Dissertation
Modern Terrorism: The Media Representation of ISIS’s Terrorist Activity within 2015-2016

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Abstract

Terrorism is a complicated phenomenon that is difficult to be accurately defined; that’s why there have been several interpretations of the phenomenon until now. Terrorism parallels the theatre and terrorist behavior is similar to a dramaturgical performance. Terrorist attacks gain the attention of media and publicity plays a vital role to the expansion of the phenomenon. The roots of it date back centuries ago, while modern terrorism which is correlated with New Media is a much more recent phenomenon. Many terrorist groups that existed in the past might have influenced the Islamic State, the terrorist organization that thrives recently. Al Qaeda, the predecessor of ISIS has affected the group’s activity to a big extent. However, ISIS forged its own path. The organization’s terrorist activity within 2015-2016 includes three major attacks; Paris, Brussels and Nice were afflicted. The way media represent terrorism is crucial. Three videos regarding Paris attack, Brussels bombings and Nice attack which have been uploaded on Al Jazeera, Vox and CNN respectively, circulate the World Wide Web and attract viewers.

*Key words:* terrorism, New Media, ISIS, Paris attack, Brussels bombings, Nice attack.
Introduction

Terrorism is shocking and powerful. It can influence our senses and feelings even without realizing (Borum, 2004). It is inevitable to avoid a jihadist’s video due to its offensive and distinctive character that attracts viewers What’s more, a video related to Islam on an internet platform is worth seeing and triggers curiosity (Caldwell, 2008). Numerous dramatic events with incredible impact are associated with ISIS. The terrorist organization proceeds a holy war mediated via the internet. The members of ISIS constitute the cyber-jihad (Bieda and Halawi, 2015). Cyber terrorists can be characterized as performers who participate in a performance and address to specific audience (Goffman, 1959). It is also advocated that while terrorist might kill, the objective of terrorists is not murder (Jenkins, 1978). As Laqueur, W. (1978) asserts, “The terrorist act by itself is nothing, whereas publicity is all” (p.62). Hence, the role of digital media is significant in order for the terrorist groups to become renowned and proliferate their messages. They also use media as a psychological weapon which is used to communicate a threat to a wider audience; this can be successfully achieved through online dramaturgical performance. It is worth mentioning that members of ISIS have been influenced by terrorist organizations which have acted in the past. Whether media representation of ISIS’s terrorist activity contributes to the expansion of the phenomenon or results in the combating of terrorism is a question of concern to this project.

More specifically, the first Chapter is an attempt to define the phenomenon of terrorism. The fact that terrorism is used to intimidate and psychologically affect its victims is stressed (Hoffman, 2007). Moreover, terrorism serves a variety of purposes. Violence is the main instrument for achieving terrorists’ goals (Jenkins, 1974, Laqueur, 2007). The two types of terrorism and the connection between them are mentioned as well. Many terrorism experts drown a parallel between terrorism and theatrical performances (Jenkins, 1974). Furthermore, there is a reference to the way terrorism arose and the social groups that first proceeded to terrorist acts; thus, the roots and the evolution of the phenomenon of terrorism will be discussed (Roberts, 2002, Zalman, 2015). To continue, the emergence of modern terrorism is examined due to the fact that is connected with the occurrence of the Islamic State a few years later. The groups’ precursors and their activity are specified too; this happens on the grounds that the groups which thrive in the past might have influence and trigger ISIS’s members to commit terrorist actions.

Regarding the second Chapter, some crucial characteristics of the jihadist organization ISIS are referred so as to be notified the group’s beliefs, moral values and practices which determine its terrorist activity. A comparison between ISIS and its predecessor, Al Qaeda, is done. In addition, the most significant terrorist attacks since 2015 to 2016 that were carried out by ISIS and had a deep impact on the whole world are elaborately represented. More specifically, the attacks in Paris in November of 2015, the Brussels bombings in March of 2016 and the attack in Nice in July of 2016 will be described in detail.

As far as the third Chapter is concerned, the distinctive characteristics of the New Media which differentiate them from traditional Media are discussed; thus, interactivity and ubiquity play essential role. Other opportunities that New Media offer regarding terrorism are mentioned too. To continue, the relationship among media and terrorism is analysed. The Internet which characterises the New Media plays a vital role on the grounds that it helps terrorists publicise their activity. Moreover, the prominence of terrorist acts benefits media as well. Methodology used in the current research is discussed in the end of this chapter.
Last but not least, in Chapter 4 three videos projected by three renowned web channels will be elaborately analyzed. The way New Media represent terrorism will be discussed. Important conclusions are drawn concerning the strategy of ISIS’s members, the way they promote themselves, their mode, their dress-code, face expressions, the scenery of their videos, the meaning of the cruel objects that most of the times carry with them and the purposes they serve. Their target and the audience in whom they address to are discussed as well.
1.1 Definitions of Terrorism

There is a problem in defining terrorism which is commonplace for the authors who try to approach this subject and also one of the main reasons of conflicts and disagreements among governments in meetings that take place internationally where terrorism is one of the topics that occur frequently for discussion (Δασεαζοπούζου-Λιβαδά, 1998). There is not a definition which is universally accepted (“Terrorism 2002-2005”). The problem exists on the grounds that terrorism is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon (Garoufalis, 2014); hence, its meaning is difficult to be limited in one definition. As Laqueur argues, “Many terrorists exist, and their character has changed over time and from country to country. The endeavor to find a "general theory" of terrorism, one overall explanation of its roots, is a futile and misguided enterprise .Terrorism has changed over time and so have the terrorists, their motives, and the causes of terrorism.” (Borum, 2004, p. 5). What’s more, terrorism is the oldest form of violence but all types of violence are not terrorism (Laqueur, 2007).

According to another definition, terrorism is a psychological act that dominates across the world as a form of violence adjusted to achieve political aims, serve religious purposes and reach ideological or imperialistic goals (Liang, 2015, Borum, 2004).

In addition, Hoffman (2007) characterizes terrorism as a form of psychological warfare. More specifically, he advocates that “Terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear in the attainment of political change” (Hoffman, 2007, p. 8). This goes to say that regardless of the fact that terrorist acts might kill scores of people, terrorism has been designed to have an extensive influence psychologically on its targets. Hence, it has deep psychological effects on the audience; it aims to spread fear, intimidate, impress, shock and affect the behaviour of the audience which is the target of terrorists (Hoffman, 2007). Terrorists’ activity is deliberately planned in order to achieve their goals. The targets-audiences may differ; they might be political parties, religious or even ethnic groups (Hoffman, 2007, Jenkins, 1974). A terrorist attack might have been designed to address to particular or multiple audiences (Hoffman, 2007). Furthermore, the victims are often unrelated to a terrorist’s cause (Jenkins, 1974). Terrorists have the belief that they can attain their objectives by using either violence or the threat of violence (Hoffman, 2006, Jenkins, 1974).

Jenkins (1974) recommends that terrorism may be defined as “the campaign of violence designed to inspire fear-a campaign to terrorize” (p. 2). A distinguishable characteristic that makes terrorism differ from other crimes or mugging is the fact that terrorist acts are performed by organizations that might terrify rather than individuals who act independently (Jenkins, 1974). What’s more, terrorists wish to change the world but they do not have so much power to accomplish this goal (Dowling, 1986). They are against the conventional world; they try to achieve political aims through violence. They do not aim at physical destruction of their enemies. The physical result of their actions is not as important as the inculcation of dread to their target audience. The deliberate creation of fear distinguishes terrorism from a normal murder or an assault (Stern, 2003).

According to the code of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Terrorism is defined as “the unlawful use of force and violence against people or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or
social objectives” (“Terrorism 2002-2005”, 28 C.F.R. Section 0.85). Therefore, the use of violence in order to intimidate is the dominant characteristic of terrorism.

The Department of State, Title 22 of the U.S. Code Section 2656 defined terrorism as follows: “Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.” (Laqueur, 2007). The “noncombatant targets” is a crucial element of the definition of terrorism; this happens on the grounds that all terrorist groups that existed hitherto attacked not only combatants such as policemen and soldiers but civilians as well. Moreover, there have been many kinds of terrorism that differ to a large extent depending on space, time, manifestations, motivations and aims (Laqueur, 2007).

The global terrorism can be separated into domestic and transnational. The two types of terrorism are correlated. The domestic terrorist incidents have a deep impact on transnational terrorism (Walter & Khusrav, 2011). Furthermore, domestic terrorist incidents can evolve to transnational ones. Thus, countries that are targets of terrorism should take into account domestic terrorism across the world and contribute to curb locally grown terrorism (Walter & Khusrav, 2011). What’s more, transnational terrorist acts might affect citizens of a country who are not the direct target of terrorists. This goes to say that a terrorist act might occur anywhere, either in a country where a dispute occurred or in another place (Addison & Murshed, 2005). As Doran (2002) advocates, transnational terrorism can truly reflect a civil war which takes place elsewhere. Furthermore, a country’s citizenry or interests subjected to terrorism might represent a supporter, a sponsor or an ally of the enemy of terrorists. USA and its allies, the Western countries, are mostly the targets of terrorists’ activity (Addison & Murshed, 2005). Terrorist organizations often believe that these countries finance states and regimes with whom the rebellious groups are in war (Walter & Khusrav, 2011). Thus, they attack the sponsors of their enemies. Consequently, transnational terrorism can be considered as the internalization of a dispute which is domestic (Addison & Murshed, 2005).

Additionally, Jenkins (1974) argues that international terrorism is an activity or campaign of violence which takes place outside the procedures and rules of war and international diplomacy. It also represents warfare. The warfare can’t be limited in territories; it takes place worldwide. Terrorists do not aim at physically destroying their enemies; they try to attain broader goals such as gaining attention worldwide through the publicity of their actions or even the society’s dissolution (Jenkins, 1974). Furthermore, Jenkins (1974) states that “Terrorism is theater” (p. 4). Terrorist attacks are cautiously choreographed in order to attract the attention of media and press globally. Terrorists often hold hostages in order to increase the drama. In case countries-targets do not meet the demands of terrorists, the hostages might be killed. Thus, terrorists mostly address their acts to people who watch rather than to the actual victims (Jenkins, 1974).

What’s more, Karlheinz Stockhausen recommended that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were “the greatest work of art of all time” (Cowen, 2006). From Stockhausen’s point of view, a terrorist attack can be seen as an aesthetic spectacle; it is a performance and looks like a thriller (Cowen, 2006).

Archetti (2013) states that the narratives as well as conflicting viewpoints on terrorism are caused by communication. Therefore, terrorism is a communication form and is strongly associated with communication media (Ephraim, 2015). Archetti (2013) also advocates that “we

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1Karlheinz Stockhausen (22 August 1928-5 December 2007) was a German composer known as one of the most significant as well as controversial composers of 20th and 21st centuries (Stockhausen, K., http://www.karlheinzstockhausen.org/).
cannot truly understand terrorism in the twenty-first century, let alone counter it effectively, unless we also understand the communication processes that underpin it” (p. 1). Terrorists do not only want to kill and destroy but also to communicate their messages to global audiences.

1.2 A historical Overview

1.2.1 Origins of Terrorism

Terrorism occurred in places where people were most exploited and cruelly oppressed too (Laqueur, 2007). Hence, it can be assumed that terrorism would be ended in case oppression and exploitation were removed from the world (Laqueur, 2007). This opinion is ambivalent on the grounds that terrorism was absent in significant regimes of the 20th century that were the most oppressive ones such as Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany (Laqueur, 2007). There are conflicting views regarding the existence of terrorism in many time periods. A few scholars labelled terrorism as the intimidation and violence which was practiced by Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union (“Nazi Terror Begins”, 2014, Miller, 2012). Furthermore, it is believed that terrorism did not occur in the richest, most egalitarian as well as poorest societies (Laqueur, 2007).

The history of terrorism is a significant key to understand this phenomenon. The past experience in conjunction with the new elements of terrorism, known as modern terrorism, will offer an integrated view of the phenomenon (Laqueur, 2003). Terrorism was and is one of the biggest dangers that mankind faces.

The roots of terrorism are dated in the 1st century where criminal minds started acting in order to affect politics (Zalman, 2015). Thugs or Thuggees was a cult, creature of Hinduism which occurred in 1800s in India. It was one of the most notorious, criminal, religious groups in history (Rapoport, 2002, Thuggees (Thugs), 2016). It was a very well organised cult which practiced long-range robberies and murders in order to serve Kali, the ultimate goddess who is essential to Hindu deities (Thuggees (Thugs), 2016). Afterwards, the Jewish group of Zealots called Sicarii used to assassinate their enemies as well as collaborators in order to remove Roman rulers from their area, Judea (Goodman, 2008).

In the 11th century, the Hashshashin, a secretive, Islamic, religious group acted both in Persia and Syria, the present Iran (Zalman, 2015). It was a Shiite sect which was known as NizariIsmailis. The adherent and leader of the group was Hassan Sabaah who desired to conquer Persia and tried to achieve this goal by force (Zalman, 2015). Thus, he seized a district in Northern Persia (Iran). Afterwards, in 1090 the area was governed by Sunni Saljuq Turks (Carr, 2016). In the 13th century the dynasty was destroyed by Mongols (Zalman, 2015). In the 14th century, the Italians used the term Assassins for professional murderers (Zalman, 2015). Therefore, the three rebellious terrorist groups, Thugs (Thuggees), Zealots (Sicarii) and

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2 Thug, Thuggee or Tuggee has as origin the Sanskrit, sthag and Pali, thak, which means to hide. Thus, a secret concealment (Thuggees (Thugs), 2016).
3 The word Sicarius, the single form of Sicarii means in Latin “dagger-man”. Sica comes from the root of the word secor which means “to slice”. At a later time the word sicarius was a term for an assassin murderer (Definition of sicarius. The Latin Lexicon).
4 The Assassins, Hashshashin, or Hashishiya. It is believed that the name Hashishiya means hashish users because they used to take drugs just before carrying out an assassination (Zalman, 2016).
Assassins (Hashhashin) which represented Hinduism, Judaism and Islam respectively, can be considered as the predecessors of the modern terrorists although their activity differs in many respects from the terrorist incidents that characterize modern terrorism (Goodman, 2008, Zalman, 2015, Rapoport, 2002). Moreover, the names of the groups are still used to designate the terrorists nowadays (Rapoport, 2002).

Terrorism is accepted as a modern phenomenon which is closely linked to mass media (Zalman, 2015). Thus, terrorists’ activities are considered as successful when they are projected on media (Dowling, 1986). The phenomenon originated in 1793. The term entered within European languages after the French Revolution in 1789 by Maxmilien Robespierre (Roberts, 2002, Zalman, 2015). The first meaning of the term “terrorism” was given by the French Academy in 1789 when governments in Paris attempted to impose radical rules on an unwilling citizenry (Roberts, 2014). Hence, at first “terrorism” meant “system or rule of terror” (Roberts, 2002). This fact reminds us that “terror is often at its bloodiest when used by dictatorial governments against their own citizens” (Roberts, 2002).

1.2.2 Waves of Modern Terrorism

The first wave of Modern Terrorism appeared in Russia in 1880 and within the decade occurred in the Balkans, in Western Europe and in Asia (Rapoport, 2002, Roberts, 2002). Epochal anarchists mainly initiated this wave; their primary goal was to assassinate prominent officials; therefore they launched campaigns against them (Rapoport, 2002). The “Anarchist wave” is considered as the first global terrorist experience in modern history (Rapoport, 2002). Secondly, there is the “anticolonial wave” which occurred in the 1920s and lasted for almost forty years (Rapoport, 2002). The term of the group stems from the fact that the resisting states were powers, ambivalent about keeping their colonial condition (Rapoport, 2002). This ambivalence makes us understand the reason why this group had the first success in the area of terrorism. Afterwards, the “New Left Wave” emerged, which decreased in the latter stages of the 20th century; today there are left a few groups active in Spain, Nepal, Peru, Colombia and the United Kingdom (Rapoport, 2002). In 1979 the “religious wave” appeared (Rapoport, 2002); this wave has probably inspired new terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that will be elaborately examined further down. It is worth noting that nationalist organizations occur in all the waves (Rapoport, 2002).

1.3 Influential Terrorist Groups

Irish Republican Army (IRA)

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA or PIRA) is the oldest paramilitary organization included in modern terrorism. It first emerged in 1916 and aimed at secession of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom; it created an independent republic encompassing of all Ireland (Moloney, 2002). The organization increased its recruits after the ‘Bloody Sunday’ incident in 1972 in which the British armed forces killed unarmed civilians during a protest against internment (Brendan O’Brien, 1999).
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

Another influential terrorist organization which founded in 1964 is named Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and mainly started its activity in 1967 (Rapoport, 2002). PLO’s activity and connections were international, that is the reason why it is thought as the preeminent part of the New Left wave despite the fact that it tried to attain nationalism (Rapoport, 2002). It was founded in order to create a central leadership and organize the Palestinians who were scattered among various countries after the Arab-Israel war (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Encyclopedia Britannica). It consisted of members from different Palestinian communities and its primary goal was to eliminate the Israel sovereignty in Palestine as well as to destroy the Israeli State (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Red Brigades

The Red Brigades was a left terrorist group, active in Italy whose main aim was to force Italy to leave the NATO alliance and was also opposed to the Italian Christian democratic government (Dugdale-Pointon, 2007). The organization was founded in 1970 and used to conduct murders and kidnappings; their acts were increasingly becoming radical and violent (Dugdale-Pointon, 2007). The isolated killings were a usual phenomenon for the extremist members and continued for many years. Many terrorist groups followed after them on the grounds that they set the beginning of radicalism.

Black September

A Palestinian terrorist organization founded in 1970 was called Black September. This was both the name of Jordan’s ruthless war on the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in September 1970 and a Palestinian commando and terrorist movement created in the aftermath of the war to take revenge for the Palestinians’ losses in Jordan (Tristam, 2016). The extremist movement by using terrorist means aimed at the destruction of Israelis. As far as its activity is concerned, the members of Black September assassinated the Jordanian Prime Minister but their most infamous act was the fatal kidnapping, murder and mutilation of eleven Israeli Olympic athletes during the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Munich. In addition a German police officer (Chacour, 2003). After the event, the Israeli government went through murders of those who were susceptible to have been involved in the incident. The event of Munich massacre took huge publicity via media and gathered people’s attention. Scores of journalists from all over the world attended the Olympic stadium in order to cover the Olympic Games in 1972. The dramatic slaughter and heinous crime of the Israeli athletes was, in fact, the first time that a terrorist attack was reported and broadcasted (Cosgrove and Bhowmick, 2013). Therefore, the importance of television seemed to be apparent as never before (Banks-Smith, 2014). Black September rushed in to fill the front pages (Nasr, 1997). The event had a dramatic impact on the whole world and the publicity was tremendous.
Hezbollah

Hezbollah is a Shiite Islamic militant as well as a political group founded in 1985 which is based in Lebanon (Jamail, 2016). It is a state that resists to Western and Israeli involvement in the Middle East (Masters, Editor & Laub, 2014). It is also considered as a terrorist organization by the European Union and the United States, supported by Iran and Syria (Masters & al., 2014). It can be considered as a resistance movement too (Horowitz, 2013). Regarding the origins of the group, Hezbollah or “Party of God” submerged during the fifteen-year civil war of Lebanon (1975-1990) and specifically after Israel’s military invasion in 1982 and subsequent occupation. The group’s aim was to expel Palestinians who were operating in Southern Lebanon but it inadvertently mobilized groups of Shiites who were deprived of voting rights to take up arms in order to support an Iranian regime (Masters & al., 2014). Suicide attacks on the embassy of the United States and Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon in 1983, launched the image of the group whose members became leaders of the Shiite resistance (Masters & al., 2014).

After its foundation in 1985, the group established an Islamic regime which aimed at the expulsion of France, Israel and United States from the territories of Lebanon. The organization has been developed into a significant and powerful paramilitary wing. It has also been described as a “state within a state” (“Iran-Syria vs. Israel, Round 1: Assessments and Lessons Learned”, 2012). The group supports the Shia population of Lebanon while the Sunnis are opposed to the agenda of the group (“Hariri: Sunnis ‘refuse’ to join Hezbollah-Al Qaida war”, 2014). Concerning the group’s tactics, it mainly uses suicide bombers in order to expel Israelis of the Islamic land (“Hezbollah: History and Overview”).

Al Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is a militant organization that was founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden (Bergen, 2006). Abdullah Azzam and some Arab volunteers, who took up arms in 1980 to prevent the Soviets’ invasion into Afghanistan, were also the co-founders of the Sunni-Islamic organization which acted globally (Al Qaeda’s origins and links, 2004). The terrorist organization has been designated by numerous suicide bombings. It also took responsibility for the terrorist attack of September, 11th in 2001 which impinged on the entire world and the Bali bombings in 2002. (White House, September 2003). West media and Bush administration characterized the military campaign after the attack of the World Trade Center as ‘War on Terror’ (Schmitt & Shanker, 2005).

Regarding the ideology of the radical Islamist movement, it aimed at creating a caliphate defeating the whole Muslim world (Musharbash, 2005). The religious group is basically devoted to breaking the power of the United States, its main enemy and expel all the non-Muslim influences by implementing Sharia. Al Qaeda members are raised to adulthood with the convictions that a Christian-Jewish coalition is conspiring to destroy Islam (Fu’ad Husayn Al’ Zarqawi, 2005).

It is believed by numerous terrorism experts that the worldwide jihadist movement is not always driven by al Qaeda’s leadership. As years pass, Al Qaeda has fragmented into various regional movements which have small connections with each other. The former officer of the CIA and psychiatric Marc Sageman argued that al Qaeda is now a “loose label for a movement that seems to target the west. There is no umbrella organization. We like to create a
mythical entity called al-Qaeda in our minds, but that is not the reality we are dealing with” (Blitz, 2010).

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been influenced by Al Qaeda which can be characterised as its predecessor. ISIS joined Al Qaeda in October 2004 and separated from the group in 2014 (Holmes, 2014). However, the two extremist organizations differentiate in some points. They have ideological and strategic differences (Byman, 2015). Al Qaeda and specifically Osama bin Laden had expressed through media his disagreement regarding ISIS insistence on the formation of an Islamic State; he claimed that they lose their orientation (Bertrand, 2015). Al Qaeda has portrayed itself as a militant group whose operations have affected ISIS in order to organize its cruel activities and build its image. Although ISIS seems in many respects much more modern than its precursor.
Chapter 2. The Predominant Terrorist Group ISIS: The activity of ISIS within 2015-2016

ISIS can be characterised as a unique extremist group. A brief reference to some characteristics concerning the jihadist terrorist organization is considered necessary in order to perceive the way they use media, the meaning of their actions, their influence as well as their targets.

Islamic state (IS)\(^5\), as the members of the group have recently announced themselves, also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)\(^6\) or “Daesh”\(^7\) was founded in 1999 and has made itself unique in the world of Islamist terrorists (Irshaid, 2015, Guthrie, 2015). It is one of the most popular and simultaneously dangerous terrorist groups worldwide lead by Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi. It began at a very different form but has fully adjusted its activity to the modern world in which social media dominate (Beauchamp, 2015). According to NBC news (Windrem, 2015), it is also one of the most powerful and richest jihadist terrorist groups ever to exist due to their ability to produce and transport oil from their region’s resources to smugglers and middlemen along Syria and Turkey (De Petris, 2015). In so doing, it finances its operations and compensates its fighters. Al terrorist organizations can be characterized as communicating vessels; they influence one another to a large extent. ISIS has been affected by Al Qaeda which is known as its predecessor. The jihadist organization joined Al Qaeda in October 2004 and separated from the group in 2014 (Holmes, 2014).

Al Qaeda is basically devoted in breaking the power of United States, its main enemy, while ISIS target is often closer to home, called apostate Shiite regimes\(^8\), such as Syria’s and Iraq governments which hinder the creation of a pure Sunni Islamic\(^9\) state (Bertrand, 2015). The members of the two religious groups have co-existed for centuries and shared fundamental beliefs and practices as well, although they differ in doctrine, ritual, law and religious issues (Sunnis and Shia: Islam’s ancient schism, 4 January 2016). ISIS also fights against the Free Syrian Army and its democratic values (“Living with ISIS”, Documentary 2016). ISIL argue that the FSA is secular and does not believe in the Sharia (“Living with ISIS”, Documentary 2016). Members of ISIS claim that they wish to build an Islamic caliphate in June 2014 in order to expand over the Muslims worldwide (Roggio, 2014). ISIS members have organised their group as a highly efficient company and exploit social media sites in order to be funded by avid and wealthy supporters. Thus, it can be considered as the wealthiest jihadist organization which tries to flourish and utilize its wealth to gain popularity (Gray, 2014). Moreover, it is also constantly projecting its activity; this characteristic makes ISIS

\(^5\)The name Islamic State (IS) reflects the group’s expansionist ambitions

\(^6\)The inconsistency between the names ISIS and ISIL has its roots in the Arabic word “al-Sham” which can be translated as “the Levant”, “Greater Syria” or “Damaskus”. “Al-Sham” is a term used in the 7th century for the description of the area between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, Anatolia and Egypt. The “Levant” has been used for the eastern part of the Mediterranean (Irshaid, 2015).

\(^7\)Daesh is an Arabic acronym that comes from the phrase “al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham”. It is also an Arabic word currently used in the media as a derogatory term that means ‘a group of bigots who impose their will on others’. The Arabic acronym has been adopted by politicians and world leaders to mock the organization and exasperate its members. (Oakley & Chakrabarti, 2016).

\(^8\)Shia constitutes about 10% of all Muslims who are in majority in Iran, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, and Yemen. The movement “Shia Ali” or the “Party of Ali” claimed that Ali was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad as leader (imam) of the Muslim community following his death in 632. (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16047709).

\(^9\)Sunnis constitute the great majority of the world’s Muslims which is estimated about 85%-90%. Their name “Sunni” is derived from the phrase “Ali al-Sunnah”, or “People of the Tradition”. The tradition refers to practices based on what Prophet Muhammad said, did, agreed to or condemned.
distinctive and reasserts its uniqueness in the world of Jihad even though the way it acts and fosters its power reminds us of past incidents.

2.1 Paris Attacks

A series of well-organised terrorist attacks occurred on Friday 13 November 2015 in Paris and Saint-Denis, the northern fringe of the city (Chow, & Kostov, 2015). Three explosions struck Paris in total (“Paris attacks: What happened on the night”, 2015). More specifically, the first one occurred at the Stade de France when three suicide bombers hit outside the major stadium in Saint-Denis during an international football match between France and Germany. The national stadium was attended by 80,000 spectators among which was Francois Hollande, the President of France (Cruickshank, 2016). The police, who had primarily made the usual security check at the entrance of the soccer stadium detected the explosives; that’s why they had debarred the man who was wearing a suicide belt near the stadium (“Paris attacks: What happened on the night”, 2015). However, the man ignored the prohibition, retreated from the security check and triggered the explosives (Robinson & Landauro, 2015). The bomber and a passer-by lost their lives due to the explosion. A second explosion occurred after ten minutes outside a different entrance of the stadium. The two blasts happened on the same street, called Avenue Jules Rimet (“2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016). What’s more, a third explosion occurred after a few minutes on Rue de la Cokerie outside a fast-food store near the soccer stadium (“Paris attacks: What happened on the night”, 2015, “2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016). Four people, three suicide bombers and a passer-by were finally killed after the three bombings. All the attackers wore explosive vests and blew themselves up (Fraser & Henderson, 2015, “Paris attacks: What happened on the night”, 2015).

Terrorist groups used to attack civilians in public areas especially when international events take place. The first of the Paris attacks in the national stadium of France reminds us, the attack during the Summer Olympic Games in Munich in 1972.

Furthermore, other attacks followed at five sites in the centre of Paris (Fraser & Henderson, 2015). Regarding the first one, a gunman opened fire on the Cambodian restaurant Petite Cambodge in Rue Bichat and the bar le Carillon which is located on the opposite side of the road; fifteen habitués were killed (“2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016). Another attack followed when a man started shooting outside the Café Bon Biere at the corner of Rue de la Fontaine au Roi and Rau du Faubourg du Temple (“2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016). As a result, five people were killed. Afterwards, the attackers arrived at la Belle Equipe, a bar-restaurant in the rue de Charonne; nineteen people were killed when two gunmen assaulted the people who were sitting outside (“2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016). A suicide bomber blew himself up in the restaurant called Comptoir Voltaire; one person was seriously injured and many others were slightly injured ((Steafel, Mulholland, Sabur, Malnick, Trotman & Harley, 2015, “2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts”, 2016).

The next and the most deadliest attack took place at the Bataclan concert hall in Boulevarte Voltaire and caused eighty-nine deaths (Steafel et al, 2015). Three armed attackers advanced upon the unsuspecting crowd who was spectating the US rock group Eagles of Death Metal a few minutes after the concert had begun (“Paris attacks: What happened on the night”, 2015). They started an assault which lasted two hours and forty minutes (Steafel et al, 2015). The three gunmen were watching over the concert from the balcony of the venue. At
first, they started shooting indiscriminately at people who were standing at the bar ("What happened at the Bataclan?", 2015). They subsequently went inside the hall and started shooting concert-goers at random ("What happened at the Bataclan?", 2015). Some people escaped through an emergency exit at the left side of the stage. The survivors were taken as hostages by the Islamists ("What happened at the Bataclan?", 2015). Two of the attackers blew up the explosive vest that they were wearing and the third one was shot by gunfire when anti-terror police raid the venue ("2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts", 2016, Steafel et al, 2015). Concerning the victims of the tragedy, eighty-nine people died during the assault in the Bataclan theatre. One hundred and thirty people died in the Paris attacks while many were injured ("Paris Terror Attacks", 2016).

Regarding the suspects, Francois Molins, the Paris chief prosecutor, argued that “three co-ordinated teams” must have been behind the attacks ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015). It seems that the mastermind of the attacks is Abdelhamid Abaaoud. According to Jean Charles Brisard, the terrorism analyst, Abdelhamid Abaaoud had directed the attacks in the Bataclan theatre by phone ("2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts", 2016). He had been member of ISIS since 2014; moreover, he had been implicated in a large number of conspiracies as well as terror attacks in Western Europe in 2015 ("2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts", 2016). Five days after the Paris massacre, the mastermind of the suicide bombings was killed in the Saint-Denis raid by the police (Henley, 2015). Concerning the rest of the suspects, there were nine people, members of ISIS, that seem to have been involved in the attacks ("2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts", 2016).

According to witnesses the attackers were shouting “Allahu Akbar” in Arabic which means “God is Great” when shooting. An attacker also blamed the President Francois Hollande for the intervention of France in Syria during the shooting ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015). This is strong evidence that the attacks have been performed by ISIS. The militant group also claimed responsibility for the acts of barbarism in Paris (Walt, 2015). What’s more, it claimed that the attacks across Paris were a way to take revenge for the airstrikes in Syria carried out by France (Parfitt, 2015). It is worth mentioning that the attacks carried out just a few hours after the rumours that Jihadi John was killed by a US strike in Syria (Parfitt, 2015).

The attacks in Paris were described by Francois Hollande, as an “act of war” which were carefully organized by the militant group ISIS ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015). He also announced a state of emergency; this means that border security and controls will increase and be carried out more intensively over the next period in order to anticipate similar atrocities by jihadist terrorists and combat terrorism too ("Paris attacks: What happened on the night", 2015).

It is worth noting that Bataclan concert hall had been threatened many times in the past due to its support to Israel in public (Greenhouse, 2015). Anti-Zionists\(^\text{10}\) activists had targeted the theatre in the past because its owners were Jewish and the concert hall used to hold pro-Israel events (Greenhouse, 2015, “French mag: Bataclan an Islamist target due to Jewish owners”, 2015). In 2007 and 2008 the theatre was threatened by radical groups because it used to regularly host galas and conferences of many Jewish organizations regularly ("Was the Bataclan targeted for Jewish ownership and support for Israel?", 2015). In December 2008, Anti-Zionists are opposed to Zionism which is defined as the hostility to ethno-nationalist and the political movement of Jews and their culture which supports the creation and dominance of the Jewish State, the Jewish homeland which is called the Land of Israel (Weider, 1997).
the threats against the Bataclan venue and its owners became more intense during the Operation Cast Lead of Israel in the Caza Strip\(^{11}\) ("Was the Bataclan targeted for Jewish ownership and support for Israel?", 2015). A video\(^{12}\) was also uploaded on the Internet that showed a team of youths with masked faces threatening the theatre for supporting an event as a tribute to the Israeli police (Myers, 2015). What’s more, pro-Palestinian associations launched petitions and urged their supporters to protest against the Bataclan theatre’s hosting of pro-Israel events by writing a formal complaint to the authorities ("Was the Bataclan targeted for Jewish ownership and support for Israel?", 2015). In 2011, according to the French popular newspaper Le Figaro, the Belgian Farouk Ben Abbes, who was arrested in Egypt after the terrorist attack on a French group of students in Cairo, in which Cecile Vannier, a seventeen year old student was killed, had admitted that he “was planning an attack against the Bataclan theatre in France” (Jouan, 2016). Finally, it turned out that the French students who had been targeted by the militant group, were attacked in order “to pay for France’s participation in the Germinal boat blockade of Gaza” ("Was the Bataclan targeted for Jewish ownership and support for Israel?", 2015).

### 2.2 Brussels bombings

Two terrorist attacks took place in Belgium on March 22, 2016 ("Timeline: Brussels attacks", March 23, 2016). More specifically, during morning hours of the same day three coordinated suicide bombings occurred, two at the airport of Brussels in Zaventem, the city’s main airport and one at the Maalbeek subway station of Brussels ("Brussels Attacks Death Toll Lower To 32", March 29, 2016). According to an eyewitness, the bomber was shouting some Arabic words just before the explosion in Zaventem (Mendick 2016, "Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks", 2016). The explosives were planted in two different spots in the departure hall of the international airport and triggered just a few seconds apart ("Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks", 2016). An hour later, another explosion hit the Maalbeek subway station in the centre of the city, close to the European Union headquarters ("Brussels attacks: Zaventem and Maalbeek bombs kill many", 2016). The subway train was heading to the direction of Arts-Loi station and a few minutes after the departure, the blast occurred in the middle of the three carriages. The subway operator immediately handled the emergency brakes, the train stopped and the carriages were evacuated by the subway operator ("Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks", 2016).

Regarding the victims of the attacks, thirty five people were killed including the suicide bombers and three hundred and thirty people were injured (Krever Mick, Shoichet E.C & Greg. Botelho, 2016, "Victims of the Brussels attacks", 2016). The above described explosions are considered as the deadliest of the terrorist attacks in the history of Belgium (Shoichet E.C., Frederic Pleitgen & Greg. Botelho, 2016). ISIS proudly took over responsibility for the attacks (Shoichet & all, 2016). The explosive devices, used by the attackers, were

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\(^{11}\)Gaza War, known as Gaza Massacre was an armed conflict among Israel and Palestinians in Gaza Strip. It lasted from 27 December 2008 until 18 January 2009 (David, B., Alon, 2009). The war in Gaza was a part of the Palestinian-Israel conflict. The election of the Islamist political party Hamas in 2005 and 2006 to the government resulted to the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas ("Big Hamas win in Gaza’s election", 2005).

\(^{12}\)http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/chilling-video-warned-attack-paris-6843845
fabricated to contain nuclear elements, which contributed to a far more lethal mixture and caused the vast amount of victims (“Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks”, 2016). Furthermore, during the thorough investigation by the Special Task Forces in Brussels, they discovered that the terrorists were actively observing and gathering intelligence about nearby nuclear power plants long before the mentioned attacks; this fact could become extremely perilous for future attacks because it might cause an unprecedented catastrophe including a lifetime of numerous victims due to the actual explosion and the following exposition to lethally expanding radiation for decades (“Η Ευρώπη σε κόκκινο συναγερμό «στον ενικό» με το Νίκο Χατζηνικολάου”. Β’ μέρος, 28/3/2016).

As far as the bombers are concerned, three men are considered suspicious; they were standing one next to the other at the Brussels’ airport according to the photos released by the police (Melvin Done & Lindsay Isaac, April 7, 2016). The two suspects, Najim Laachraoui who carried the “most powerful bomb” and Ibrahim El Bakraoui committed suicide, because they remained at the airport at the time the bombs were to explode (“Βρυξέλλες: Άλλοι τρεις κατηγορούνται για συμμετοχή σε τρομοκρατική οργάνωση”, March 28, 2016). The third man, Salah Abdeslam left the airport after having planted a bomb which eventually did not explode, due to false assembly (Melvin Done & Lindsay Isaac, 2016, Selina, 2016). The man who is the one and only survivor of ten men who were implicated to the Paris attacks on November 2015, was arrested three days after the bombings (Shannon, 2016). The attack might have been triggered by the arrest of Abdeslam Brahim, the main suspect of the atrocities carried out in Paris, in November 13 of 2016 (Austin Henry, March 20, 2016). Abdeslam Brahim who had been recruited by Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the ringleader of Paris attacks, is considered responsible for planning the attacks conducted in Paris (Melvin Done & Lindsay Isaac, April 7, 2016).

Brussels was hit because it is the capital of Belgium and the European Union as well. It often hosts European Commission’s official seats and has become a centre of counterterrorism investigations (Shannon, 2016). Brussels have also a high number of citizens who often travel to Iraq and are connected with Muslim communities; it is believed that some of them must have helped Jihadists and protect them from the security services in order to commit their atrocities (Shannon, 2016).
2.3 Nice attack

One of the bloodiest terror attacks took place in Nice on 14 July 2016, when people were celebrating the Bastille Day, the French National Day\(^{13}\). The attack was characterized as the third terror atrocity that afflicted France within 18 months (Brunsden & Chassany, 2016). More specifically, shortly before 11pm, after the end of the celebrations, when people started leaving the celebration place, a 31-year-old perpetrator started unpredictably driving a large cargo truck at 70 km per hour for almost 2 km into walking crowds. The police after managing to immobilize the truck, immediately surrounded it, started exchanging gunfire with the attacker and eventually landed a lethal blow on him (Ralph & Almasy, 2016). The driver of the vehicle was the Tunisian Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel who had a French residency permit (“Attentat de Nice: ceque l’ onsait du chauffer, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel”). It is worth mentioning that the man was a self-announced soldier of Islam (Chazan, Willgress, Jalil, Morgan, Turner, Allen, Rothwell, Evans, Smith, 2016). On the Promenade des Anglais, the main street in Nice where the attack was conducted, 83 people died, among them, 10 children and teenagers. Moreover, 303 people were injured and committed to the hospital (Chazan et al, 2016, “Nice attack: Who were the victims?”, 2016).

The French President François Hollande characterized the attack as “terrorism of opportunity”. He also announced three days of national mourning and made an extension of the state of emergency in France (“Nice attack: truck driver named as France mourns 84 killed in Bastille Day atrocity-as it happened”, 2016). Hollande had also declared a state of emergency for three months in France earlier due to the terrorist attack in November 2015 by ISIS (Griffin, 2015).

The French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls connected the Nice attack with the terrorist organization of Islamic State despite the fact that the group did not officially take responsibility for programming the attack (Brunsden & Chassany, 2016). He also claimed that “France must learn to live with terrorism” (Mensch, 2016); this announcement caused public discourse and provoked discontent to French people. Other sources, such as the English Newspaper the guardian, mentioned that the Islamic state claimed responsibility for the atrocity in Nice (Jones, Chrisafis & Davies, 2016).

The attacker was linked to five suspects that were kept in custody in order for the investigation to be conducted. It is worth noting that the driver’s phone proved much more important than the suspects themselves for the policemen who took over the investigation (Chazan et al, 2016). Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel had visited many web sites referring to the Islamic State since the 1\(^{st}\) of July. According to BBC news he searched the internet on a daily basis for Koran verses and “nasheeds”, the propaganda chants of Jihad (“Attacks on Nice: Who was Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel?”, 2016). Furthermore, he searched for the Islamic holiday called Eid al-Fitr\(^{14}\), “a festival of breaking of the fast” (Jamal, 1999). According to the newspaper The Telegraph News, the Tunisian man “took drugs and used dating sites to pick up men and women” (Chazan et al, 2016). What’s more, the attack was premeditated; it was

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\(^{13}\)Bastille Day is a Memorial Day of the Storming of the Bastille on 14 July of 1789 (“Bastille Day-14 July. Official Website of France”). This day was a global symbol of the abolition of authoritarian democracy. The feudal system was replaced by another one where the human rights and the principles of equality and liberty dominated (“14 Ιουλίου 1789: Πέφτειν Βασιλέα, αφενε και από την δικαιοσύνη”).

\(^{14}\)Eid al-Fitr is a significant religious holiday which is celebrated by Muslims all over the world and marks “the end of Ramadan”, the Islamic month of sawm. In this day, Muslims are not allowed to fast; they celebrate the conclusion of the 30 days of fasting during “the month of Ramadan” (Jamal, 1999).
carefully and accurately prepared. Thus, he rented a 19-tone lorry on July 4, and the day of the assault was regularly checking the seafront as François Molins\textsuperscript{15} advocated. The prosecutor also claimed that the perpetrator showed “a clear and recent interest in radical Islam in the week leading up to the attack” (Brunsden & Chassany, 2016). Therefore, he followed the Islamic State’s encouragement to make car attacks in order to defeat ISIS’s enemies (Prince, 2016). As a consequence, the online activity of Jihadists can become extremely effective even more than the use of a Kalashnikov (Bunt, 2003); this can be proved if we take into consideration the fact that the perpetrator of Nice attack had been influenced by the ISIS’s video which circulated the social media prompting its supporters to attack its enemies with every mean even by a car (Maddow, 2016).

\textsuperscript{15}François Molins is the Paris prosecutor who is responsible for the investigation of Nice attack.
Chapter 3. Terrorism in the Age of World Wide Web: New Media and ISIS

New Media concern the content which is available on the Internet and accessible on digital devices. Some examples of New Media are blogs, wikis, online newspapers, social media or even video games. The most distinctive characteristic of the New Media is interactivity. This characteristic differentiates New Media from traditional Media (Vogt, 2011). Users can interact with each other and participate on a dialogue. People have the opportunity to make comments, discuss and share various content offered on websites. Communication among people around the world has been increased via digital communities. According to McLuhan’s point of view regarding the digital media world, humanity is fully connected through the media and can collaboratively build as well as share a global world (Siapera, 2012). In addition to this, Kittler states that “all we are is determined by the media” (Siapera, 2012, p.1). The media play an essential explanatory role in the transformations and shifts concerning the human history. Thus, understanding Media means understanding the history of the whole world and human behaviour. Moreover, understanding New Media is also associated with social changes, processes, ideas, norms and practises. Ubiquity which characterises the New Media is associated with their rise. Many aspects of life such as politics, economy and culture, have been articulated with the world of New Media. Therefore, a series of cultural, social, psychological, political and economic processes interact with them.

3.1 Terrorism and the New Media

Communicating messages through the use of orchestrated violence characterizes modern terrorism (Tsfati and Weimann, 2016). Extremists have found the instrumental tools in order to plan, communicate and facilitate their operations (Mount Holyoke College, 2014). Media have contributed to the proliferation of terrorists’ messages due to the fact that they publicize their atrocities (Laqueur, 1978). As Laqueur (1978) claims, “Media are the terrorists’ best friend”. There is also a mutual dependence between terrorists and the media; they need one another in order for each one to thrive. Terrorist groups that have acted in the past became renowned via media; therefore, we realize the significance of publicity in the terrorists’ world. The communicational element is vital in terrorists’ strategy. Their objectives are met due to the media contribution. Media offer the means of attracting audience’s attention and spreading terrorists’ messages as well. The spread of a terrorist group’s messages to a large audience through media is vital in order for terrorism to expand; terrorists’ violence aim at a wider “target audience”. By spreading their outrage and terror to a broad audience can the terrorists succeed in gaining the maximum leverage in the future and effect policy changes (Spencer, 2012).

The prominence of terrorism in western media is correlated with public concern; i.e. the terrorist acts need media’s attention, otherwise they lose a basic component of terrorism as a communications strategy (Spencer, 2012). The way media present terrorism is crucial because it might direct the public thought. Media can either counter terrorism or contribute to the development of the phenomenon. In addition, media is the dominant source of information regarding terrorism. Viewers are interested in terrorist news; media is trying to gain the attention of the public when broadcasting news regarding terrorism. Terrorism provides them...
with bloody and exciting news; therefore, terrorists help media sell their products. Moreover, 
media help terrorism to achieve its goals; this happens on the grounds that the main aim of 
terrorists is the dissemination of fear rather than the violent acts and the killing of large numbers 
of people. The spread of fear is succeeded via the media representation of violent acts and the 
projection of news regarding terrorism.

In addition, the Internet and terrorism are intertwined (Tsfati and Weimann, 2016). Videos uploaded on the Internet can help people find a new insight into traditional communication media (Morris & Ogan, 1996). Online videos can be reproduced by people and also be incorporated in a TV show. Furthermore, the Internet constitutes an effective arena in order for the terrorists to thrive. What is unique about the Islamic state’s members is that they have demonstrated a talent in the New Media space (Tsfati and Weimann, 2016). The executors regularly participate in virtual communities in order to present their destructive activity, mobilize people, intimidate and spread propaganda (Wilson, 2014). ISIS tries to project its members’ military strength in order to highlight the group’s power (Irshaid, 2014). This fact will be clearly demonstrated on the third video which will be analysed subsequently. As self-representations through the Internet have become a mainstream, members of ISIS frequently use social networking sites in order to upload ‘selfies’, images and mainly videos regarding their activity; these means are frequently used by them to convey messages; they are also used to produce and consume their identities too (Williams and Marquez, 2014). ‘Images’ can become meaningful or expressionless (Walker Rettberg J., 2014). In case they are accompanied by icons, symbols or flags they become much more meaningful representations on the grounds that they deliver messages (Walker Rettberg J., 2014).

The fact that the Internet and more specifically, the New media are getting more and more a coherent and cohesive element binding communities together and gathering individuals is very well understood by the Islamic State and its supporters (Bunt, 2003). Consequently, New media have become an effective “Islamic tool” (Bunt, 2003). On the other hand, Web TV channels often reproduce terrorists’ videos helping their propaganda. The way New Media represent the terrorist activity is of high importance because it can definitely form and affect the viewers’ opinion. The videos of Islamists uploaded mostly on YouTube are influential and appeal to digital media viewers as we will see further down.

3.2 YouTube and ISIS

Acts of terrorism can be watched on the Internet in real time through videos on YouTube. ISIS adjustment to the digital world aims to attract wider audiences through a multimedia environment. They permit journalists to have access to their operations in order to let viewers come into their terrifying inner world of jihadist militant extremism. YouTube is a social media platform that is used as an alternative communicative channel (Arif, 2014). It can be considered as the most popular video search engine and a sharing service as well (Halvey & Keane, 2007). It is widely used by scores of Internet users, that’s why YouTube videos are the most apparent choice for the oncoming description and analysis. YouTube videos are also embedded in other websites, blogs and social media platforms used worldwide (Halvey & Keane, 2007).
3.3 Methodology

Framing analysis is a qualitative research method included in social sciences and used in the current research in order to analyze the way people comprehend and interpret situations as well as activities. The concept of Frame analysis is primarily attributed to Erving Goffman. According to Goffman, an audience understands the events unfolding around it via a primary framework which is given to them (Goffman, 1974).

Media focus attention on specific events and then give them a meaning. The way events are presented to the audience is the so called “frame”; this can determine the process of information and the choices that people make. Thus, the way the audience process a piece of information is influenced by the frame that media put in the events. It can be said that a frame works to structure or organize a meaning of a message (“Framing Theory”).

Furthermore, "Framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997, p. 221). Therefore, the renowned web channels Al Jazeera, Vox and CNN deal with Islamic terrorism which is a social and political issue that afflicts western societies the last years; all of the channels place a frame to the events unfolded during the terrorist attacks, i.e. they convey specific meanings through the information they provide.

The repercussions of Islamists’ abominable behaviour and savagery in the Western communities will be necessarily exposed. The way Jihadists propagate their beliefs, convey their messages and reach their goals with the contribution of digital media is a main purpose of this project too.

Online data collection and analysis has been done to serve the purpose of the research. More specifically, information has been obtained by websites and social mediaplatforms. Great credence has been given on YouTube videos related to the terrorist activity within 2015-2016 which were uploaded either on popular websites visited by a high number of internet users (Jewitt, 2012). Therefore, qualitative assessments can be extracted (Burgess & Green, 2009). Description as well as visual and narrative analysis is done on the current project regarding the videos about the Islamic terrorism within 2015-2016. This kind of methodology will be mainly used in the first two videos that will be analyzed further down (“Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”, “Why ISIS Attacked Brussels”). An interpretive insight into the cyber community of YouTube will offer useful information and conclusions of vital importance.

According to Goffman (1959), a performer (actor) is an individual who plays a role when a performance (show) is given. The members of ISIS can be characterised as performers and their attitude on social media is associated with a performance in a theatre (Jenkins, 1978). They act in order to build images and create specific impressions. The contribution and cooperation of more than one participant is significant in order for a performance to become successful (Goffman, 1959). The performers try to act in a mutual way in accordance to their moral standards. So, jihadists constitute a team characterized by unanimity and solidarity. They should comply with specific rules and do not deviate from the team’s spirit. Hence, the members of ISIS who participate in virtual communities try to launch specific impressions and convey messages through their online performances; this fact will be proven on the third video further down (“What Are You Waiting For? French Converts Easy Prey for Islamic State Recruitment”). We have an array of bodily and verbal cues that signal meanings, intentions as well as social identities (Goffman, 1959, Robinson & Schulz, 2011).
on YouTube and also incorporated and reproduced by popular Web channels as will be discussed below.

Furthermore, elements from Semiotic studies will be used to serve the purpose of the research. Thus, the signs, goals and meanings of important artifacts will be defined and analyzed (Thibault, 1991). Signs which take the form of images, sounds, objects or acts have meaning. They only become signs when they are given a meaning and put in a specific concept. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, a ‘sign’ should be linked to a concept or ‘signification’ (Grayson & Shulman, 2000). Saussure offered a two-part or ‘dyadic’ model of the signs: the ‘signifier’ or ‘signifiant’ refers to the form that the ‘sign’ takes and the ‘signified’ or ‘signifii’ which is the concept that the sign represents (Chandler, 2014). ‘Signification’ is the relationship between the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’ (Saussure, 1983). Moreover, the ‘sign’ is the result of the connection between the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’ (Saussure, 1983). Therefore, the emphasis is given to the relationships among signs rather than on the signs themselves (Chandler, 2014). He also viewed the semiotic process as entirely mental (Grayson & Shulman, 2000).

The Saussurian model which is adopted nowadays is more materialistic than the one that existed in the past. The ‘signifier’ is now interpreted as the material or even the physical form of a ‘sign’; it can be seen, touched, smelt, heard and tasted (Chandler, 2014). For Saussure, the ‘signifiers’ as well as the ‘signifieds’ were ‘psychological’ in the past; they were ‘forms’ while nowadays are mostly ‘substance’ (Saussure, 1983, Chandler, 2014); this means that they were notion of things, not things (Saussure, 1983). It is worth noting that the same ‘signifier’ might have different ‘signified’. Saussure focused on linguistics signs; he was seeing the language as the most essential sign system (Saussure, 1983).

In addition, Peirce’s theory of signs which contrasts the Saussurian binary model will be taken into consideration in the current research. A sign is composed by three parts which are inter-related: the ‘sign’, the ‘object’ and the ‘interpretant’ (Atkin, 2010). The ‘sign’ can be considered as the ‘signifier’, while the ‘interpretant’ as the ‘signified’. The ‘object’ associates the pair of ‘sign-interpretant’ with something that has objective existence; this means that exists in the real world (Gottdiener, 1995). The ‘interpretant’ which is the most distinctive and innovative feature of Peirce’s theory is what can be understood about the relationship between ‘sign’ and ‘object’ (Peirce, 1958). Peirce argued that the ‘signified element’ is the one that signifies and not the whole ‘sign’. Thus, he is interested in those elements which are the most crucial to the sign’s functioning as the signifier; he also refers them as ‘representations’, ‘representamen’, ‘grounds’ or ‘sign-vehicles’ (Atkin, 2010). As a consequence, a sign signifies an object only by virtue of some of its characteristics. What’s more, a sign that determines an ‘interpretant’ can be better understood when focusing on understanding specific features of the signifying connection among the ‘sign’ and the ‘object’ (Peirce, 1958).

Moreover, Peirce categorizes the signs into three types: first, there are the ‘icons’, which are the ‘representations’ and refer to the images or objects. Secondly, there is the ‘index’ or ‘indexical sign’ which shows the way the signifier is connected to the signified; they are related causally or physically (Grayson & Shulman, 2000). Last but not least, when an interpretation of a sign in virtue of conventions, law, religion, culture, tradition, customs, norms, is made, this results in uncovering the ‘symbol’ (Peirce, 1958). The signs are also defined as symbols; there is a causal relationship between the object, the sign and the symbol (Peirce, 1958).
This model underlines the significance of locating the sign physically in the context of an objective, real and non-mental world in contrast to the Saussurian model which emphasizes on locating the sign semiotically and taking into account the relation to other signs (Grayson & Shulman, 2000). Peirce also mentioned that a sign which addresses somebody might create in his mind an equivalent or more developed sign in his mind (Chandler, 2014). An initial interpretation might be re-interpreted; therefore, there is “a series of successive interpretants ad infinitum” and what Uberto Eco calls “unlimited simiosis” (Chandler, 2014).

It is worth mentioning that elements from Semiotic method will be used in the analysis on the third video that will be studied subsequently (“What Are You Waiting For? French Converts Easy Prey for Islamic State Recruitment”).

What’s more, three videos from three Web channels that have a different point of view each one will be represented in the current project, i.e. videos from Al Jazeera, Vox and CNN as well as their ideological directions will be studied.
Chapter 4. Videos about terrorists attacks within 2015-2016

4.1 “Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”

In the aftermath of Paris attacks, Upfront, the informative show broadcasted on Al Jazeera.com, projected a video in an attempt to discover the incentives of Islamic terrorists, their game plan, method, strategy and future targets as well (“Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”, 2015). The video was displayed on YouTube on 20 November 2015. Al Jazeera is the oldest satellite channel based in the peninsula of Qatar (Zayani, 2005). Its first broadcasting was in November of 1996. Its programs are mainly world news as well as historical and international references to events and persons (Asaf, 2007). The site Al Jazeera.com has been ranked between the five most visited websites. It is one of the largest news organizations and the only channel that covered live the war in Afghanistan; that’s why it gained attention globally following the outbreak of the war (Whitaker, 2003).

It has been classified by many as an Islamic radical channel due to the fact that it is based in the Middle East. Al Jazeera started developing relationships with non-Arab governments such as British and American authorities one month after the Twin Tower attack (Goff, n.d.). However, after the attacks on September 11, the channel was labeled by many Americans as the “Taliban channel” because it projected some messages of Osama Bin Laden (Zayani, 2005). It has been criticized by Western Authorities that has a Middle Eastern perspective and by Middle Eastern governments that has adopted a western viewpoint. The channel manages to remain alive as a secular source of news in a zone where Islamic Fundamentalism is a norm (Goff, n.d.). It launched English language in 2006 and thereafter is called Al Jazeera International. Western Media have characterized the channel as a “window to democratic expression” or “the CNN of the Arab world” (Zayani, 2005, p.81). The principles of objectivity, the democratic transparency and truth regarding the journalistic speech have been adopted by Al Jazeera (Zayani, 2005).

a. First part: Richard Barret, the Counterterrorism Expert.

Firstly, a Former Head of Counterterrorism at MI6 named Richard Barrett is hosted in the show. The anchor, Mehdi Hasan is looking to find answer to the question whether Isis is aching for a confrontation with the West or is it trying to scare countries like France into backing off. The Islamic scholar argued that there is a combination of things which make ISIL has a specific behaviour toward Western countries. Moreover, Isis tries to constantly demonstrate its power through the terrorist attacks. When being attacked by Russians and Americans it wants to show that it can strike back effectively. In doing so, it takes revenge which is so important for the Islamic organization but it also attracts more support with people who see its power and respond to it. By attacking, they send a strong message to those who were thinking of supporting the Islamic State or looking for ways they might support it. The Islamic terrorists want also to prove that their state is a real entity that can make an impact. Thus, the idea to be the focus of attention is quite important to them.

Furthermore, the host together with the Head of counterterrorism examine whether the French decision to attack Rakka, the capital of the Islamic State is going to make France a

16https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9Nk5bqha2M
target. Richard Barrett maintains that this fact will make France more than a target because attacking Rakka is not something that is going to stop the Isis attacking France and whether it will reduce the capability to do so, the intention and the opportunity will remain; this happens due to the fact there are many sympathizers of IS who live in France. The Islamic State wants the French involvement and the bombings of Rakka will be a sort of further engagement. What the Western countries have to do strategically is to carry on the way they are doing according to Richard Barrett. They should try to solve the problems caused by IS in Iraq and Syria; this requires a great pressure by all parties especially by Russia because it confirmed that the Russian aircraft which was brought down on 31 October 2015 was a bomb attack carried out by ISIL. In addition, the Islamic scholar asserts that there is not a military solution in order to defeat Isis. Even if we manage to destroy the organization by bombs, we do not know what is going to take its place; so there is no point in destroying it. The increase of territory controls is a good solution as Barrett argues.

What’s more, many people support that we wouldn’t have IS threat if US hadn’t invaded in Iraq in 2003. This view is discussed on the current video by the presenter and the Islamic scholar of MI6 who argues that we cannot predict this fact; we have to deal with the facts. He continues saying that there is a link between the Iraq invasion and ISIS today; what started Al Qaeda in Iraq in 2003 has now grown to ISIS. It is the same organization. At this point, we can adduce the correlation between the two organizations that has been done earlier (ch.1.3). ISIS joined Al Qaeda in 2004 and has been influenced by its predecessor to a large extent. However the groups were divided in 2014 (Holmes, 2014) and differentiated from one another in many respects as it was mentioned earlier (Byman, 2015).

To continue, the destruction of the grey zone in which Muslims are living in Paris is discussed after the Paris attacks. The terrorists aim at sowing division and provoking a sort of Clash of Civilizations. Richard Barrett advocates that the whole point of terror attacks is to force people to take sides and decide whether they support ISIS or the place they live in. Hence, the polarization is a very important element of the IS strategy. They try to do it in a broader religious sense between Muslims and no Muslims as with Sunni and Shia. The Paris attacks have eroded the grey zone even more and the members of ISIS will continue to do similar things so as to intensify the division between communities.

A reference is done to the number of deaths globally figured by the US government which is estimated to 4.5 thousands from 2002 to 2014. Thus, many people suggest that the War on Terror is a complete failure according to the presenter of the show. Richard Barrett, the Islamic terrorist expert, advocates that in many weak states where people feel disaffected, disadvantaged and alienated from the state there are many movements; i.e. people bind together in order to combat terrorism. For instance, in Central and South Asia, Middle East, West Africa, North Africa and East Africa there are many groups who try to meet one another, to take action, recruit together, helped by social media to be able to build a force which can actually do something.

A discussion regarding the War on Terror and the best ways to tackle terrorism is done. The alliance between Western countries and Russia is probably not the ideal way to solve the problem as Richard Barrett mentions. It is very difficult to bring all the enemies of ISIL

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17 The Clash of Civilizations is the rivalries among nation states due to the different religious and cultural identities. “Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future”. (Huntington, 1993).
together. Every country may see ISIS as a target and wants to destroy it but for different reasons each one. Therefore, binding together in a coalition might not be a good way to defeat ISIS. However, everybody has to pull together to a certain extent against this enemy. As far as the duration of the war against terrorism is concerned, it is extremely difficult to predict that. This happens on the grounds that it is possible to knock ISIS out, to weaken the state so much that it should go underground; but the idea behind ISIS is difficult to be defeated; this requires much more work and it is probably not going to happen soon.

b. Second part: Violence in the Middle East

To continue, the host of Upfront presents the reasons of all violence in the Middle East. He tries to prove the fact that the conflict, the age-old war between Sunnis and Shias is a myth. Power and not piety is the reason why the rivalry started. More specifically, all started in 1979. We actually go 40 years earlier, not 40 centuries in 632AD as it is believed by many. In 1972 the rise of petroleum power from Sunni side and the Iran revolution from Shia side triggered the conflict. The US invasion in Iraq in 2003 which has been out of control since Bashar al-Assad went to war with his own people in Syria in 2011 created a conflict among Sunni; i.e. we have Sunni against Sunni. Consequently, politics is the main factor that determined the sectarian conflict in Syria. The Sunni-Shia war is not about long-standing theological ties but geopolitics. Moreover, young people protested against abuses in Syria with the slogan “No Terrorism, We Want Freedom” according to the video; this was a part of the Arab Spring. Even today the Russians are bombing Syria because they care about who succeed to profit. Hence, everything happens about power.

What’s more in Libya which mainly consists of Sunni, a civil war started in 2011 (Fritz, 2011). Thus we have again Sunni against Sunni. Furthermore, in Yemen we have Sunni government forces versus Shia Houthi rebels. Shias in Yemen are called Zaydi and Zaydi are not dissimilar to Sunni. In Yemen the two sects often pray in the same mosques and practice many of the same customs. So, a lot of this Sunni-Shia conflict narrative is just a product to lazy simplistic cliche journalism according to Mehdi Hasan, the presenter of the program. Most Muslims want to get alone with each other and pray together for unity between Sunni and Shia and are binding into the ISIL narrative. A global Sunni-Shia war completely ignores political alliances, life-long friendships and love stories that have occurred among people of the two sects as it is well presented on the video. The conflict has to do with power grabs, identity politics, tribal splits, economic grievances and foreign military interventions than theological differences. As a consequence, the presenter concludes that we are not witnessing a Sunni-Shia religious war; it might turn into a sectarian conflict though if we keep treating it as it is one. Therefore, according to the video, the Sunni-Shia conflict might be factitious.

c. Third part: Hamza Yusuf, the Muslim scholar

Subsequently, another guest is hosted in Upfront named Hamza Yusuf, the President and co-founder of Zaytuna College. He is one of the American leading Muslim scholars who has been at the forefront of efforts to count on the ISIL narratives and stop young Muslims in the US from going to join what he calls ‘the not jobs’. Thus, he expresses his disapproval regarding the initiation of jobless young people into ISIS.
A discussion started concerning the appeal of groups like ISIL to Muslims living in the West. Hamza Yusuf supported that the vast majority of Muslims in the US are opposed to ISIS; so, they are not influenced as much as people think; there are influences as anywhere near. However, the host presents some FBI statistics regarding the Americans who have gone out to find groups familiar to ISIS. The number is estimated to 200 people between May and July. What’s more, in 2014 they arrested in charge 20 people over the whole year and 25 in just three months. The Islamic scholar supported that many of them go not to join ISIS but to join what they consider to be a legitimate opposition in Syria; thus they have been lumped in as one group. He added that there are a lot of different functions in Syria that are fighting and some of them are supported by NATO states. Therefore, the Islamic scholar tries to prove that there is percentage of young people that migrate so as to join various organizations which are dissimilar to ISIS.

Afterwards, a sermon of Hamza Yusuf that took place in September 2014 and became viral online is projected on the video. In this sermon he condemns ISIL using Islamic scripture sayings from the prophet Mohammed. On the video excerpt he characterizes as madness and complete insanity the fact that many people in the US are going oversees to join up; he also supports that those people are confused. The reasons why youth is going to join ISIS are concluded by the Islamic scholar; i.e. for some of them there is definitely an issue of mental health. There are many people in the US that do horrible things and are classified as mentally ill. When Muslims do insane things they are categorized as terrorists; we have a double stander here. Many people think that it is a romanticized version of the idea of caliphate. Hence, there is a romanticization of this ideology of a caliphate. The truth is that ISIS immersed as a response to a lot of Shia atrocities of Malaysia against Sunni villagers.

The presenter of the show refers to the fact that ISIS fighters are killing Shias and he is wondering if there is a clear sectarian hate. However, they also attack Christians and Yazidis. Therefore, there is an ideological bent for some of the fighters that determines their actions. Hamza Yusuf concluded the factors that define the Islamic terrorists’ behaviour. Firstly, we have the idea of anathematizing Muslims, of considering Muslims to be outside of the faith. Secondly, we have this provincialism, this attitude toward Christians, Jews, Yazidis and other people that Muslims historically have lived in peace with, they have also protected and preserved their churches and syndicates. This is one of the first times in Muslim history that these atrocities have been committed against religious minorities. So, the idea that this has something to do with normative Islam is not acceptable. The truth is that many people are motivated by scriptures and publications; it is a type of Protestantism. There are a lot of people who open the Koran and find verses there that can be de-contextualized or completely misunderstood just like people can in the Bible. This is the reality in the age we live in. Therefore, we can deduce that the Islamic scholar tries to explain the deviant behavior of some Muslims and also highlights the fact that there is a minority of them which resorts to violent behavior; we should not categorize all Muslims as terrorists.

Furthermore, many critics of Islam argue that Islam need to undergo a reformation; this view is discussed by Hamza Yusuf who advocated that people who support the opinion that Islam needs a reformation have never read Christian history. He added that a Counter-Reformation is what we need. Moreover, we do not live in pre-modern times, we live in a

18 Counter-Reformation, Catholic Reformation or Catholic Revival are called the Roman-Catholic efforts which were directed in the 16th and 17th centuries against the so-called Protestant Reformation; they were composed of some important elements:
completely different period; that’s why we do not need reforming or changing Islam. The ideal way, according to the Islamic scholar, is to take the tools from the religious tradition and revitalizing them. Thus, a renewal is necessary. He also draws a parallel between Islam and a house; “we need a renovation which is not to destroy the house and re-built a new house but restore the dereliction of the house so that it functions”. Consequently, some drastic changes should be done regarding Islam; destroying the whole tradition and religion of the state will be ineffective.

Subsequently, a video excerpt of the sermon of Hamza Yusuf that took place in September 2014 is projected. The guest of the show raised the issue of youth that can watch videos available on the Internet in which atrocities against Muslims are committed; he condemned this fact. Moreover, he proposed ways in order to deter young people from joining ISIS. He supported that there are many young boys who are frustrated; that’s why, healthy means should be found by which they can express some type of outrage in a way that is productive; otherwise, they might be manipulated by people who lurk and are ready to manipulate the emotions of youth.

After all, Hamza Yusuf advocated that one out of every four people in this planet is Muslim. Thus, Muslims represent 1.6 billion people; thence, this significant number should be taken into consideration. In addition, he doubt the fact that Islam is an evil religion as it is believed by many.

4.2 “Why ISIS Attacked Brussels”

Among the most popular YouTube videos after the Brussels attack is this one that gives an explanation of ISIS’s attacks in Brussels. The video was projected by Vox on 22 March 2016. Vox.com is characterised as an opinion website that presents American news. It was founded in 2014. The progressive or liberal editorial perspective characterises the website. In addition to this, “explanatory journalism” characterises the concept of Vox. It is also a site that both the left and the right hate. Vox also specializes in commentary, opinion and aggregation. It appeals to young, affluent, “smart” audience (“The Gawker meltdown and the Vox-ification of the news media”, July 21, 2015). Vox has been criticized by conservative commentators and received huge media attention.

The projected video explains how the Brussels savagery represents an ISIS shifting strategy and a horrifying reality that spreads terror across European countries. At the beginning of the video, we have some pictures that depict Brussels’ tragedy; i.e the attack at the airport of the city in Zaventem and this one at Maalbeek subway station of Brussels. According to the video, the fact that the terrorist group started losing major cities triggered the attacks that ensued. More specifically, in the summer of 2014, the Islamic State confronted difficulties as it lost a quarter of its territories in Syria and Iraq. In February of 2015, ISIS victory throughout the Middle East started to end. In March 2015, it lost control of Tikrit, the Iraqi city; the group was defeated by troops of Iraq and American airstrikes afflicted it too. Therefore, it started to use any means to recruit new members; it needed those fighters in order to survive and reach

the structural or ecclesiastical reconfiguration, the spiritual movements, the religious orders and the political dimensions (“Counter-Reformation”, Encyclopaedia Britannica).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdjArlHB8k8
the group’s imperialistic goals. The organization wanted to expand abroad and envisioned “new caliphates” in Yemen, Afghanistan and Syria (Fisher, 2016). In summer of 2015 the Islamic state started to organize major attacks in order to achieve its expansion. Thus, in November 2015 it conducted the Paris attacks and few months later, in March 2016 it attacked Brussels. ISIS executors are depicted on the video when holding their weapons, fighting and demonstrating their power too.

Furthermore, the video refers to the attackers who are foreigners and European Nationals; they come from their countries to join ISIS, so they are called foreign fighters. Subsequently, the video presents a diagram which shows the origin of the ISIS’s foreign fighters; about 8,500 come from Middle East, 8,000 come from Northern Africa while more than 5,000 originate from Western Europe. It is worth noting that the rank of Western European fighters in the diagram is depicted with red color while the other fighters’ origin is represented with black color. This goes to show that the percentage occupied by Western Europeans is remarkable. This fact can be understood if what was said in the previous video (“Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”) as well as in the later one (“ISIS aims to recruit French converts”, 2016) regarding Western societies which are hit by unemployment is taken into account. On this regard, the high level of unemployment might have contributed, up to a point, to the large number of young foreigners who abandon Western countries to join ISIS. As these foreign fighters become very well-trained soldiers, they are returning to their homeland to carry out violent acts. The video also highlights the fact that since ISIS started losing its territories, it has started shifting emphasis to huge terror attacks (Fisher, 2016). It is a group that is capable of doing terrible danger abroad.

At this point, we can adduce some important arguments of terrorism specialists in order to better understand the way Islamic extremists act. Clint Watt, a terrorism expert, advocated that “If an extremist group that has seized territory starts to lose it, it will be highly incentivized to turn to terrorist operations that allow for maximizing effects at a lower cost” (Watts, 2015). Regardless the fact that ISIS has started to lose its ground and its hopes to create new ‘caliphates’, militarily and ideologically it survives; that’s why it will continue its large scale operations against its enemies, including Europe. Moreover, Mc Cants, the scholar of militant Islamism argued that “Isis is a state that has millions of dollars that can spend on this kind of operations. We’re not talking about al Qaeda hiding out in Pakistan. We’re talking about an actual government that has money to put behind plots and has very motivated people, many of them with European passports that can carry them out” (Fisher, 2016). As it was mentioned earlier (ch.2), ISIS is one of the most powerful and richest jihadist terrorist groups ever to exist. Therefore, the resources of the group such as weapons, money, well-trained and experienced fighters as well as officers who are experts in planning operations will be increasingly used for more attacks like the one carried out in Brussels.

On this regard, it is noticeable that ISIS differs from Al Qaeda in many respects. The two groups have ideological and strategic differences as it was mentioned earlier (ch.1.3). Mc Cants supported that their way of acting differentiates on the grounds that Al Qaeda the last years of its activity preferred to hide itself rather than to act in the way the Islamic State does (Fischer 2016, Byman, 2015). The world of jihadist terrorism is competitive. The greatest rival of ISIS was always Al Qaeda. The roots of their antagonism are going some decades back to the war in Afghanistan (Bertrand, 2015). Today this antagonism is expressed through the war in Syria. ISIS early became the leader of this war because it accomplished what Al Qaeda did not succeed (Fisher, 2016); it declared a real state and expanded across Iraq and Syria. This
fact in conjunction with the thousands of recruitments made by ISIS built a super brand in the jihadist world.

4.3 “ISIS aims to recruit French converts”

Cable News Network (CNN) is an American satellite television channel that broadcast news. It was founded in 1980. It was the first channel that provided 24-hour coverage of news and the first one that broadcasted all kind of news as well (“CNN changed news-for better and worse”, 2005, Kiesewetter, 2000). CNN International refers to the channel’s international sister network; viewers in 212 countries can watch its programming (“CNN is Viewers Cable Network of Choice for Democratic and Republican National Convention Coverage”, 2000). CNN.com is among the most popular news websites all over the world. CNN’s network used to be “too Liberal” but recently started to make attempts to attract more conservative audience for reasons of prosperity; for this purpose, conservative voices via i.e. commentators were included on the site.

A video that was first released on CNN.com on November 22, 2014 and spread across the World Wide Web via YouTube after Nice attack was referring to young Muslims who live in France and have not integrated in European culture. The video-campaign was redistributed by jihadists and uploaded again after Paris attacks and the savagery in Nice (Aly, Macdonald, Jarvis & Chen, 2016). The militants of Jihad try to entice ISIS’s supporters into embracing Islam and proceeding in Islamic terrorist activities. They believe that individuals who have not been assimilated into the European culture are the new generation of jihadists that’s why they try to catch the attention of them through alluring material on the web. The current video is showing the militants of ISIS when prompting their supporters, calling them “brothers” to hit their targets via means that are available such as weapons and cars (Prince, 2016, “ISIS aims to recruit French converts”, 2016). Through the current video, they try to radicalise young people and urge them to become part of their community.

In addition, militants of Jihad are depicted when burning their passports; this can be considered as a pledge to people who are engaged in Jihad: “The sea is behind me, the enemy is in front of me and heaven is preparing for me” (Alazreg, 2016, p.115). Thus, they have adopted the dogma which makes them wish rather than fear to die. Moreover, by burning their passports, they are announcing the lack of recognition of their place of origin as well as their willingness and readiness to fight against their native country (Alazreg, 2016); this happens on the grounds that most of those who migrate in order to embrace Jihad and join the Islamic army renounce their homeland and are totally dedicated to their purpose in life which is inseparable with Muslim culture and Islamic beliefs (“Οι τζίχαντες νότια της Κρήτης. Πόσο κινδυνεύει η Ελλάδα?”, 2015).

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20 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha76ENnJvZs
4.4 Semiotics and Islamist extremists

The third video shows the members of the group wearing head scarves while others appeared in their face-covering hoods. If we use Peirce’s theory of signs, we could say that each of the terrorists depicted on the video is a sign. The ‘terrorist on the left who is holding both a rifle and a sword’ can become a ‘sign’; the ‘sign’ becomes “an icon when reflects qualitative features of the object” (Peirce, 1958). The ‘rifle’ and the ‘sword’ can be considered as the ‘sign-vehicles’ because they are the signifying elements of the ‘sign’ which is the ‘terrorist’; they are those essential characteristics that make the ‘sign’ functions as a ‘signifier’. The weapon that Jihadist executors carry with them is a way to demonstrate their power and reflect their force (Katsounaki, 2015); we realize that the gun has become an integral part of Islamic terrorists and determines their actions. The sward that they often hold symbolizes their power; they seem forceful on the video when projecting themselves holding it. Thus, the power of Jihadists can be considered as the ‘interpretant’ of the sign. They want to demonstrate their meaningful objects which are the rifle and the sword so as to intimidate and instil fear in their enemies. Jihadists try to gather people’s attention through brutality and violence; they do not have other means to serve their purposes. They try to make their presence felt via aggression and demonstrate their power and prevalence too.

Another interpretation of this sign is that Jihadist executors who demonstrate their weapons on the video may address to the potential members and supporters of ISIS and show them that they have the appropriate equipment to fight the enemy. Therefore, the executors depicted on the video might want to arm the potential members with strength and to make them feel secure in order to join their group. It can be deduced that the audience in which the actors-terrorists address to, might be either the potential members of ISIS or the Western societies whom they fight. The audience differentiates according to the interpretation we give to the sign. The jihadist executors fulfill different expectations accordingly to the audience each time.

The Islamist executors depicted on the video in their face-covering hoods can be considered as ‘signs’ too. The sign vehicle of the image is the black hood because it is the qualified element that signifies the object i.e. the terrorist. The black hood causes fear and creates a feeling of secrecy among the audience. Hence, this sign can be interpreted if the feelings that create to the spectator are taken into consideration. The sense of fear for the secret identity of the men in face-covering hoods dominates in the audience when watching the video.

What’s more, according to David le Breton (2014), “face is the place where significant values are condensed”. The members of ISIL use face as an essential mean to communicate through their expressions, gestures, gaze as well as their specific voice tone (Silva, 2012). The ‘terrorists’ gaze’ depicted on the video can be considered as ‘a sign-vehicle’ too due to the fact that it reveals their perseverance to succeed their goal. The stable and persistent look they have on the video shows their conviction for taking revenge. Their body attitude plays an essential role because it reveals their intentions too. They also use these recurrent video to broadcast the brutal manner with which their enemies have to deal with (Gray, 2014). Another interpretation of ‘terrorists’ gaze’ might have to do with intimacy they try to create between themselves and their audience (Walker-Rettberg, 2014). In this way, when they address to potential members or supporters of ISIS they want to acquire acquaintance with them; this is the reason why they project themselves on social media platforms and not hiding. They want to be noticeable, to draw people’s attention and increase the members of their group in order to succeed in their operations.
Furthermore, the scenery of their video is very well-made and their stylistic choices are appropriate to their attribute. Thus, their manner, which refers to the way they act, is consistent with their appearance (Goffman, 1959). They cultivate images by carefully creating their scenery to launch the appropriate impressions each time. The way jihadists are dressed, their body stance and the cruel objects they carry with them reflect their cruelty. ISIS savagery is not spontaneous; their videos primarily illustrate the severity of the threat of Islamic state and try to sow dread in the whole world, especially in the pluralistic countries of the West.

We can deduce that CNN’s representation of Islamist terrorists might lead to attracting new members; this happens on the grounds that many supporters of ISIS may be impressed by its members’ way of living. The demonstration of their power, their wealth and prosperity might attract vulnerable people, especially those who are jobless. What’s more, terrorists’ face expressions, gestures and the way they promote themselves can be the key to the evolution of terrorism; terrorists might influence either their enemies within the fear they cause or their potential members because of the force they display. Thus, the attraction of new members through the video might lead to the expansion of the phenomenon.

Goffman’s conceptualization of the social world in terms of dramaturgical performance is shown on this digital-mediated interaction (Robinson & Schulz, 2011). People’s behavior in front of an audience and all kind of social interactions are performances; the social world is described as a theatre in which the actors enact roles, take different personas (Goffman, 1959, Robinson & Schulz, 2011). Consequently, the members of ISIS are performers who create specific impressions according to the message they wish to convey (Bunt, 2003, Goffman, 1959, Robinson & Schulz, 2011). On the current video, they are acting when addressing their supporters and potentially sympathizers so as to persuade them to join their group. By expanding their team they ensure the achievement of their purpose which is the annihilation of the Western societies; therefore, their performance is vital.

An issue of high importance which is stressed on the current video by the Journalist-Author John Paul Ney, is the bad immigration and integration policy that might have contributed to the Paris tragedy. The fact that scores of Muslims have entered the city the last years and the Muslim population is the highest among all the European countries is mentioned too. According to the video which was projected on CNN, many young disaffected people mostly from immigrant communities who caused vandalism in Paris streets during 2015 are the target for the fundamentalist message; this probably means that people who might not have been integrated into the French community attempt to create and expand their own society that is separated from the French one; therefore, they opt for violent activity in order to strengthen their presence. In addition, the economic crisis and the high level of unemployment are emphasized. This happens due to the fact that numerous young people struggle to make ends meet and confront difficulties in finding a job; thus, they become vulnerable and resort to the community of ISIS.

Moreover, the video shows a member of ISIS provoking supporters of the group into killing their enemies. He also incites them to spit in their faces and run over them with their cars; this public announcement influenced the terrorist attacker in Nice who was a supporter of ISIS (Katz, 2016). It seems that he had faithfully followed ISIS instructions when attacking to the attendees by a lorry during the celebration of the Bastille Day.

Therefore, we can infer that this video might lead to the expansion of Islamist terrorism because it projects the Islamist terrorists; publicity is a factor that plays an essential role as far as the spread of terrorism is concerned. On the other hand, it might deter people from joining
ISIS due to the dissuasive images that projects; pictures of terrorists can have either positive or negative impact to the public.
Conclusions

The spread of terrorism is in direct intertwining with the media behavior toward the phenomenon. This happens on the grounds that media representation of terrorism can lead either to the effective treatment or the expansion of the phenomenon. The three videos that are analyzed in the current project regarding Paris attacks, Brussels bombings and Nice attack have both differences and similarities as far as the way they represent Islamic terrorists is concerned. Each of them can affect in a positive or negative manner to tackle terrorism.

The first video projected on Al Jazeera represents the facts regarding ISIS on the part of a Counterterrorism expert called Richard Barrett, the British diplomat. After Barrett’s speech we also have some images that are presented by the anchor of the show. The Former Head of Counterterrorism argues that tackling Islamism terrorism is a complicated issue. The annihilation of the Islamic State is a quite difficult achievement due to the fact that supporters of the organization exist among western countries, especially in France. Moreover, revenge is a central factor that determines ISIS behavior; thus, the destruction of the Islamic State will be probably pointless because of the possible revenge that its sympathizers might take. Richard Barrett tries to explain the reasons why Paris was attacked as well as present the possibility for future attacks.

As far as Al Qaeda and ISIS are concerned, they have a very close relationship one another as the two groups are the same organization. The purposes of Islamic terrorism which are closely related with the division between communities and polarization of society are presented too. The host of the show supports that the War on Terror can be considered as a failure as Islamic terrorism is difficult to be defeated. According to Richard Barrett, the coalition between all the countries-victims of ISIS is difficult to achieve because each nation has to succeed its own goals concerning Islamic terrorism. However, there are many movements especially in weak countries where people bind together in an effort to combat terrorism. Moreover, the participants of the show try to discover the incentives of the Islamic State as well as the reasons of all violence in the Middle East. The fact that the main motive of Islamic terrorists’ outrage is power and not religion is stressed on the video.

What’s more, a second guest is hosted on the show, an Islamic scholar called Hamza Yusuf. He presents his arguments from a different viewpoint because he is Muslim. Despite the fact that he condemns ISIS’s activity and tries to deter young people from migrating and joining the terrorist organization, he supports the Muslim world up to a point. As far as the association between Muslims and terrorists is concerned, he is arguing in order to change the universal view that all Muslims are terrorists. Last but not least, he raises awareness of the fact that youth has the opportunity to watch outraging videos against Muslims on the Internet; this fact might influence young people. Therefore, solutions must be found in order for young people to express themselves in a productive and fruitful way.

Al Jazeera presents Islamic terrorism by two different viewpoints. Thus, each representation might have different effects on the audience.

The second video projected on Vox, explains the factors that triggered ISIS to attack Brussels. This video projects a high number of images as well. The fact that ISIS lost a great part of its territory was a hindrance to ISIS’s imperialistic goals; this happened on the grounds that recruitment of new fighters became extremely difficult. Therefore, the group had to make new attacks in order to achieve its purposes. ISIS’s fighters are depicted while fighting and demonstrating their strength too; similar
pictures are illustrated on the next video analyzed regarding Nice attack. The increasing numbers of foreign fighters from Western countries who have initiated the organization the last years are underlined on the video as well. Furthermore, unemployment is a factor that might have motivated young people to join ISIS. It is worth noting that this fact is highlighted in all of the three videos that are analyzed in the current projected. The difference between Al Qaeda and ISIS is mentioned on the video that is projected on Vox. The two groups differ in many points. ISIS has achieved what Al Qaeda could not succeed. The visualization of a new expanded state characterizes the ideology of the terrorist organization. However, Richard Barrett, the counterterrorism expert mentioned on the first video that Al Qaeda and ISIS are the same organizations; the second one is the continuation of the first one. Hence, opinions concerning the two terrorist groups differ.

CNN projects a video that depicts the Jihadist executors contrary to Al Jazeera and Vox; the two channels chose a presenter and Islamic experts as commentators to analyze and explain the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism as a result of the terrorist attacks within 2015-2016. However, on CNN’s video (“ISIS aims to recruit French converts”) we have the depiction of Islamic executors who use various means in order to achieve their purposes. More specifically, they use verbal cues so as to persuade the potential executors to join ISIS as soon as possible. In addition to this, they try to persuade them via demonstration of their weapons. They also address to their enemies through their behavior trying to show their power. The way Islamic terrorists are dressed, their face expressions, the way they speak, dress and present themselves as well as the feelings they try to create to the audience are remarkable on the video. Furthermore, the way terrorists promote themselves is very cautious and well prepared as it aims to their goal achievement.

Consequently, New Media play a vital role regarding the way they present terrorism. They have the power to either promote or condemn the phenomenon. Tackling terrorism is a complicated issue that needs special treatment on the part of media. Overexposure of terrorists’ activity via media might lead to the expansion of Islamic terrorism.
Table 1.1: Similarities & Differences among the YouTube Videos

| Similarities & Differences: Videos of Terrorist Attacks within 2015-2016 | 1. “Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdjArlHB8k8 | 3. “ISIS aims to recruit French converts”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha76ENJvZs |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Jazeera</td>
<td>Vox</td>
<td>CNN</td>
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<tr>
<th>YouTube Video Structure</th>
<th>Online show consists of 3 parts.</th>
<th>Online video consists of 1 part.</th>
<th>Online video consists of 1 part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Video Presenters | 3 online virtual presenters:
- 1 anchor
- A Counterterrorism Expert at MI6
  (Richard Barrett)
- A Muslim Scholar
  (Hamza Yusuf) | 1 video spokesperson | 3 video presenters:
- 1 spokesperson
- 1 virtual presenter
  journalist/author,
  (John Paul Ney)
- Islamic terrorists sent messages & make self projection |

| Video Images | Counterterrorism Expert, Richard Barrett
- Muslim Scholar, Hamza Yusuf
- Political leaders out of history
  (George Bush, Bashar al-Assad)
- Young protesters against terrorism | Gruesome imagery from Brussels attack
- Islamic terrorists | Islamic terrorists
- ISIS supporters
- Islamic Authorities
  (Minister of State) |

| Video Viewpoints | 2 different viewpoints:
- European
- Muslim | 1 viewpoint:
- European | Ambiguous viewpoint |
Table 1.2 Similarities & Differences among the YouTube Videos

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<tr>
<th>Video References</th>
<th>1. Key factor for joining ISIS</th>
<th>2. Immigration in relation to Islamic terrorism</th>
<th>3. The identity of Islamic terrorists</th>
<th>4. Incentives of Islamic terrorists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployment &amp; frustration of young people</td>
<td>Unemployment &amp; Socio-economic problems</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Key factor for joining ISIS</td>
<td>• Immigrants join ISIS</td>
<td>Immigrants are not related with terrorism</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>Immigrants are not related with terrorism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Immigrants join dissimilar organizations to ISIS-legitimate opposition to Syria</td>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>Immigrants are not related with terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Immigration in relation to Islamic terrorism</td>
<td>• Foreign fighters</td>
<td>• Muslims</td>
<td>• Muslims</td>
<td>• Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Minority of deviant Muslims</td>
<td>• European Nationals/foreign fighters</td>
<td>• European Nationals/foreign fighters</td>
<td>• European Nationals/foreign fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The identity of Islamic terrorists</td>
<td>• Power-imperialistic goals</td>
<td>Power-imperialistic goals</td>
<td>Power-imperialistic goals</td>
<td>Power-imperialistic goals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Revenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Incentives of Islamic terrorists</td>
<td>• Division of civilizations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Representation of ISIS via New Media

| Videos of Terrorist Attacks within 2015-2016 | 1. “Upfront – What is behind ISIL’s attacks?”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdjArlHB8k8 Vox | 3. “ISIS aims to recruit French converts”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha76ENnJvZs CNN |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views</td>
<td>42,773</td>
<td>1,015,570</td>
<td>30,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4,964</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>9,941</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 2 depicted above, reflects the impact of media representation to YouTube audience. The fact that the second video (“Why ISIS Attacked Brussels”, 2016) gathers the most views on the YouTube platform is remarkable. It goes without saying that people are hungry to find out the reasons why Islamist terrorists chose Brussels to attack. It is worth mentioning that the third video (“ISIS aims to recruit French converts”, 2014) has the lowest number of views compared to the other two analyzed videos. This video which appeals to French youth might deter people from seeing it, because it depicts the armed Islamist terrorists trying to increase ISIS’s members and is aimed at a small part of viewers too.

Moreover, users’ reactions are depicted on the second video through the high number of comments that exist below it. The video projected on Vox gathers much more comments than the other two videos. This goes to say that it brings the greatest interest on the part of the audience; this might happen because the current video tries to elaborately explain and find out all the factors that triggered ISIS’s behavior. In addition to this, the big number of illustrative images that are presented on this video may draw the attention of the audience.

Viewers also show their approval to the videos via the “like” button. On the second video we can see the most number of “likes” which means that it attracts a high number of people.
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