possible reasons for the lack of reporting on this event. Several newspapers have reported that the Swedish media decided to keep the event out of the press “to avoid extreme-right parties from attaining more power”. In het Algemeen Dagblad, van der Mee states that “Sweden has taken this to the next level. The Swedish police have admitted to concealing mass assaults, which occurred in 2014 and 2015 by Afghani people. These events were not made public in order to avoid into playing to the hands of extreme-right Swedish Democrats. There were 20 complaints by young teenage girls, and the police had dozens of suspects in the picture, but persecution was not forthcoming” (van der Mee, 2016, AD-14). The data on the years the assaults occurred, and the reason this event was not reported, are also stated in het NRC Handelsblad (Molest op festival: Zweden ontdekt nu eigen 'Keulen', 2016, NRC-13). *The Telegraaf* merely reported the date of the assaults, 15 August in 2015. However, the newspaper adds a quote by the Swedish police Chief, Peter Ågren. The Chief stated that “It is a sore point. Sometimes we do not dare to mention these events, out of fear it will play into the hands of the Swedish Democrats”. The article also included a quote by the Swedish Premier, who angrily replied to Ågren’s quote by acknowledging that “in my view, the police are tasked with solving crimes and bringing the culprits to justice. They are not allowed to withhold information for any reason” (Loning, M., 2016, TG-8). In Trouw, the quote by the Swedish police Chief is used, and the assaults in 2015 are mentioned. However, this is the first newspaper that acknowledges the opinion of the Swedish spokesperson for the police. It shows that the Swedish police have not been incompetent, but instead that they have “detained dozens of men” and had their eyes on “the unconfirmed number of suspects, ranging from 50 to 200. The 20 statements that have been made were submitted by teenagers” (Jonker, S., 2016, TR-8). *The Volkskrant* was the only newspaper to report separately on the assaults in Sweden without mentioning Cologne. Therefore, a letter to the editor was used as an illustration of what was mentioned in the article. The author, Ramakers, starts by mentioning the article that was published on 13 January, in *The Volkskrant*. She mentions that the physical violence that was committed against these 11- and 12-year-old girls by Afghani men had been ignored by the Swedish media so as “to not play into the hands of the Swedish Democrats” she adds. She also expresses her disgust, by stating that the perpetrators were exempt from persecution, and all of this “two months before the elections”. She adds that these girls have been scarred for life and that the only stakeholders, who gain something from keeping these events quiet, are the parties who are currently in power, and the incumbent directors. In her final argument, she asks “how much less of a human you are if you sacrifice 11- and 12-year-old girls for political gain” (Ramakers, C., 2016, VK-19). It is impossible to deny that this event was omitted for various reasons, but the theories of Said and Flint’s definition of Orientalism cannot be ignored in this matter. When the reporting on Sweden finally took off, in the second week of January, the Afghani people were indeed depicted as the perpetrators. Initially, the reporting on the assaults in Cologne started off in the same fashion. Police Chief Wolfgang Albers reported that it had been a “quiet night”. However, over the course of January, when the police force was depicted as incompetent, and the number of statements increased, several police officers were more inclined to be anonymously interviewed by various newspapers.

The discourse in the news, in various articles, could be grouped under two types of analysis. Discriminant analysis has been used in various news articles. Hornig-Priest defines this analysis as “[…] used to figure out which variable among a complex set best divide (or discriminate) one group from another” (Hornig-Priest, S., 2010, p.157). The response to the assaults in Cologne, by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, has been an example of this analysis. In his speech he makes use of the words “we” and “them”. Van Ginneken calls this the “key criterion”, the “I/us versus them” (van Ginneken, p.197). The exact words the Prime Minster used were “We will not adapt to their norms and values” (Bijlo, V., 2016, AD-8). The Prime Minister could imply with this quote that there is “the Dutch citizen” and that there are people who do not share the same values of this group. By setting “the other group” apart from the citizens of the Netherlands, he could also assume that these people do not share his values. Therefore, these citizens (asylum seekers, refugees) may not take part in the society the Minister has mentioned.

In this analysis, the words associated with the terms “asylum seeker” and “refugee” shall be investigated, as well as the words “girl” and “woman”. Hornig-Priest also identifies the possible issue of ethnic diversity within pluralistic societies. She asks herself whether minorities are displayed in an unfavourable manner, and whether: “these minority perspectives” are “appropriately presented in the news”. She further asks “just what images of minority groups *should* the media be expected to provide?” (Hornig-Priest, S. 2010, p.195). The quote by the Dutch Prime Minister could serve as an indication that the minority he is referring to is not accepting of Dutch values.

A cluster analysis has been used to divide various cases of mass assault. Newspapers have often used Egypt, other German cities, and Sweden as comparative material. This is because these mass assaults can be grouped under this data set and have been defined by Hornig-Priest. She states that “unlike the discriminant analysis, cluster analysis does not begin with a predetermined set of categories (such as political party affiliation) but determines categories based on the data” (Hornig-Priest, S., 2010, p.157). The cluster analysis can, therefore, be applied to the aforementioned areas because assaults are the common denominator.

Some newspapers reported, that the German police force was reluctant to provide information on the identity of the assailants. Other newspapers reported that this information had been purposefully withheld.

In this context, the words that are most relevant are the nuances between refugees and asylum seekers. In the literature review, Hartley’s figure and Barthes’s theory have been explained. The figure and chart have indicated that a news report and the choice of words may be able to make a difference.

# Conclusion

The conclusion will explain whether the assaults in Cologne may have been a case of fact or framing. It also discusses possible differences between discourses. The second paragraph indicates which themes have been explored in this research, and adds the limitations of the research.

The aim of this dissertation was to find out whether the reporting on the assaults in Cologne was a consequence of fact or framing. The data that has been collected indicates that the time and place of the assaults were after 11 P.M., at Dom Square in Cologne on 31 December 2015. The evidence available seems to suggest that the reporting of the assaults in Cologne were the subject to framing. In addition, newspapers have been unclear about the identity of the culprits. Due to the limitations which made reporters unable to obtain primary source information, information was only available through secondary sources. The primary sources in this matter have not been objective, as it was later reported that the identity of the culprits had to remain unclear (Johan, J, 2016, TG-2). In addition, one of the primary sources (the German police force) has chosen to omit the identity of the perpetrators. This evidence was provided to the general public by police officers who wanted to publish what had truly occurred.

The episodic framing also indicates that newspapers may blame politicians for the occurrence of the assaults. The politicians who were mentioned most frequently were Henriette Reker (mayor of Cologne) and Angela Merkel (the German Chancellor) (Duk, W., 2016, AD-3). Other political figures who were associated with the assaults in Cologne are Ralf Jäger (German Minister of Interior and Local Government of North Rhine-Westphalia) and Wolfgang Albers (German police Chief). The thematic frame has been used to explain the definition of sexual assault, and to explain the (psychological) consequences for women who have been assaulted (den Boon, T., 2016, TR-2). Other articles focussed on the crimes that have been historically committed in Cologne, and explained the mix of cultures and the lack of integration of some migrants (van ‘t Ho, G., 2016, AD2; 'Keulen' is voorlopig vooral een openbare-ordeprobleem, 2016, NRC-5; Bolwijn, M, 2016, VK-11; Römkens, R., 2016, TR-10; Huygen, M., 2016, NRC-10). The thematic frame has also shown that sexual assault occurs everywhere, not just in Cologne (Römkens, R., 2016, TR-10, Breebaart, L., 2016, TR-14, Patrick, L., 2016, TG-3; Meer aanrandingen, 2016, AD-6). In addition, the terms “woman” and “girl” have been used differently for two newspapers. In the reporting on the assaults in Sweden, the term “girl” has been universally used by all five newspapers. In over 50% of the cases, the episodic frame has been used to report on the assaults in Cologne. This evidence points to the blaming of politicians and individuals for the assaults. The German politicians, Reker and Merkel deserved a lot of attention, but the German police chief was mentioned as well. Other German (or Dutch) politicians have commented on the assaults as well. In addition, due to the confusion about the perpetrators, the migrants who have committed the crimes have been called asylum seekers and refugees by all newspapers, some using the one term more often than the other.

This study has identified 16 different themes and focussed on immigration (refugees), sexual assault, and women. It has also omitted the existence of internet reporting, save for the accounts which are recorded in Appendix IV. In the reporting on the assaults, cases of sexual assault or statistical data on assaults were often used. The research has attempted to involve the journalists who have written articles on the assaults, but has unfortunately not received any replies.

Since the time and the location of the assaults have been universally determined by all five newspapers, these data have been presumed to be factual information. The newspapers have speculated on various reasons for the occurrence of the assaults (statistics, other events, religion) but have not provided conclusive evidence to pinpoint the true cause of the assaults, if there was any.

# Recommendations

Due to the limitations which were presented in the introduction of this dissertation, internet reporting on the assaults in Cologne was mentioned, but not thoroughly explored. Internet reporting allows citizens to obtain news faster and provides hyperlinks to additional articles on the same subject. Sometimes, an article may even feature a video. Since newspaper articles are focussed purely on discourse, internet media research on the assaults in Cologne may be an option for researchers who would like to explore this topic further. John V. Pavlik has written a book which may prove useful for this type of research (Pavlik, 2001).

The data gathered in the study indicated that newspapers distinguished between the people who had committed the assaults. Utilizing a more ‘neutral’ discourse could be an option, as opposed to refugee or asylum seeker. The neutral term for a refugee or asylum seeker would be the use of the word migrant. This term does not imply whether the people merit protection under the Geneva Treaty or the external factors (money) for coming to Europe. An example of one of these terms was provided by German Minister Jäger, who called the culprits “migrants”. This type of discourse could be an example to the Dutch Prime Minister, who used terms such as “us” and “them”.

In addition, if possible, another researcher may be able to obtain information from the reporters who wrote the articles examined here. Although this was not possible in this dissertation, it could prove useful to have access to the insights of the reporters who gathered information on the assaults.

The recommendations for this research would have been to practice more ‘slow journalism’ and to spend more money on editors abroad. This is merely a primary assessment. However, newspapers could also print the sort of disclaimer described earlier. As an example of slow journalism, the Belgian newspaper *De Morgen* published data three months after the assaults (Soenens, 2016). By admitting that they were wrong, the newspaper showed that it reflected upon its own reporting.

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# Appendix I

Figure 1: Number of articles and items published in January 2016 on the assaults in Cologne, by date and newspaper

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | The Telegraaf | NRC | Trouw | Algemeen Dagblad | Volkskrant |
| Date |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 5th | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |
| Jan 6th | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Jan 7th | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Jan 8th | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Jan 9th |  | 4 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Jan 10th |  |  |  | 4 |  |
| Jan 11th |  | 2 |  |  | 2 |
| Jan 12th | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 |  |
| Jan 13th | 1 |  | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Jan 14th | 1 |  | 2 |  | 1 |
| Jan 15th |  | 1 |  | 2 | 2 |
| Jan 16th | 2 |  | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Jan 17th | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |
| Jan 18th |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| Jan 19th |  |  | 2 |  | 1 |
| Jan 20th |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Jan 21st |  | 1 | 2 |  | 1 |
| Jan 22nd |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 23rd |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Jan 24th | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 25th |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 26th |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 27th |  |  |  |  | 2 |
| Jan 28th |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 29th |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jan 30th | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |
| Total | 15 | 19 | 21 | 23 | 32 |

# Appendix II

Number of themes per article

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | AD-1 | AD-2 | AD-3 | AD-4 | AD-5 | AD-6 | AD-7 | AD-8 | AD-9 | AD-10 | AD-11 |
| Crime |  |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Sexual violence | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |
| Verbal assault | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Theft | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Safety | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Women | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Police | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Politics |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deportation |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Xenophobia |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Religion |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Culture |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Islam |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Gender equality | | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | AD-12 | AD-13 | AD-14 | AD-15 | AD-16 | AD-17 | AD-18 | AD-19 | AD-20 | AD-21 | Percentage | Total |
| Crime |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 28.57% | 6 |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 85.71% | 18 |
| Sexual violence | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 42.86% | 9 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 14.28% | 3 |
| Theft |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 19.05% | 4 |
| Safety | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 57.14% | 12 |
| Women | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 66.67% | 14 |
| Police | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 28.57% | 6 |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0% | 0 |
| Politics |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 66.67% | 14 |
| Immigration |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 80.95% | 17 |
| Deportation |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 47.61% | 10 |
| Xenophobia |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 28.57% | 6 |
| Religion |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  | 47.61% | 10 |
| Culture |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 47.61% | 10 |
| Islam |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 33.33% | 7 |
| Gender equality | | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 38.09% | 8 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | NRC-1 | NRC-2 | NRC-3 | NRC-4 | NRC-5 | NRC-6 | NRC-7 | NRC-8 |
| Crime |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Sexual violence | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Theft | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Safety | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Women | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Police | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Politics | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deportation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| Xenophobia | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Religion |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Culture |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Islam |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Gender equality |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | NRC-9 | NRC-10 | NRC-11 | NRC-12 | NRC-13 | NRC-14 | NRC-15 | Percentage | Total |
| Crime | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 53.33% | 8 |
| Sexual assault |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.67% | 13 |
| Sexual violence | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 66.67% | 10 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 6.66% | 1 |
| Theft | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 66.67% | 10 |
| Safety | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 93.33% | 14 |
| Women | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.67% | 13 |
| Police |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 53.33% | 8 |
| Education |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 20% | 3 |
| Politics | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 80% | 12 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100% | 15 |
| Deportation |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |  | 20% | 3 |
| Xenophobia |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 60% | 9 |
| Religion |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 60% | 9 |
| Culture |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 73.33% | 11 |
| Islam |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 60% | 9 |
| Gender equality |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 40% | 6 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | Tr -1 | Tr -2 | Tr -3 | Tr -4 | Tr -5 | Tr -6 | Tr -7 | Tr -8 |
| Crime | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Sexual violence |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |
| Verbal assault | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Theft | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Safety | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Women | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Police | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Education |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Politics | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |
| Immigration | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deportation | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| Xenophobia | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Religion | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Culture | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |
| Islam | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Gender equality |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | Tr-9 | Tr-10 | Tr-11 | Tr-12 | Tr-13 | Tr-14 | Tr-15 | Percentage | Total |
| Crime |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 40% | 6 |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 93.33% | 14 |
| Sexual violence | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 40% | 6 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 20% | 3 |
| Theft |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 46.67% | 7 |
| Safety | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.67% | 13 |
| Women | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 80% | 12 |
| Police |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  | 33.33% | 5 |
| Education |  |  |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 26.67% | 4 |
| Politics | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 86.67% | 13 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 93.33% | 14 |
| Deportation | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 53.33% | 8 |
| Xenophobia |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 | 66.67% | 10 |
| Religion |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 66.67% | 10 |
| Culture | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 80% | 12 |
| Islam | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 53.33% | 8 |
| Gender equality | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 66.66% | 10 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | TG-1 | TG-2 | TG-3 | TG-4 | TG-5 | TG-6 |
| Crime | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Sexual violence | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Theft | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| Safety | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Women | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Police | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Politics | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deportation |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |
| Xenophobia |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| Religion |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Culture |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Islam |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Gender equality |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | TG-7 | TG-8 | TG-9 | TG-10 | TG-11 | TG-12 | Percentage | Total |
| Crime |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 41.67% | 5 |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100% | 12 |
| Sexual violence |  |  |  |  |  |  | 16.67% | 2 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0% | 0 |
| Theft |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 33.33% | 4 |
| Safety | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 66.67% | 8 |
| Women | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 66.67% | 8 |
| Police |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 41.67% | 5 |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0% | 0 |
| Politics | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 83.33% | 10 |
| Immigration |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 75% | 9 |
| Deportation |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 16.67% | 2 |
| Xenophobia |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 33.33% | 4 |
| Religion | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 50% | 6 |
| Culture | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | 41.57% | 5 |
| Islam | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 41.67% | 5 |
| Gender equality |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 33.33% | 4 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | V-1 | V-2 | V-3 | V-4 | V-5 | V-6 | V-7 | V-8 | V-9 | V-10 | V-11 | V-12 | V-13 |
| Crime | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Sexual violence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |
| Verbal assault |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Theft | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Safety | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Women | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Police | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Politics | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Deportation |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Xenophobia |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Religion |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Culture | 1 |  |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Islam |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 |
| Gender equality | 1 |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Newspaper | V-14 | V-15 | V-16 | V-17 | V-18 | V-19 | V-20 | V-21 | V-22 | V-23 | V-24 | V-25 | Percentage | **Total** |
| Crime |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 36% | 9 |
| Sexual assault | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 92% | 23 |
| Sexual violence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4% | 1 |
| Verbal assault |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  | 20% | 5 |
| Theft |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 36% | 9 |
| Safety |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 72% | 18 |
| Women |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 80% | 20 |
| Police | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  | 50% | 15 |
| Education |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 8% | 2 |
| Politics | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  |  | 64% | 16 |
| Immigration | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 76% | 19 |
| Deportation | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | 28% | 7 |
| Xenophobia | 1 |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |  |  | 36% | 9 |
| Religion |  |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 | 32% | 8 |
| Culture | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 48% | 12 |
| Islam | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  |  | 1 | 36% | 9 |
| Gender equality | |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | 36% | 9 |

# Appendix III

Figure 1.4: Algemeen Dagblad, refugee vs. asylum seeker

Figure 1.5: NRC Handelsblad, refugee vs. asylum seeker

Figure 1.6: The Telegraaf, number of mentions

Figure 1.7: Trouw, number of mentions in percent

Figure 1.8: The Volkskrant, number of mentions in percent

# Appendix IV

This Appendix focuses on the articles that have been written on the Dutch website *GeenStijl*. The aim of this Appendix is to show that there are multiple styles of reporting, and that the truth may be represented in other ways on the Internet. It should be noted that the comments on these articles are moderated by a site moderator, should they violate the terms of use. However, this website is not bound to the limitations of traditional journalism, in the sense that there are no deadlines, no pack journalism and external pressures from advertisers.

Spartacus, a writer for *GeenStijl*, wrote an article on the assaults in Cologne on 9 January in 2016. The author casually mentions the concept of honour killing and relates it to the women that have been assaulted. “Let’s not forget what these assaults are. In the Islamic culture, a violated woman is the greatest imaginable disgrace – just look at the institute of honor killings” (Keulen Round-up. Duitsland zit aan z'n islam-tax, 2016).

In the Islam, a ‘defiled’ woman, is killed by her father or brother, according to Islamic rules. This text is immediately and explicitly linked to the Islam. By stating the concept, the author shows awareness of the contempt the culprits may have felt towards the assaulted women. This article leaves the reader with the afterthought that all of the culprits may have had an Islamic background. Since *Geenstijl* is not a traditional form of media, fact checking and interviews are not required to substantiate claims. More importantly, the article appears to be lacking in legitimate source materials. In this case, the quote could be perceived as a case of framing. In the aforementioned article, an indication is provided which views the perpetrators as a (large) group of Muslim men, who are lacking in respect for European women.

For comparison purposes, the author uses other articles on assault in Europe and other German cities. Nevertheless, the writing confirms that 18 of the 31 suspects that have been arrested were known to be asylum seekers. *The Volkskrant* published the same information on 9 January as well. On 8 January, *Trouw* published that there were 19 suspects who were asylum seekers in the Cologne case, but the newspaper did not report on the nationalities of the culprits. The omission of certain data by newspapers also led to a completely different discussion other than the assaults, women, and the Islam. The question that arose in the letters to the editor was: “Is my newspaper being politically correct by avoiding certain issues?” On Twitter this term was changed to ‘policor’, and in opinion pieces, by the ombudsman and journalists, this term was also used.

On January 10th, Bas Paternotte published an article on the GeenStijl website. Paternotte reports that at least 400 statements have been made in relation to the assaults in Cologne. He also adds that there were 18 refugees among the perpetrators. The author then points out, that the Dutch Prime Minister has not responded to the assaults in Cologne, but that the person who is second in command, has. He also observes that PVV (Dutch Party for Freedom) leader Geert Wilders has acted proactively, but also explains why the rest of the Dutch cabinet is not as willing to make a statement.

In 2010 Angela Merkel, the German Councilor, stated: “the multicultural society has failed” (Paternotte, 2016). The author then adds: “But what were those words worth? After more than five years, it appears that the German police have received government orders to report as little on crimes involving refugees and migrants, to avoid playing into the hands of extreme right parties. By deliberately concealing the consequences of that utterly failed multicultural society, is something that hundreds of women (and men) experienced firsthand at the Breslauer Platz during New Year’s Eve”( Paternotte, 2016).

Paternotte emphasizes, that even though Mark Rutte (the Dutch Prime Minister) was chairing the European Union at the time, he would not be commenting on this issue. This type of reporting also sheds a different light on what the Dutch newspapers had reported at the time. As could be seen on 9 January, only two Dutch newspapers mentioned who were suspected, and a number of suspects. The remaining three newspapers refused to mention anything related to this information. Paternotte’s quote, refers to the theoretical framework. This is because of the fact that it mentions the political trends before the assaults occurred, using a quote by the German Chancellor.