

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS. AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

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ABSTRACT. The topic of this paper explores the online media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks in relation to the ethical and legal frameworks aimed at protecting the people. Despite the fact that freedom of expression should not be restricted under any circumstances, the news media outlets ought to take into consideration the legal acts, the moral behaviors and ethical principles when publishing and disseminating information about the terrorist attacks. Journalists should aim to pursue the purpose of this profession with the intent of remaining objective and upright while respecting the human rights.

The research of this paper focuses on the interdependence between journalism, ethics and law by analyzing how Le Monde covered some of the terrorist attacks which happened in Europe. The importance of ethics in journalism had been acknowledged by analyzing the role of the regulatory organizations for the press, as well as the professional standards which were set in order to guide the journalists and protect the people. The in-depth analysis of the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks highlighted the fact that the journalistic ethical codes might have the power to strengthen the protection of the people in the press, while assessing the noninfringement or the breach of the supranational and national legislation enacted by the European Union and France.

Keywords: *victims, terrorist attacks, media ethics, media law*

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The Media Representation of Terrorism

The purpose of this section is to present the evolution of terrorism and the interdependence it has with the media. The main concepts which represent the foundation of this research paper are presented and defined in this chapter, with the intention of giving a more in-depth study of the subject by the means of empirical research supported by a quantitative and a qualitative research.

It is important to observe and analyze the history of terrorism, while understanding the use of terror and how it impacts the media. The role of the definitions presented in this chapter regarding acts of terror and acts of violence is to have a clear starting point for the media coverage of terrorism. Furthermore, this chapter aims to present the criteria for the media attention and the media framing of these events, supporting the fact that the news organization and journalists should remain unbiased, due to the field in which they activate. In this chapter it is stated that the journalists' role is to inform the public. By presenting the information regarding certain topics they could shape the audience's perception and provoke the people to act upon them. The media covering of terrorist attacks should remain unbiased, while being aware of the fact that the provided information regarding these events might influence negatively some people, leading to their involvement in this kind of actions.

Terrorism is a phenomenon which dates back to the first century and since then its breadth of fatalities became higher. Nationalism is a social movement which refers to the devotion and loyalty of an individual towards a country, while exalting and supporting its culture and interests. The rise of nationalist movements in Europe began with the Spring of Nations in 1848, which led to the early anti-colonial movements which became aware of the power a terrorist attack might bring, in terms of generating publicity for the cause they were fighting for and also for the global influence. Throughout the history, the political, economic and social goals have changed, but the role of the use of terror and terrorism, either objective driven or terror driven,

remained to create fear in a society in order to achieve a goal. The criteria for terrorism represents a major factor in differentiating terrorist attacks from acts of violence, although there are similarities between them. According to Global Terrorism Database (Global Terrorism Database n.d.), terrorist attacks are defined as “acts of violence by non-state actors, perpetrated against civilian populations, intended to cause fear, in order to achieve a political objective.” To be defined as a “terrorist attack”, the actions must be conducted by organizations or individuals who are influenced by their political, economic, religious or social beliefs. According to the same source, during 2008 and 2018 there have been registered 4482 terrorist attacks in Europe, including those which were attempted, but not successfully carried out. In total there were 1373 terror attacks with casualties and fatalities. (Global Terrorism Database n.d.)

Terrorist attacks are occupying a big part of the media and the reasons behind this fact are undisputable. The way in which an incident is being presented in the media has the power to shape the perception of a mass of people about it. According to a study conducted by the University of Kansas on media’s influence on public opinion and how it varies by country showed that, as Hong Tien Vu, who is a Journalism professor, stated that “The effect journalism has on the public is a product of culture, economy and similar factors in a nation. Our findings provide empirical evidence that individual factors, such as age, education, living area and political ideology, and national macrovariables, including economic development and media freedom, are associated with the strength of such effects.”

The background one person has could represent an important factor for the choices he makes consciously and unconsciously. A person might be influenced to perceive things as they are being presented by the media, without filtering the information received or by performing the act of critical thinking based on their background, their values and perception of the world, shaped previously by individual factors. Journalism’s role is to inform the public by providing accurate information, without specifying how to interpret it.

As an example, according to Our World in Data (Hannah Ritchie, Joe Hasell, Cameron Appel, Max Roser 2013), a study showed that in 2016 terrorism was accounted for 0.06% of the global deaths, but the reality is that terrorist attacks have taken a major part in media coverage. The influence of mass media should not be perceived as being inconsequential, because it has an impact on people's perception and it affects the way in which they look at certain happenings in the world.

The fact that terrorism was and still is greatly publicized not only by newspapers and news media platforms, but also on social websites, should raise some concerns. The internet became a great tool for terrorists, due to the fact that it is accessible and inexpensive. Terrorism organizations find it more easily to recruit new members and to organize attacks and therefore, due to these advantages they now have, the number of attacks increases. According to Bruce Hoffman, who is the author of *Inside terrorism*, stated that "terrorists are now able to bypass traditional print and broadcast media via the Internet, through inexpensive but professionally produced and edited videotapes, and even with their own dedicated 24/7 television and radio news stations. The consequences of these developments [are] far-reaching as they are still poorly understood, having already transformed the ability of terrorists to communicate without censorship or other hindrance and thereby attract new sources of recruits, funding, and support that governments have found difficult, if not impossible, to counter." (Hoffman 2017) Media is an impactful source of information for people, therefore the way in which an act of terrorism is presented has the power to act as an instrument which shapes the public's perception regarding terrorist attacks and perpetrators, in direct link to the religion, politics and economy of the perpetrator. Media framing regarding terrorist attacks might function as an indicator for the importance and gravity of the event, while trying to inform and impact the people, but it could also lead the audience to an irrelevant focus, changing their beliefs regarding religion or military services. As an example, according to Our World in Data (Hannah Ritchie, Joe Hasell, Cameron Appel, Max Roser 2013), terrorist attacks carried out by Muslims receive, on average, 357% more media coverage than those carried out

by any other groups. This could influence the audience to associate acts of terror and terrorism with Muslims due to the fact that those events receive more media coverage, therefore could be considered of a greater importance for the public. As it is stated in the article "Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?" (Kearns 2019), the news organizations take into consideration, while covering terrorist attacks, the target, the number of casualties and the symbolism behind the dates chosen for those events. It is highlighted the fact that the number of fatalities has a significant role when covering terrorist attacks and, therefore, those are the attacks which receive more media attention. According to the article written by Eric Kearns, Allison Betus and Anthony Lemieux the identity of the perpetrator does not attract media attention, but the existence of casualties, the type of terrorism, especially hijacking and targeting airlines, and if domestic groups are involved, influence the media attention.

While it stated that people's perception might be adulterated due to unbalanced media coverage, the statistics provided by Statista (Plecher 2018) showed that in 2017 the most active terrorist groups were the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) with 1321 attacks, the Taliban with 907 and Al-Shabaab with 573. Those terrorist groups are Islamic and jihadist fundamentalist groups, which might support the people's association of Muslims with terrorism. In spite of these facts, the media coverage of terrorist attacks might be considered biased and it is indisputable that it could shape the audience's view regarding terrorist groups.

The media is littered with different types of biases. This type of bias, regarding media framing and media attention, arises from the news organizations' need to attract new viewers and to maintain the established audience, a need which could be transposed in presenting the information in a dramatic manner, leading to what is known as sensationalism. The truth exists in the news, but the framing of the story could be deceiving for the masses of people, replacing the preserved objectivity of journalism with sensationalism and with the affiliations with a different person, party, group or organization.

The effects which an audience might experience after being exposed to Figure visual elements while consuming news have been analyzed and presented in the article "Figure Violence as Moral Motivator: The Effects of Figureally Violent Content in News" (Grizzard 2017), while linking the publishing of this kind of images and video materials with sensationalism and with the disaffection of viewers regarding violence and certain groups of people. After two experimental studies based on exposing the subjects to footage of a mass execution controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) it has been concluded that "Figure media violence can serve as a moral motivator". The results showed that the subjects experienced higher levels of moral sensitivity, desires for anti-ISIS interventions and eudaimonic motivations. Antithetically to the conclusion that the exposure to visual elements which consist of Figure violence raises the levels of moral sensitivity, in the article "Support for Censorship of Television Violence. The Role of the Third-Person. Effect and News Exposure." (Hoffner 1999) it was stated that the people who view more televised violence are more likely to become less receptive to limiting their access to violent programming, while heavier viewers could experience desensitization and could become less responsive to violence. (Hoffner 1999) apud Donnerstein et al., 1994

The act of sensationalizing news about terrorist attacks, their victims and perpetrators were proven to have negative effects on the audience, while it can also instigate to glorifying terrorism. The modern terrorists are now taking advantage of the technological developments which helped the spreading of the news by planning, scheduling and conducting the attacks in a way in which they would fit the news media outlets' criteria. The attacks have to be timely, different, adventurous and they have to affect the audiences indirectly. (Cohen-Almagor 2005).

The way in which an act of terror is covered in the media, especially if its framing it's littered with sensationalism, might lead to the glorification of terrorism. In "Terrorism and the Media: A Handbook for Journalists" (Marthoz 2017) it is stated that the news media outlets can be sanctioned according to the existing laws regarding the glorification of

terrorism, mentioning the fact that the differences of applicability can vary from country to country. "The question is evident for the media considered close to "terrorist" organizations: do they unofficially cater to those organizations? What laws apply to these media, which have a disputed journalistic status? Some countries demand that they close down; others are content to monitor them and look out for content that could violate their laws." (Marthoz 2017)

With respect to the role of journalism there should not exist any alterations in informing the people. The media is responsible for presenting the truth as it exists, while also respecting the people who are part of the stories they present to the public.

Ethical Regulation in France - Syndicat National des Journalistes

While United Kingdom and Belgium have self-regulatory systems which are responsible for educating the practitioners of journalism and for handling the complaints regarding the dishonorable practices when reporting and publishing news, France does not have an official press regulator. Syndicat National des Journalistes (National Union of Journalists) is part of the government and it regulates the press having the position of a press club and a union. This union was founded on the 9th of January 1918 and it focused on journalism as a profession. The group of fifteen people who created it were part of the Association of Journalists and main purpose of this union was to "promote the fraternity of the association, promote respect for the profession and act as a moral council, ensure labor protection rights, form a press club". (Syndicat National des Journalistes n.d.) On the website are published the "Journalists' professional ethics charter" which states that "These principles and the ethical rules below bind each journalist, whatever their function, their responsibility within the editorial chain and the form of press in which they exercise", adopted by the National Committee in March 2011 and the "Declaration of the duties and rights of journalists", created in 1971, in Munich. (Syndicat National des Journalistes 2011)

The evolution faced by the world led to numerous and significant changes for journalism while the enactment of Article 10 in European countries has been pursuing the freedom of expression and information for more than half of a century. Article 10 represents a cornerstone for this profession in order to impart information about the happenings of the world, but this process should not interfere with the human rights of the people. In order to achieve this balance by respecting both Article 8 and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights the practitioners of journalism should make an appeal to their moral values and ethical principles. The United Kingdom, Belgium and France are countries in which ethical standards, codes and guidelines have been created in order to set a framework for the upright professional standards of this profession. Moreover, the ethical standards of journalism are important to exist in regard to the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks because they set guidelines for protecting the people while respecting the public's right to know.

The journalists in the United Kingdom, Belgium and France have at their disposal ethical codes, standards and guidelines in order to report legally and ethically upright on terrorist attacks or sensitive subjects which could affect the audience, the witnesses, the families and the victims emotionally. In spite of the fact that France did not have at the date relevant for the study (the dates of the terrorist attacks) a press regulator, the ethical code and guidelines which are created for the journalists are set by the governmental union Syndicat National des Journalistes.

The understanding of the necessity and importance of these press regulators which differ from country to country leads to a set of research questions regarding the news media outlets from the France, specifically "To what extent do the selected news media outlets respect the ethical codes available for their newspapers?".

The Supranational and National Legislation'

This section of the paper aims at outlining the legal acts created by the European Union in regard to the media representation of the

victims of terrorist attacks which ought to be respected by France and the legislation of this country aimed at providing the legal framework for “governmental action in fields that are either entirely new or that were not considered by the common law to be within the province of governmental action”. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2016).

As European countries they had ratified the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms which imposed the compliance of Article 8, Article 9, Article 10 and Article 14, presented in this section of the paper. In order to strengthen the protection of the victims, the European Union had enacted the Victims’ Right Directive and the 2017/542 Directive and had created a set of guidelines for the Member States focused on human rights and terrorism. Furthermore, this section sheds light on the laws enacted by the legislative bodies of the United Kingdom, Belgium and France which were created in order to have a harmonious society and to ensure the protection and safety of the citizens.

Due to the ascension of journalism linked with the technological evolution, the legislation of a country should include legal rules for the journalists and the media actors who practice this profession, especially when covering terrorist attacks.

Therefore, the coverage of terrorist attacks should respect the journalistic values, the ethical standards and the existing legislation regarding the privacy and the emotional distress of victims and their families. The national legislation of France is governed by the constitution and it comprises the Penal Code and the Civil Code. This section presents the legal acts created by the European Union and the legislation of these countries starting with the constitutional legislation, the criminal and the civil codes while placing the emphasis on the relevant law regarding the media and the portrayal of victims of terrorist attacks, focusing on the relation between the freedom of expression and the protection and dignity of the people.

European Union Law

The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms represents a “foundation of justice and peace”

which ensures the protection and freedom of every citizen and the political, economic and social democracy of the Member States. The United Kingdom, Belgium and France have signed the European Convention on Human Rights confirming that they are “countries which are like-minded and have a common heritage of political traditions, ideals, freedom and the rule of law”. (Europe 1950) Therefore, the fundamental human rights and freedoms of these countries’ citizens ought to be respected.

As the Western European countries, including the United Kingdom, Belgium and France, have been exposed to numerous terrorist attacks in the previous years, the protection and the safety of the citizens have become a great responsibility for the governments, while seeking to protect the right to respect for family and private life stipulated in Article 8, the freedom of thought, conscience and religion ensured by Article 9, the freedom of expression mentioned in Article 10 and the prohibition of discrimination stated in Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. (Europe 1950) According to the European Commission, “an estimated of 15% of Europeans or 75 million people in the European Union fall victim to crime” annually. (Directorate-General for Communication n.d.) The importance of protecting the people led to the enactment of The Victims’ Right Directive in 2012 which has set minimum standards for the protection and support of the victims of crime and their rights. (European Parliament, European Council 2012)

Moreover, the European Union has enacted the 2017/542 Directive for victims of terrorism which requires the Member States “to provide for access to professional, specialist support services, immediately after an attack and for as long as necessary”, stating that they should create efficient mechanisms meant to provide emergency response and access to information for the victims and their families. (Document 12012M002 2012) It is stated that this directive respects the principles stipulated in Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union which ensures the “values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities”. Article 23 of

this directive - “Fundamental rights and freedoms” states that Member States may establish conditions regarding the “determination or limitation of liability” of the press or other media in relation to the rights and responsibilities of this profession. (European Parliament, European Council 2017).

The freedom of receiving and imparting information is a fundamental right of the European Convention on Human Rights and therefore it has to be respected by the United Kingdom, Belgium and France, but reporting on terrorist attacks might contribute to the spread of public terror and it could harm the victims and their families, while violating their right to respect for private and family life. The media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks should be presented by journalists with respect to the human rights, the human dignity and the mental state of those people. The Council of Europe had created a set of guidelines for the Member States with the aim to support and protect the human rights of the people who have been affected by terrorist attacks, either directly or indirectly. It is stated in “Human rights and terrorism - Council of Europe revised guidelines” that the states “must guarantee effective access to the law and to justice for victims”. (Council of Europe 2018) As part of the objectives set by the Council, in regard to the protection of private and family life it is mentioned that states should encourage the media and journalists to take measures in order to respect the private and family life of the victims. Another objective aims at the protection of dignity and security and it states that “At all stages of the procedure, victims should be treated in the respect for their personal situation, their rights and their dignity.” and that their identity should be protected, especially when they are witnesses of the attacks. Moreover, it is mentioned that some Member States pursued the objective of raising public awareness about the victims and encouraged the media and journalists to become aware of “the vulnerability of the victims, their needs and the risk potential for secondary victimization”. Mr. Philippe Boillat, the President of the Steering Committee for Human Rights and former Chairman of the Group of Specialists on Human Rights and

the Fight against Terrorism, had stated that “states should, with full respect for freedom of expression, encourage the media and journalists to adopt self-regulatory measures to ensure the protection of privacy and family of victims as part of their information activities”. (Council of Europe 2018)

The right to hold and express opinions, to impart and receive information should be respected when covering terrorist attacks in order to inform the public regarding the acts, the distress and suffering of the people and the after-effects of the affected countries from political, economic and social perspectives. The European Union has established laws and guidelines for the journalists and the media who are covering terrorist attacks in order to protect the right to respect for private and family life of the victims and the right to freedom of expression.

Legislation of France

The journalists in France have to report and cover terrorist attacks with consideration to the European Convention on Human Rights which was ratified in this European country in 1974, while also respecting the national legislative acts presented in this section. The Law on the Freedom of the Press of 29 July 1881 is to be respected in accordance to the Penal Code which comprises Article 226-8 regarding the publishing of an image without the consent of the person, the Article 226-1 about the violation of people’s privacy and Article 421-2-5 which focused on the representation of terrorist attacks in the media and to the Civil Code which focuses on protecting the right to respect for the citizens’ private life in Article 9.

The legislation of France is based on a dual system which consists of two legal branches. The “Public law” comprises the legal responsibilities of the state and the public bodies, while the “Private law” is addressing the private individuals and entities. (Georgetown Law University Law Library 2018) France has ratified the European

Convention on Human Rights in 1974 and the right to respect for private and family life, as well as the right to freedom of expression, have become the fundamental rights of French citizens. (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères 2019) This European country has been affected in the previous years by a large number of terrorist attacks and the laws regarding terrorism and its portrayal in the media have been created in order to ensure the protection of the victims and the affected people.

Article 226-8 of the Penal Code regarding the publishing of an image without the consent of the person who appeared in it stipulates that the breaching of this law is punished with imprisonment for one year and a fine of 15,000 Euros. (Gouvernement 2019) Violating the privacy of other people by intruding into their private space without consent and “fixing, recording or transmitting” the image of the people in those times is also mentioned in the Penal Code, under Article 226-1. (Gouvernement 2019) These laws ought to be taken into account by journalists when reporting on terrorist attacks in order to protect the privacy of the victims in those difficult times.

In France the freedom of expression has been a fundamental right of the citizens for more than 40 years, while the freedom of the press has been enacted by the law of 1881. (Gouvernement n.d.) Article 35c of the law of July 29, 1881 stipulates that “the dissemination, by whatever means and whatever the medium, of the reproduction of the circumstances of a crime or ‘an offense’ without consent, which could damage the dignity of a victim is punishable by a fine of 15,000 Euros. (Loi du 29 juillet 1881 sur la liberté de la presse n.d.)

The way in which terrorist attacks and its victims are portrayed in the media might have an impact not only on the victims, on their families and on the witnesses as it infringes their right to privacy, but it could also have an impact on the people who view the disseminated content. The freedom of the press is limited regarding certain aspects by law as a counter-terrorist measure. Article 421-2-5 of the Penal Code of France specifies that “making an apology” for terrorist acts is considered to be an offense and it is punishable by law. (Legifrance

n.d.) As it is stated on the website of the French Government, the direct and explicit incitement to terrorism “not only in its spirit but also in its terms, to commit physically determined acts” is punishable with imprisonment for seven years, adding that “it does not need to be public to be punished”. Moreover, the public justification of terrorism consisting in “presenting or commenting on acts of terrorism while justifying them, praising them, idealizing their goals or their methods, or passing a favorable moral judgement” via online channels of communication is punishable by seven years of imprisonment since 2014. (Service d'information du Gouvernement 2015).

With the purpose to ensure the protection of the citizens' rights, Article 9 of the Civil Code had been inserted by Act of Parliament of 17 July 1970 and it aims at protecting the private life of the individuals and their families. (Legal and Technical Office of Information and Communication 2007).

France has been exposed to numerous terrorist attacks which led to the necessity of establishing a legal set of rules and guidelines through the prism of security in order to ensure the protection of the citizens. Taking into consideration the national legal acts regarding the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks of these countries it can be concluded that the legislation of France had succeeded in creating the most efficient legal framework in order to protect the victims' privacy and dignity. While the citizens of these countries have to respect the European Convention on Human Rights and the supranational binding legal acts in regard to the right to private life, the freedom of expression and the protection of information, the Penal Code of France additionally had set forth articles focused on the representation of terrorist attacks in the media and aimed at protecting the victims' privacy and image. Furthermore, France, as an European member states, has ratified the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) created by the European Union with the purpose to unify the data privacy laws which could be invoked if personal information about the victims, witnesses and their family members are disseminated by the journalists. In spite this fact, the

authoritative and governing bodies of a country should choose not to rely on the GDPR in order to protect the privacy and dignity of the victims of terrorist attacks.

Therefore, considering the legislative acts of the United Kingdom, Belgium and France it can be concluded that the existence or the absence of a victim's consent to have personal information disclosed in the media, the protection of the victim's identity regarding the personal data and the recognizable physical features of the victim are to be considered potential indicators for assessing the articles about the terrorist attacks in order to determine if the legislation of these countries is respected by the journalists. The theoretical approach of this section generates the research questions "To what extent do the selected news media outlets respect the articles from the supranational and national legislation aimed at protecting the victims' privacy?", "Does the way in which the legal framework of France is constructed influence the media representation of the victims?", "Does the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks differ from an ethical and legal perspective if the attacks had happened in the country of the respective news media outlet?" which are fundamental for understanding the media representation of the victims' of terrorist attacks.

The Methodological Approach and the Research Questions

The aim of this research paper was to explore the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks and to observe how it is constructed in accordance with the ethical codes and standards and with the supranational and national legislation. In order to explore and to systematically describe the media representation of the victims, the research paper focused on the terrorist attacks with the highest death toll which had happened in the United Kingdom, Belgium and France and on how the news media outlet Le Monde covered the events. The selection of Le Monde was due to the fact that it is a newspapers of record by reputation meeting the high standards of journalism by covering international and national events.

In order to have a clear perspective regarding the ethical and legal framework aimed at protecting the human rights and, implicitly the victims of terrorist attacks, the literature review consisted of exploring the representation of terror attacks in the media, the available journalistic ethical codes enacted by the press regulators, the national legislation, as well as the legislation of the European Union. The theoretical approach of this research paper led to the research questions regarding the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal acts and generated the indicators for the assessment of the articles published on the online platforms of the newspapers. The research questions which were subsequently answered in the research paper were

“To what extent does the selected news media outlet respect the ethical codes available?”,

“To what extent does the selected news media outlet respect the articles from the supranational and national legislation aimed at protecting the victims’ privacy?”

“Does the way in which the legal frameworks of France is constructed influence the media representation of the victims?”

“Does the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks differ from an ethical and legal perspective if the attacks had happened in the country of the respective news media outlet?”.

The methodological design of the data collection

The most suitable research method for exploring and evaluating the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks was the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the news pieces published by Le Monde. The preliminary quantitative analysis constituted in the data collection of the articles which met the criteria for the time frame – to be published over the course of 31 days after the attack had happened. The variables of this stage were independent due to the fact that they were based on the existence of visual elements and personal information about the victims – if the article included visual elements and/or

personal data i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality it was included in the adjacent sampling. The data coding of these elements led to 105 articles which were relevant for evaluating the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks.

The qualitative method used for gathering information about the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks was the content analysis due to the fact that the examination of the articles was furtherly quantified in order to provide an answer to the research questions and to have a clear view of the subject of this research paper. The sampling consisting of articles which included information about the victims was analyzed according to the indicators generated by the literature review. The content analysis of the articles was quantified in a table divided in three sections: the analysis of the visual elements, the analysis of the text regarding the disclosure of personal data about the victims, the indicators for evaluating the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework.

The indicators for the analysis of the visual elements i.e. the existence of visual elements with the victims, the existence of intrusive visual elements with the victims, the existence of visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims were easy to identify might have been influenced by the personal interpretation of the visual elements and therefore, this represented a limitation of the qualitative analysis of the research paper. The media representation of the victims included the media representation of the people who were present at the moment of the attack and had been physically and/or mentally affected by it. Furthermore, it is important to be taken into consideration the fact that the data coding of the articles which respected or breached the ethical and legal frameworks was conducted in accordance with these indicators.

The indicators for the qualitative analysis which presented information about the ethical and legal frameworks were divided in general indicators which were applied for the media representation of all the news media outlets and in special indicators which were applied individually according to the country of the publication. The general indicators i.e. the noninfringement of the ethical codes and the

noninfringement of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights were applied to all the articles analyzed due to the fact that Le Monde is a European newspaper. The special indicators were designed in accordance with the national legislation of France. The indicators for evaluating the articles published by Le Monde were the noninfringement of Article 226-1 and Article 226-8 of the Penal Code and Article 9 of the Civil Code.

The research method provided descriptive statistics which analytically described the media representation of the victims and therefore, it represented the most suitable approach to gather, select and evaluate the online articles published by Le Monde in order to answer the research questions and provide a better understanding of the importance of the journalistic ethical codes and the legislation aimed at ensuring the victims' protection.

Research Analysis of Le Monde

Le Monde is a private newspaper owned by Le Monde Group which has a widely respected notoriety as a French broadsheet paper, with a circulation of 323,565 copies being daily distributed throughout the country. It was founded in 1944 and it had become a newspaper of record in France due to its large circulation, the in-depth coverage of international and national subjects and by meeting the higher standard of journalism since its establishment in 1944. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d.) The broadsheet newspaper is addressed to the general public, but its readership also included highly educated people. Due to the technological evolution in matters of disseminating information in the online medium, the audience of Le Monde has had the possibility to access the media coverage of world events via the Internet since 1998. The journalistic values and the quality of the media coverage of Le Monde as a print publication have been transposed in the online environment by Le Monde Interactif. The online content has to respect the code of ethics of Le Monde Group which was enacted in 2010. The code encompasses the Munich Declaration of Duties and Rights of Journalists in which it is stated that journalists ought to

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respect the privacy of the individuals. The content published by Le Monde could be assessed by the established Ethics and Professional Conduct Committees which can issue recommendations or opinions on the ethical matters of a news piece. Furthermore, the content should be created with respect to the ethical codes of the Syndicat National des Journalists and to France's legislation. In order to observe the noninfringement or the breach of the ethical and legal framework by Le Monde and how the media coverage is influenced by the existing legislation aimed at protecting the human' rights, the quantitative research of the online journalistic materials which represent the sample is based on descriptive statistics of the published content. The preliminary sampling based on the media coverage of terrorist attacks consisted of 488 articles in total, divided in 102 news pieces covering the three terrorist attacks which happened in the United Kingdom, 61 news pieces about the three attacks which happened in Belgium and 325 news pieces reporting on the attacks from France. (See Figure 1)

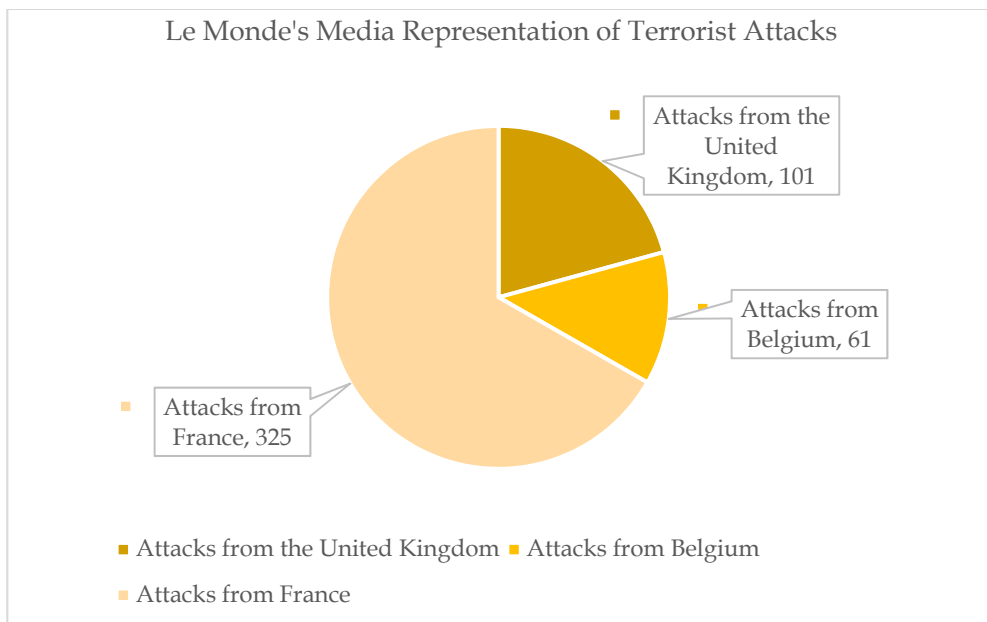


Figure 1

The quantitative analysis of the preliminary sample showed that the attacks from France had received the highest media attention from *Le Monde*, as they were covered in 325 articles. In order to have a clear perspective regarding the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks, the data coding and the content analysis was based on the analysis and the quantification of the personal data about the victims of terrorist attacks or about their families i.e. the full name, age, profession, nationality and the visual elements with the victims.

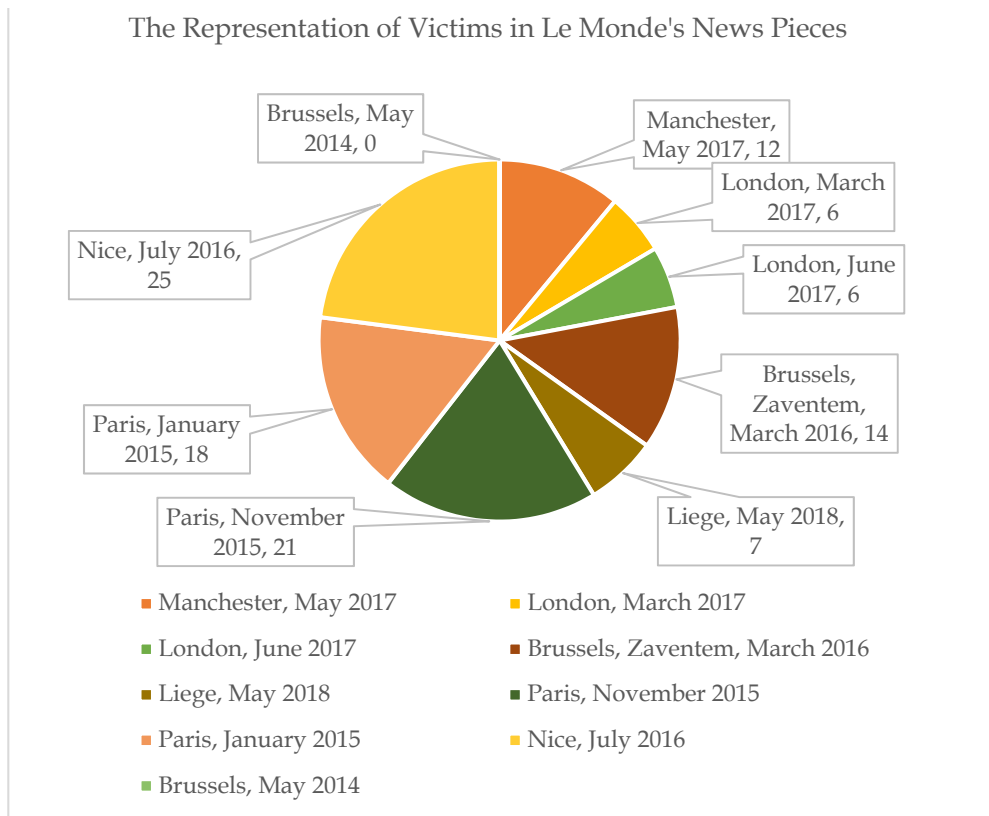


Figure 2

The pre-defined criteria had led to a selection of 105 news pieces which were representative for the following quantitative and qualitative research. Due to the quantitative analysis of these 105 articles it can be

concluded that the media representation of the victims of the attacks which had happened in France received the highest media attention from Le Monde due to the fact that out of 105 articles 64 of them had included information about the victims. (See Figure 2) The high media coverage of the attacks which happened in France could be due to the national interest of the French audience regarding these events.

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in the United Kingdom

The quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the journalistic materials published by Le Monde about the terrorist attacks from the United Kingdom had showed that out of 101 articles 25 of them had shared information about the victims. The victims of Manchester Arena bombing received the highest media attention by disseminating information about them in 12 articles, despite the fact that Manchester attack had the lowest death toll out of the three attacks which happened in the United Kingdom. (See Figure 3)

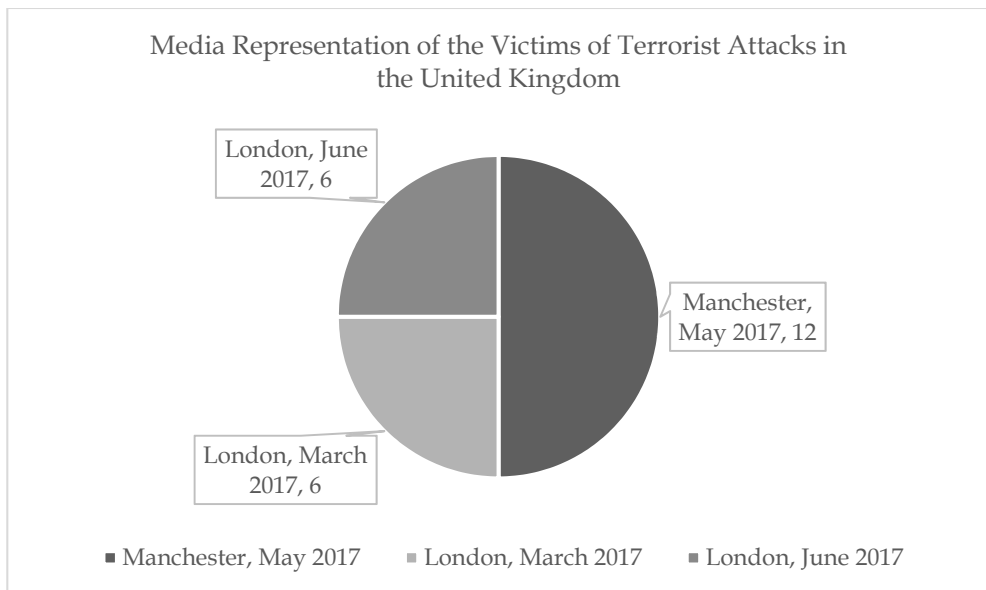


Figure 3

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of London Attack from June, 2017

After the data coding based on the previously defined indicators for evaluating the articles published by Le Monde it had been concluded that the representation of victims of terrorist attack which happened in London in June, 2017 was included in 6 articles. According to the descriptive statistics 67 per cent of the news pieces had shared personal data about the victims. The qualitative analysis of the content showed that out of 4 articles which included personal data 3 of them published the full name of the victims. (See Figures 4 and 5)

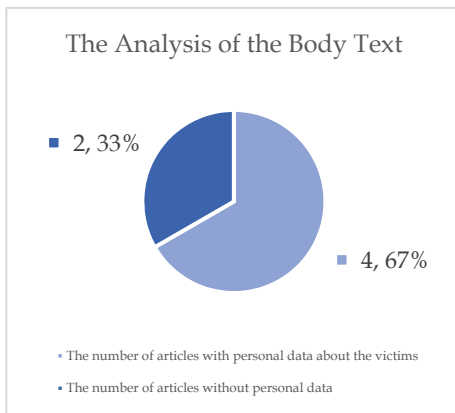


Figure 4

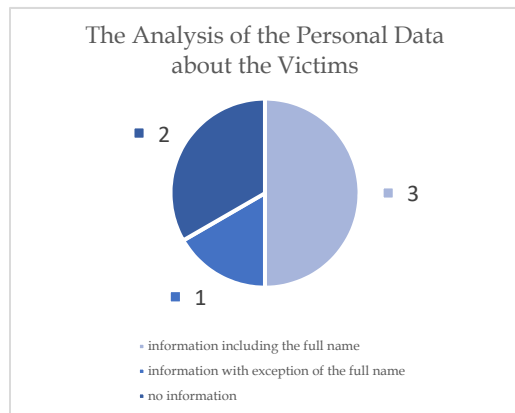


Figure 5

The qualitative analysis based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims showed that out of 6 articles 2 had included visual elements which were intrusive and the recognizable features of the victims were easy to identify. (See Figure 6) Due to the content analysis it can be concluded that the intrusive visual elements did not respect the ethical and legal framework because it is noticeable that the victims were having a moment of distress.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

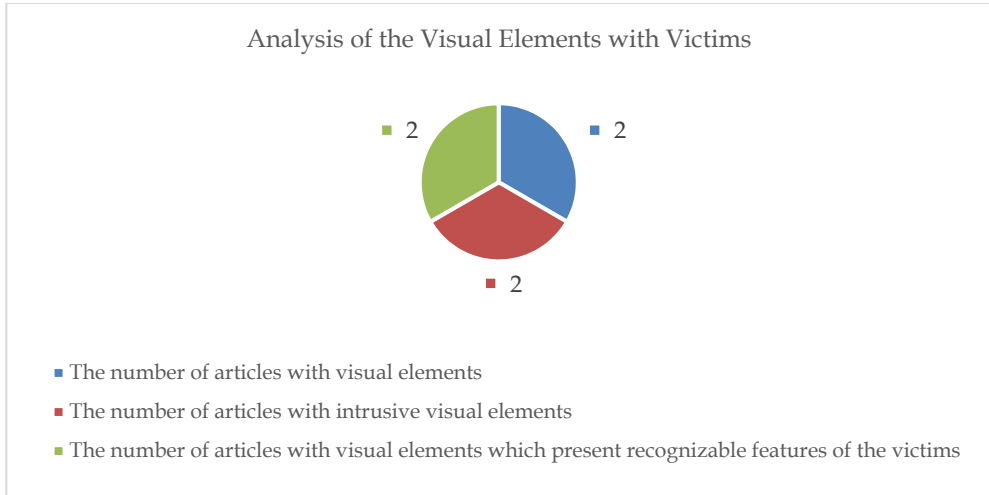


Figure 6

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements and the personal data about the victims led to the quantification based on the indicators regarding the ethical and legal framework of France that all 6 articles respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 9 of the Civil Code and Article 226-1 of the Penal Code, while the 2 articles which had included intrusive visual elements had breached the ethical codes and Article 226-8 of the Penal Code. (See Figure 7)

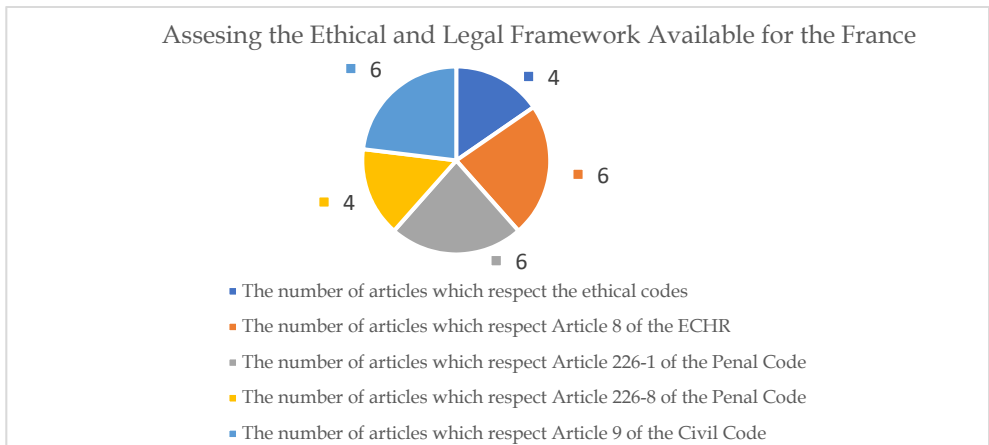


Figure 7

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Manchester Attack from May, 2017

According to the data quantification based on the pre-defined indicators for the evaluation of the articles published by Le Monde, the media representation of the victims of Manchester Attack was included in 12 articles. The quantitative analysis showed that out of 12 articles 83 per cent of them had included personal data about the victims while the qualitative analysis of the body showed that out of the 10 articles 8 had published the full name of the victims. (See Figures 8 and 9).

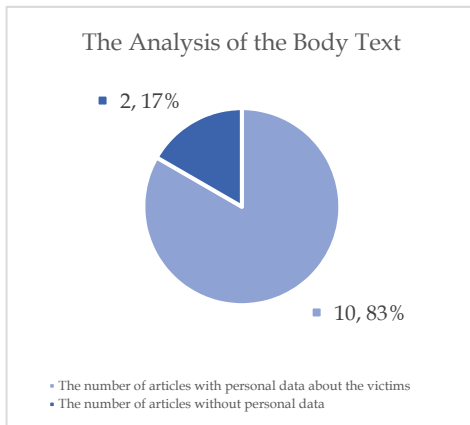


Figure 8

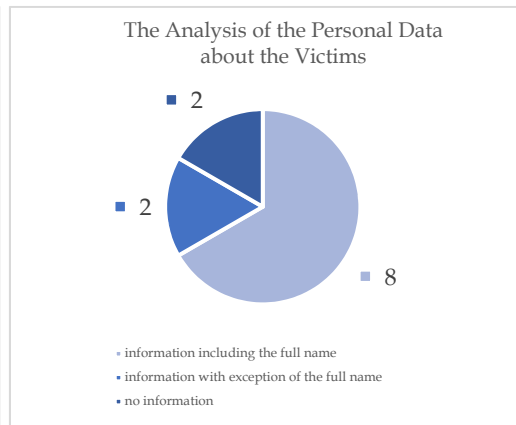


Figure 9

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis of the visual elements with victims showed that out of 12 articles 5 had included visual elements with the victims in which the recognizable features of the victims were easy to identify. Out of the 5 articles 2 had included intrusive visual elements with the victims who survived the attack. (See Figure 10)

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

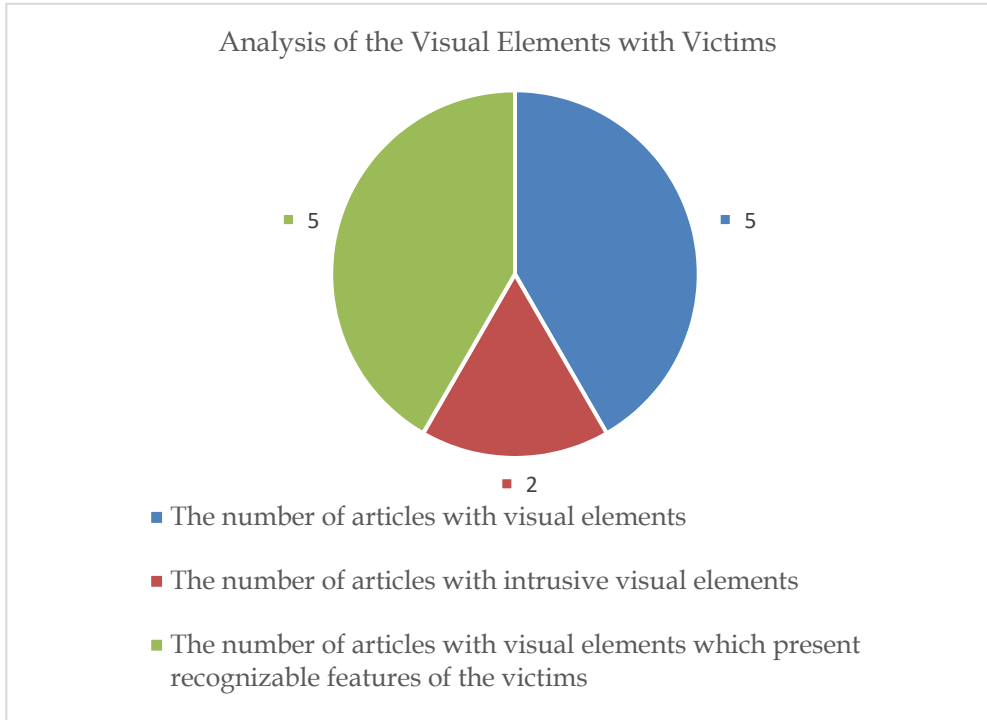


Figure 10

The content analysis showed that out of the 12 articles in which the victims had been represented by Le Monde 10 articles respected the journalistic ethical codes, Article 226-8 of the Penal Code, Article 9 of the Civil Code, while none of the articles breached Article 226-1 of the Penal Code and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. (See Figure 11)

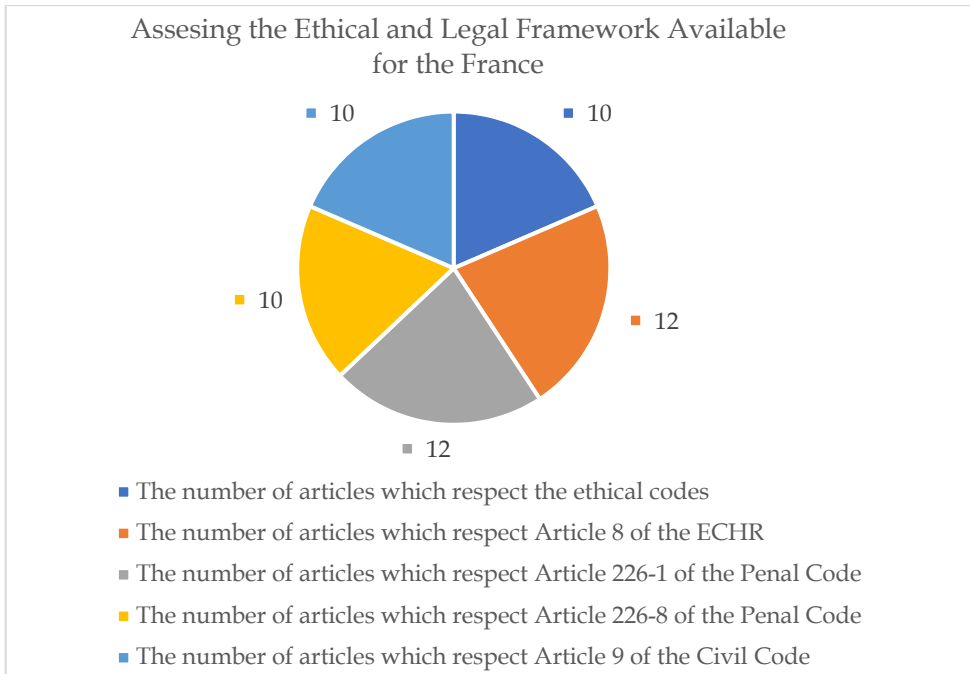


Figure 11

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of London Attack from March, 2017

According to the indicators designed for the evaluating the personal information about the victims, the quantitative analysis showed that out of 6 news pieces all of them had included personal information i.e. full name, age, profession, nationality, while the qualitative analysis of the articles showed that 3 articles had made public the full name of the victims. (See Figures 12 and 13) The content analysis showed that the published information was about the victims who had passed away or had recovered and that no information about the victims who were recovering at that moment was shares.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

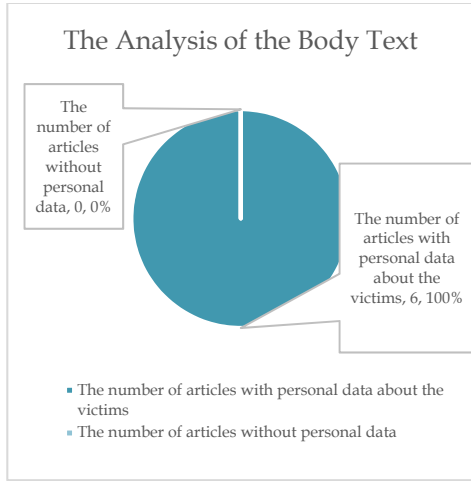


Figure 12

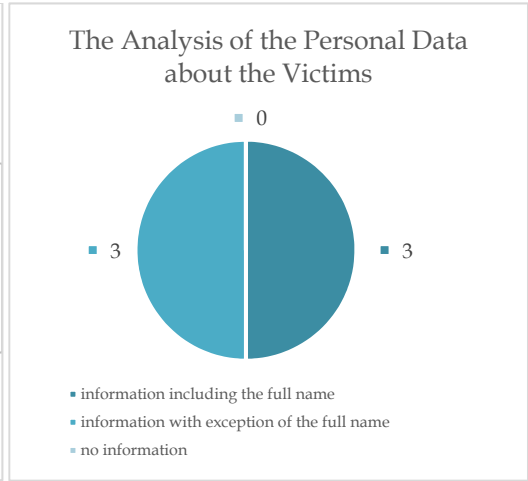


Figure 13

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims showed that out of 6 articles one had included visual elements with victims which could be considered as intrusive due to the fact that the victims were having a moment of distress. (See Figure 14)

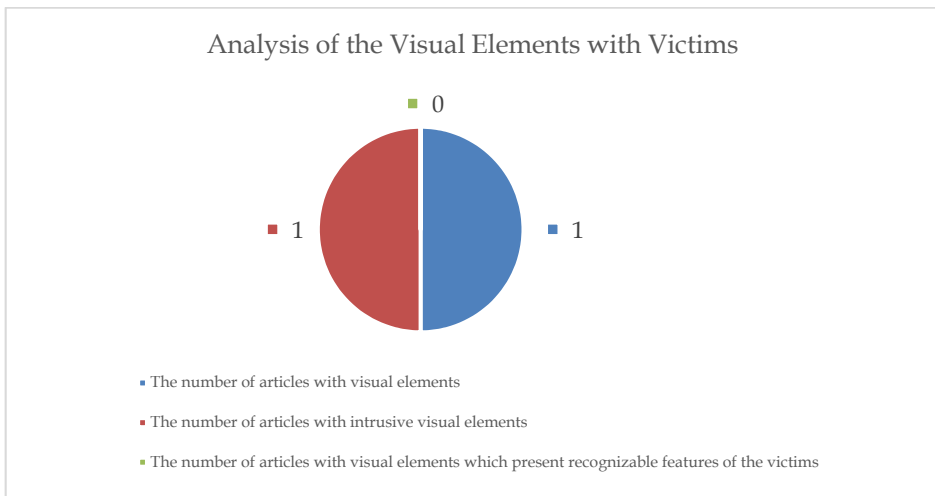


Figure 14

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements and the personal data about the victims of the terrorist attack which happened in March, 2017 concluded that all the articles respected the ethical and legal framework of France. (See Figure 15)

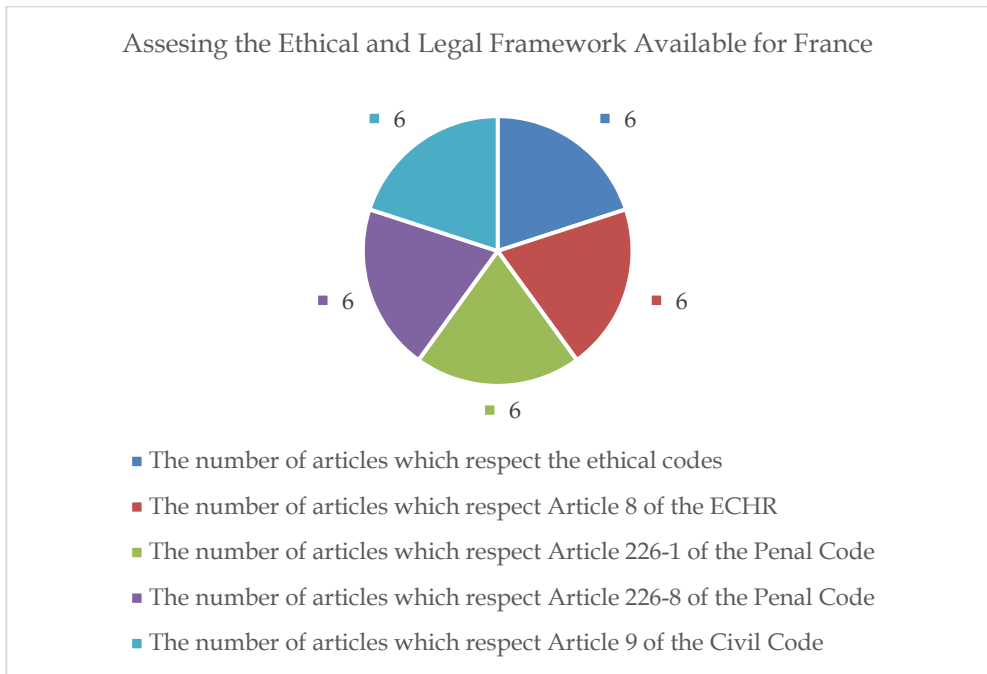


Figure 15

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in Belgium

The quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the journalistic materials published by Le Monde about the terrorist attacks from the Belgium had showed that out of 62 articles 17 of them had shared information about the victims. The articles which met the criteria published had covered the Brussels and Zaventem attack and Liege attack, while the articles about the Brussels attack from 2014 did not

share information about the victims. (See Figure 16) The framework created for the content analysis of the 17 news materials followed the general structure presented in Methodology and had represented the cornerstone of the qualitative analysis by including the relevant indicators for drawing a conclusion and answering the research questions.

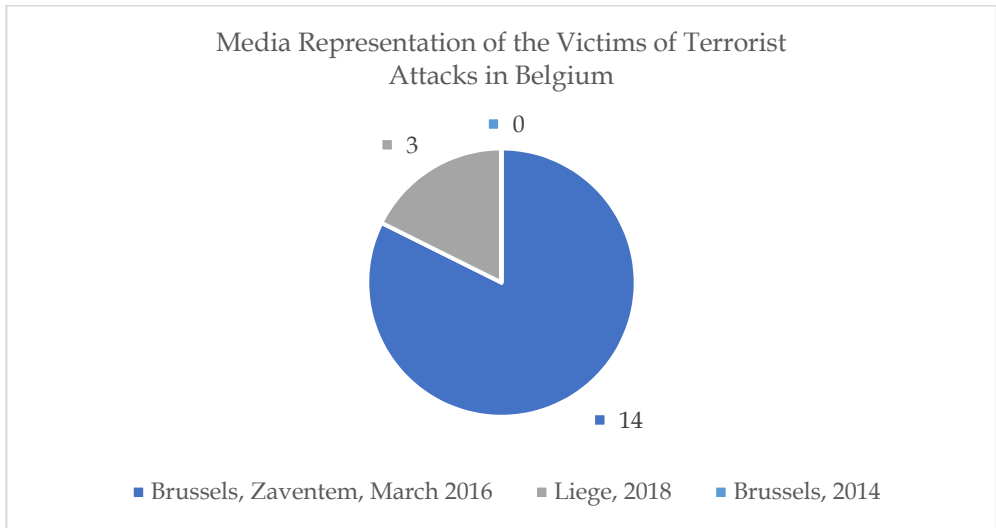


Figure 16

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Liege Attack from May 2018

Le Monde had published 7 news pieces about the terrorist attack which had happened in Liege and 3 articles had met the criteria to be included in the established sampling for the quantitative and qualitative analysis. According to the indicators designed for the assessment of personal information about the victims, the quantitative analysis showed that all 3 articles included personal information i.e. age and profession and 2 of them published the full name of the victims. (See Figures 17 and 18)

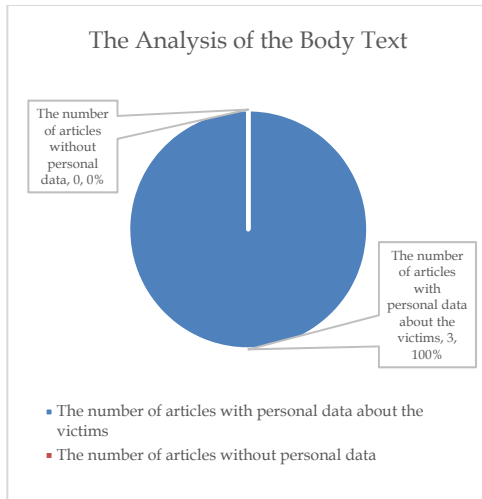


Figure 17

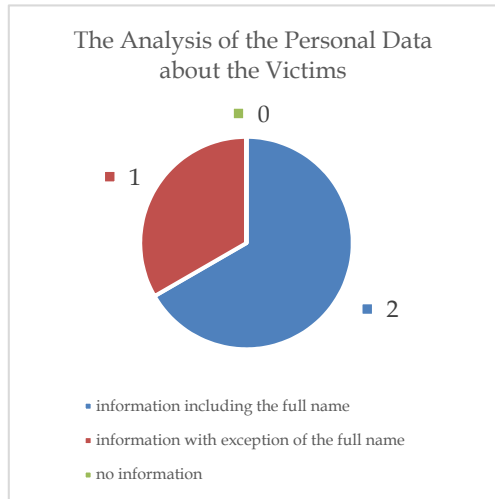


Figure 18

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims showed that the articles did not include photographs or videos and therefore the ethical and legal framework was not infringed.

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Brussels Attack from March, 2016

The data coding of the 17 articles which included information about the victims published by Het Nieuwsblad showed that the media representation of the victims of the Brussels and Zaventum attack which had happened in March, 2016 consisted of publishing visual elements or information about the victims in 14 news pieces. The qualitative analysis showed that out of 14 articles 64 per cent of them had included personal data and according to the qualitative analysis of the content it was concluded that the victims' full names were mentioned in 6 articles. (See Figures 19 and 20)

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

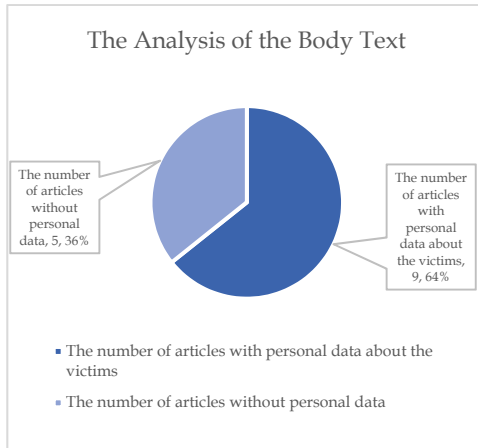


Figure 19

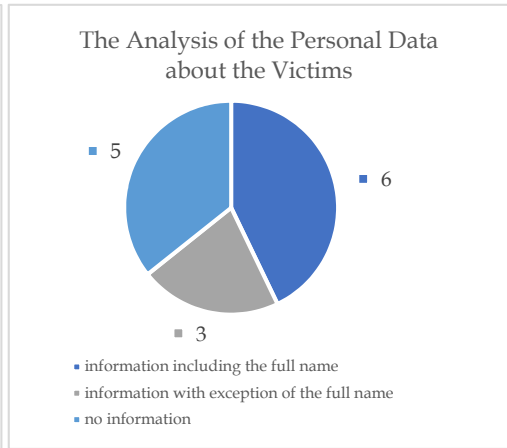


Figure 20

By advancing the qualitative analysis based on the data coding regarding the visual elements with victims it was concluded that out of 14 articles 12 had included visual elements. The content analysis of the visual elements showed that 10 articles included intrusive and gruesome photographs and videos of the victims in which the recognizable features could be easily observed. (See Figure 21)

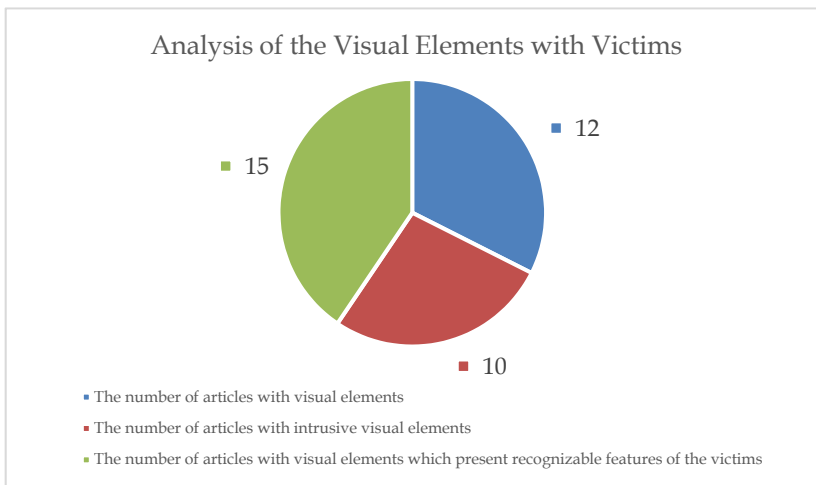


Figure 21

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements and the personal data about the victims of the terrorist attack showed that out of the 14 articles about the Brussels and Zaventem attack 6 of them published intrusive visual elements which led to the infringement of Article 9 of the Civil Code and Article 226-8 of the Penal Code, while the ethical codes were breached by 8 articles due to the fact that they had included visual elements with the victims in moments of distress and panic. (See Figure 22) The infringement of the ethical and legal framework of one article was due to the embedment of a picture published by The Washington Post with a victim, which was already included in the articles published by Le Monde which were included in the sampling.

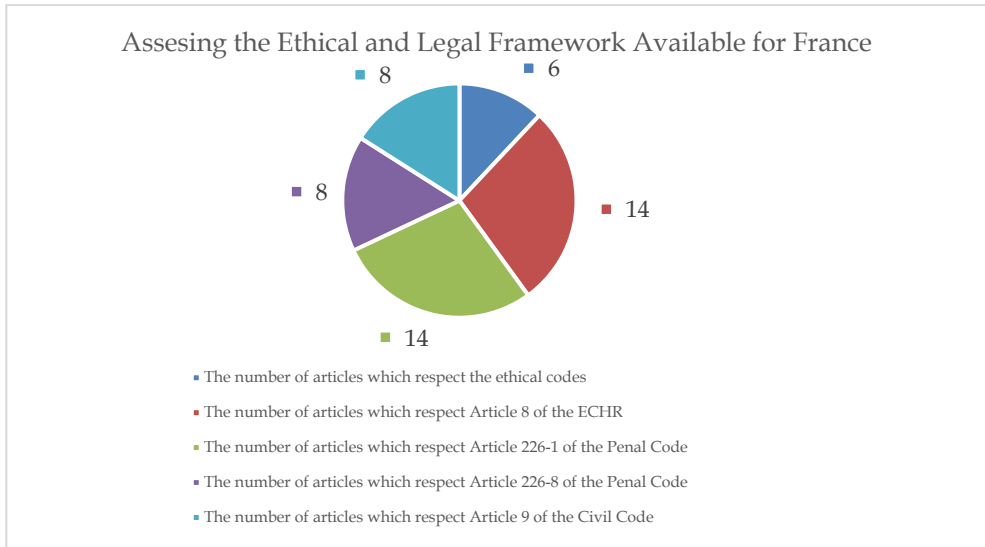


Figure 22

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Terrorist Attacks which happened in France

The exploratory quantitative analysis based on the data coding of the 325 journalistic materials published by Le Monde about the

terrorist attacks from France which had met the pre-defined criteria showed that 64 of them had published information about the victims. (See Figure 23)

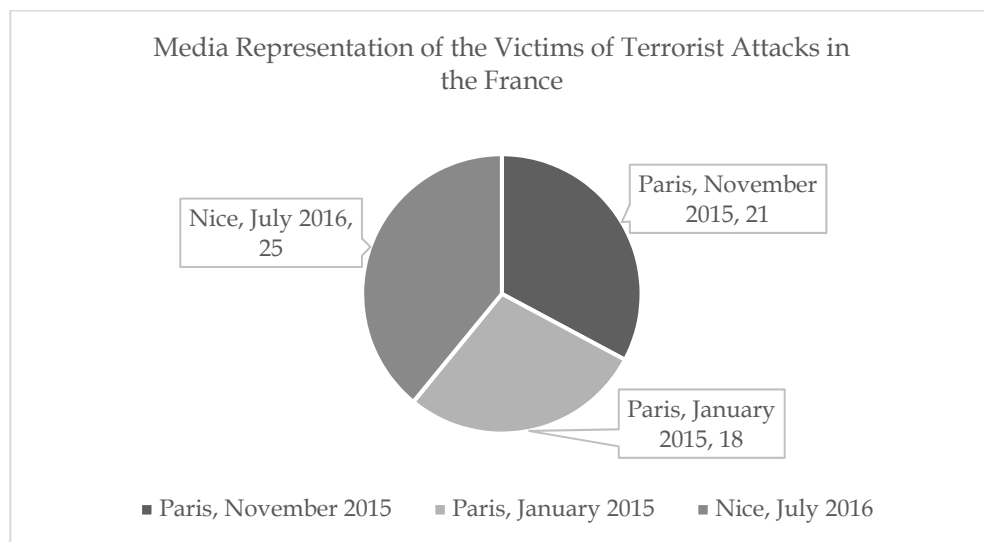


Figure 23

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of the Nice Attack from July, 2016

The data coding based on the previously defined indicators for evaluating the articles published by Le Monde showed that the representation of victims of terrorist attack which happened in Nice in July, 2016 was included in 25 articles. Out of the three attacks on which this research paper is conducted, this terror attack received the highest media attention and this could be due to the fact that it happened on the national day of France and it was a subject of high interest for the French citizens. According to the descriptive statistics 60 per cent of the articles shared personal information about the victims, while the qualitative analysis showed that the full name of the victims was included in 13 articles out of 25. (See Figures 24 and 25)

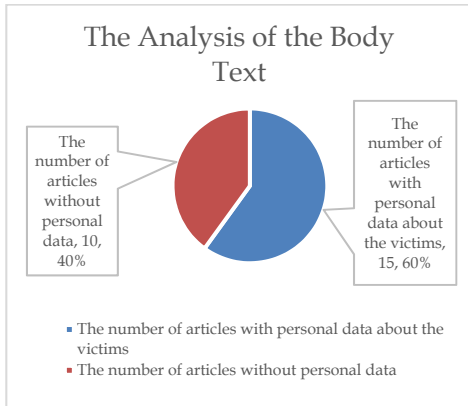


Figure 24

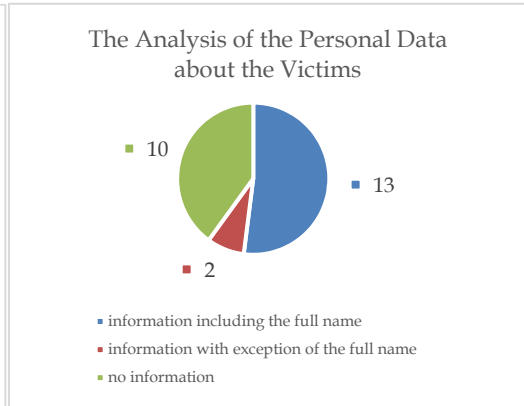


Figure 25

The qualitative analysis based on the data coding for the visual elements with victims showed that out of 25 articles 12 had included visual elements with victims, out of which 2 articles had published intrusive visual elements and 9 articles had included visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified. The content analysis concluded showed that out of the 9 articles which included visual elements with recognizable features of the victims 8 of them were not intrusive, while one article included pictures with the victims which could have been identified in moments of distress, noting that they were not injured. (See Figure 26)

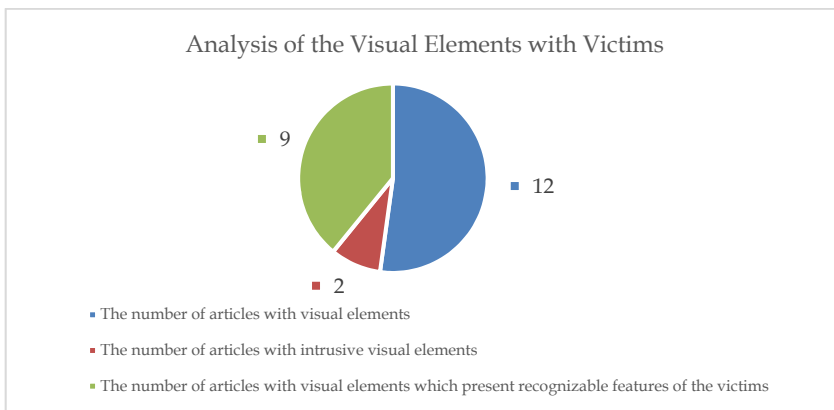


Figure 26

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements and the personal data about the victims led to the quantification based on the indicators regarding the ethical and legal framework of France, concluding that all the articles which included the media representation of the victims respected the ethical codes, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 226-1 and Article 226-8 of the Penal Code, Article 9 of the Civil Code, while 5 articles might have breached Article 226-8. (See Figure 27)

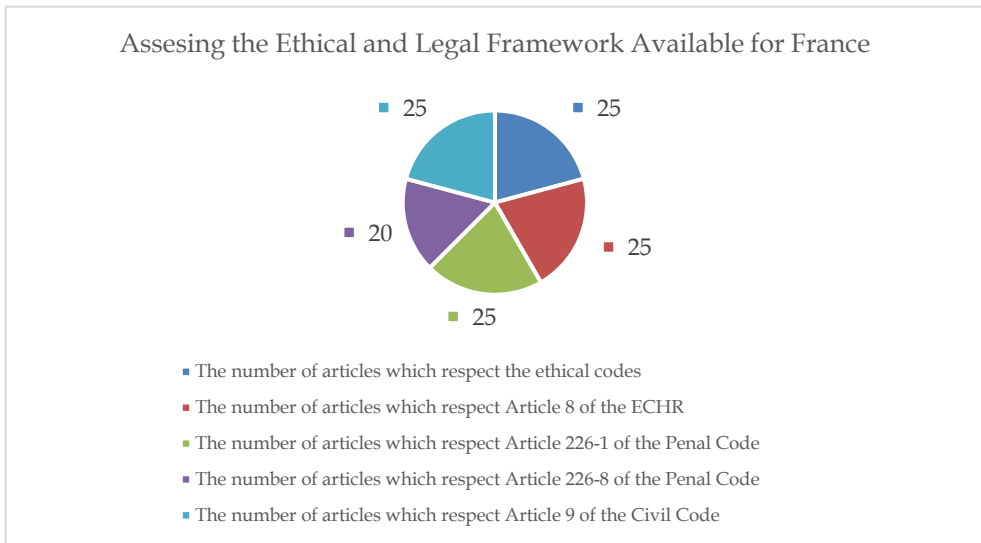


Figure 27

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of Paris Attack from November, 2015

Le Monde published 117 news materials about the terrorist attack which happened in Paris in November, 2015. The quantitative analysis showed that this attack received more media attention than the attacks which happened in January, 2015 and in Nice in 2016. The data coding of the 117 articles highlighted that 21 included information i.e. visual elements, personal data about the victims. The quantitative analysis of the 21 articles which were included in the sampling

showed that 48 per cent of them published personal data and the qualitative analysis of the text showed that 11 articles made public the full name of the victims. (See Figures 28 and 29)

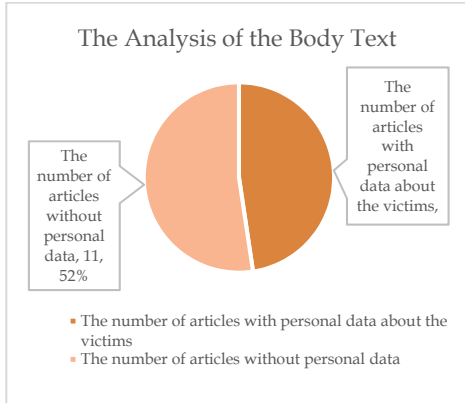


Figure 28

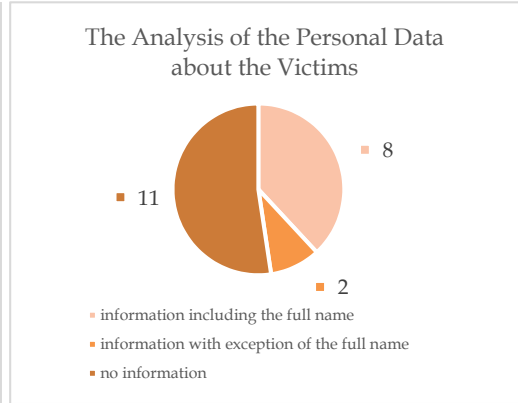


Figure 29

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis based on the data coding for the visual elements with victims showed that out of 21 articles 17 had included visual elements with victims, out of which 10 articles had published intrusive visual elements and 12 articles had included visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified. The content analysis led to the conclusion that Le Monde had created an intrusive media representation of the victims in a percentage of 47,6 per cent. (See Figure 30)

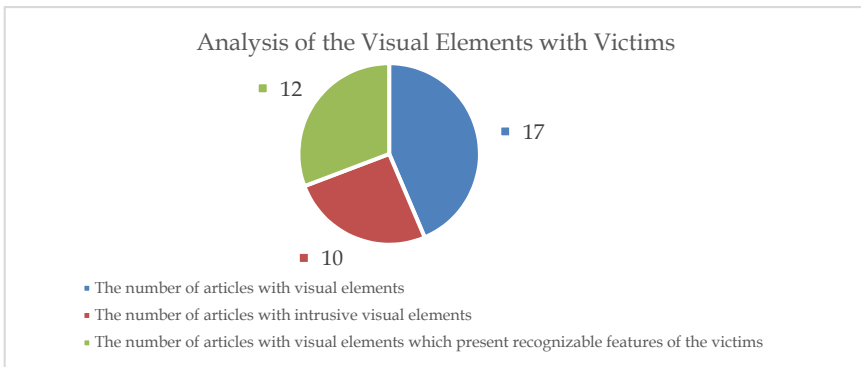


Figure 30

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

The subsequent part of the qualitative analysis based on the pre-defined indicators for assessing the noninfringement or the breach of ethical and legal frameworks available for France showed that the 21 articles respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 226-1 of the Penal Code, while 9 articles breached Article 226-8 of the Penal Code by publishing visual elements with the victims in moments of distress and 11 articles did not respect the ethical codes. (See Figure 31) The content analysis showed that the visual elements which led to the failure to comply to the ethical codes represented an intrusion into the moments of shock and terror of the victims, highlighting the fact that the recognizable features of the victims were easy to identify in 9 articles.

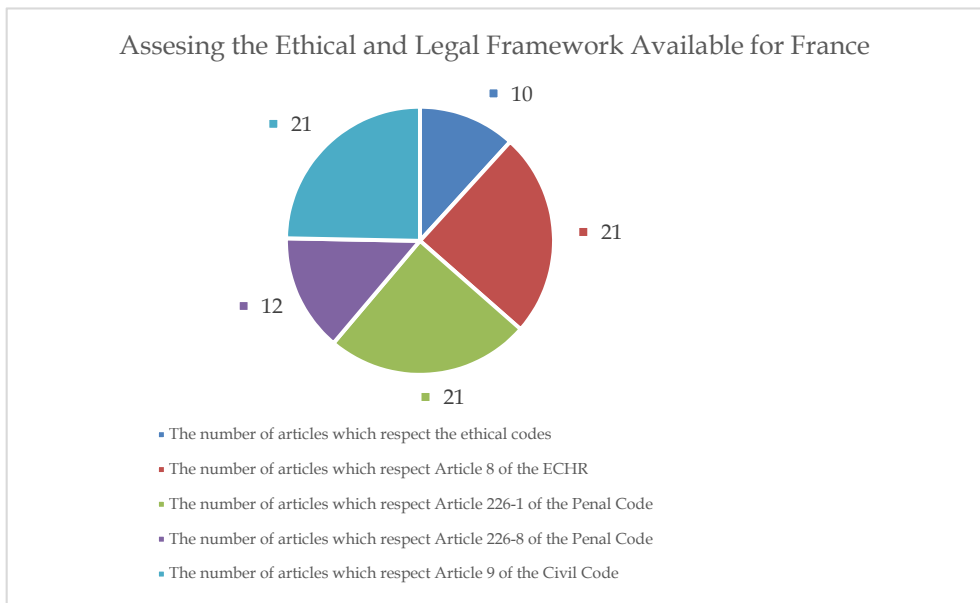


Figure 31

The Online Media Representation of the Victims of the Paris Attack from January, 2015

The preliminary data coding of the 64 articles which included information about the victims published by Le Monde showed that the media representation of victims of the Paris attack which happened in January, 2015 was included in 18 online materials. The descriptive statistics regarding the personal data of the victims showed that out of the 18 articles 94 per cent of them had included personal data about the victims and the qualitative analysis of the published information about the victims showed that all 17 articles included the full name. (See Figures 32 and 33)

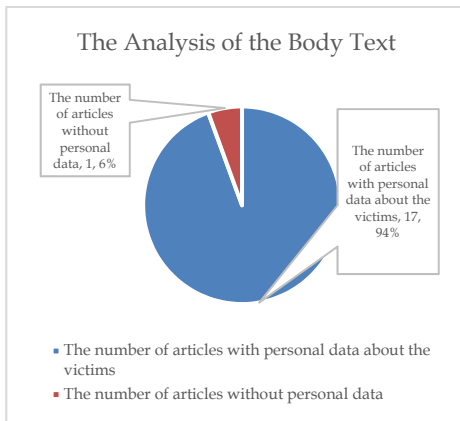


Figure 32

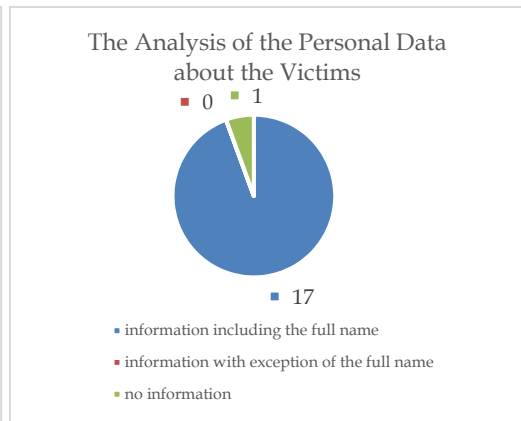


Figure 33

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis based on the data coding for the visual elements with victims showed that out of 11 articles had included visual elements with victims, out of which 2 articles had published intrusive visual elements and 11 articles had included visual elements in which the recognizable features of the victims could be easily identified. (See Figure 34) The content analysis concluded that the intrusive visual elements were of unidentified victims which did not present any recognizable features.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS.
AN ETHICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE

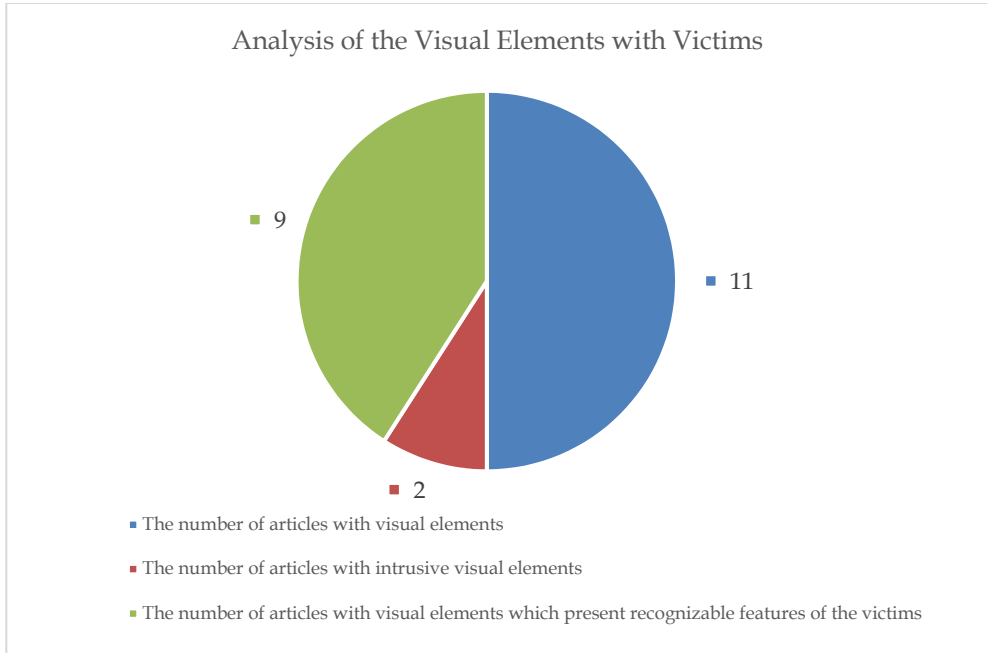


Figure 34

The qualitative analysis of the visual elements and the personal data about the victims led to the quantification based on the indicators regarding the ethical and legal framework of France, concluding that all the articles which included the media representation of the victims respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 226-1 and Article 226-8 of the Penal Code, Article 9 of the Civil Code, while 2 articles out of the 18 did not respect the ethical codes due to the fact that the visual elements captured the victims being carried on a gurney. (See Figure 35)

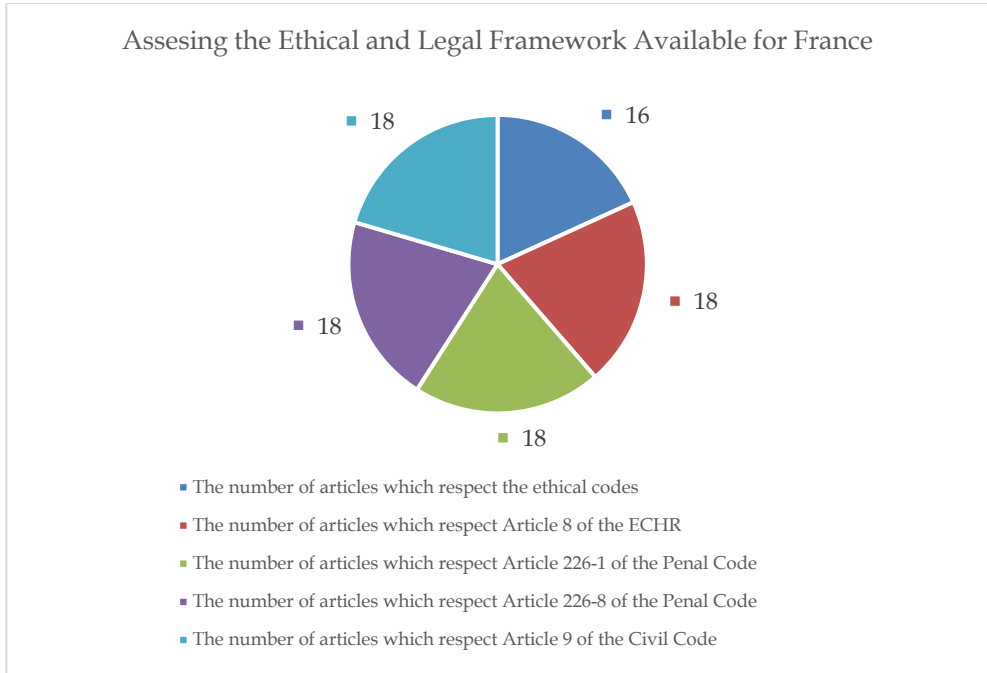


Figure 35

Conclusions

The purpose of this research paper was to present the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks and to analyze its interdependence with the ethical journalistic codes and the legal acts aimed at protecting the people.

According to the pre-defined limitations presented in the methodology of this research paper and the limitations which were encountered during the research analysis of the articles the answers of the research questions offered a clear view of the media representation of the victims.

To what extent do the selected news media outlets respect the ethical codes available for their newspapers?

Le Monde respected the ethical codes in proportion of 66,6 per cent in the media representation of the victims of London attack from June, 2017, 83,3 per cent for the Manchester attack and 100 per cent for the London attack from March. The arithmetic average is **83,3** per cent for the victims of the United Kingdom attack, **42,8** per cent for Brussels attack and **100** per cent for the Nice attack. The overall arithmetic average is **75,3** per cent.

To what extent do the selected news media outlets respect the articles from the supranational and national legislation aimed at protecting the victims' privacy?

The research analysis showed that Le Monde respected Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and that it is not relevant for the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks because it aims at protecting the privacy of the people, while their portrayal in the media affects the victims' dignity and image, while it can also have a high emotional impact on them, on their families and on the audience. The legislation of France includes Article 226-8 which refers to the publishing of an image without the consent of the person. The article has been included in the research analysis and served as indicator. The analysis regarding the noninfringement of Article 226-8 of the Penal Code of France showed that the media representation of the victims of the attacks respected it in proportion of **83,3** per cent for the United Kingdom attacks, **57,1** per cent for the Brussels attack and **80** per cent for the Nice attack.

Does the way in which the legal framework of France is constructed influences the media representation of the victims?

Le Monde respected the ethical codes in proportion 75,3 per cent even though the legislation of France included Article 226-8 which refers to the publishing of an image without the consent of the person.

Does the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks differ from an ethical and legal perspective if the attacks had happened in the country of the respective news media outlet?

By taking into account the descriptive statistics representative for the noninfringement of the ethical codes it can be observed that Le Monde created a more ethical media representation of the victims if the attacks had happened in France.

The research analysis of this paper provided answers to the questions about the ethical and legal frameworks aimed at protecting the victims and their rights while contributing to a deeper understanding of the importance of ethics in journalism. The results based on the sampling of this research paper cannot attest the general position of the selected newspaper regarding the media representation of the victims of terrorist attacks, but they underlined the interdependence between the role of journalism, the human rights and the ethical standards of this profession.

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