

Sources (Terrorism Coverage)

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KEYWORDS

journalism research, actors, automated content analysis

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Sources describe the actors quoted by journalists to support or refute their argumentation or to introduce new aspects into a discussion. Sources might be used for direct or indirect quotes and can be attributed to a variety of actors, such as government officials, witnesses or PR sources. In terrorism coverage, the media tends to mostly rely on official sources such as the government or police officials.

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Content analyses focus on journalistic sources beyond terrorism coverage. Such analyses are often based on “Agenda-Setting” theories (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), models conceptualizing the relationship between journalists and PR, power hierarchies, or studies on working routines of journalists.

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Similar analyses in the context of “Automated Content Analysis” try to grasp news “Actors”, of which news sources might be one, automatically (for example Burggraaf & Trilling, 2020). In addition, interviews with journalists can shed light on their sourcing routines (Larsen, 2018).

Two studies are of particular value when analyzing sources used in terrorism coverage since they analyze a large variety of different sources

and will hence be discussed in the following section.

EXAMPLE STUDIES

Larsen (2019); Venger (2019)

INFORMATION ON LARSEN, 2019

Authors: Larsen

Research interest: How are radicalization and violent extremism framed in the news, including the sources used in these articles?

Object of analysis: Online news from four Norwegian news outlets (Aftenposten, NRK, TV2, and VG)

Time frame of analysis: 2014–2015

INFO ABOUT VARIABLE

Variable name/definition: Sources

Level of analysis: News stories

Values: 27 different values, namely (1) no source, (2) police, (3) security services, (4) national politician in position, (5) national politician in opposition, (6) local politician, (7) bureaucracy/administration, (8) lawyer, (9) military/intelligence, (10) expert/researcher, (11) journalist/editor, (12) “extreme Islamist”, (13) “right-wing extremist”, (14) acquaintances, (15) NGOs, (16) international organizations, (17) religious leaders/spokespersons, (18) members of the public, (19) health, (20) education/school, (21) private sector/business, (22) prison administration, (23) affiliation not mentioned (i.e. anonymous), (24) think tank, (25) public prosecutors, (26) judge/court of Justice, (27) other

Reliability: Cohen’s kappa: .895

INFORMATION ON VENGER, 2019

Authors: Venger

Research interest: How did the use of sources



in news on the London bombings differ across newspapers published in countries with different media systems?

Object of analysis: Newspaper coverage in the UK (The Guardian, The Times), the US (The Washington Post, The New York Times), and Russia (Izvestiya)

Time frame of analysis: July–August 2005

INFORMATION ABOUT VARIABLE

Variable name/definition: Sources

Values: 8 different values, including (1) local government officials of the newspaper's country, (2) foreign government officials, including officials of international agencies, (3) local experts, (4) international experts, (5) foreigners not associated with any government, (6) private citizens (of the newspaper's country), (7) citations for local newspapers, (8) citations for international newspapers.

Reliability: Rust and Cohen's PRL reliability index, minimal value of any variable in study: .85

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Table 1. Measurement of „Sources“ in terrorism coverage.

Author(s)	Sample	Manifestations	Reliability	Codebook
Bennett (2016)	Online news articles	12 different sources, ranging from “domestic media” to “eyewitnesses”	Not reported	Not available
Douai & Lauricella (2014)	Newspaper articles	5 different sources, ranging from “Western media sources” to “official/government Muslim sources”	Percent agreement across all	Not available
Du & Li (2017)	Online news articles	7 different sources, ranging from “NGOs” to “laws, orders, and documents”	Scott’s pi for all variables in study:	Not available
Fahmy & Al Emad (2011)	Online news articles	5 different sources, ranging from “US sources” to “Al Qaeda sources”	Scott’s pi: .92	Available under https://www.hope.uzh.ch/doca/article/view/2w/1785
Gardner (2007)	Newspaper articles	7 different sources, ranging from “analyst/academic” to “friends	Holsti across all variables:	Not available
Larsen (2019)	Broadcasting programs and online news articles	27 different sources, ranging from “security/intelligence” to “religious spokespersons”	Cohen’s kappa: .895	Available under https://www.hope.uzh.ch/doca/article/view/2w/1563 and https://www.hope.uzh.ch/doca/article/view/2w/1564
Li (2007)	Broadcasting programs	10 different sources, ranging from “airlines officials” to “witnesses”	Scott’s pi: .84	Not available
Matthews (2013)	Newspaper articles	16 different sources, ranging from “police sources” to “experts”	Minimal value for all	Available

Author(s)	Sample	Manifestations	Reliability	Codebook
Matthews (2016)	Newspaper articles	7 different sources, ranging from “friends” to “survivors and witnesses”	Not reported	Not available
Venger (2019)	Newspaper articles	8 different sources, ranging from “local experts” to “citations for international newspapers”	Rust and Cohen’s PRL reliability	Not available
Zhang & Hellmüller (2016)	Online news articles	10 different sources, ranging from “ISIS/insurgent groups” to “ordinary people”	Krippendorff’s alpha: .8	Available under https://www.hope.uzh.ch/doca/article/view/2w/1786 and https://www.hope.uzh.ch/doca/article/view/2w/1787