

Media and terrorism

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Media And Terrorism

Introduction

The media promotes terrorism in many ways by stressing fear and uncertainty among the masses notwithstanding the long relationship between fear and crime. This is because, without the media and its coverage, the acts of terrorism and their impact will be wasted, remaining confined to an individual as opposed to it occurring over a wider target audience of whom the violence is usually aimed at. Therefore, the relationship between the media and terrorism in generating viewership and creating fear respectively cannot be overemphasized (Nellis and Savage, 2012).

Pandalai and Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (2013) argue that several characteristics make the media to be well suited for terrorist and terrorist activities. One important characteristic that is important for terrorism as related to the media is that it sets the agenda in that the more attention one pays to a certain activity like terror attacks, the more importance and attention the public pays attention to it. Moreover, the way a news item is offered or outlined determines how it will be explained or understood by the target audience or population. It is a matter of fact that terrorists and their terror activities would want to be in the media most probably in a positive way to be seen as fighting for a political, ideological or political cause. The media becomes an important tool for setting and framing this agenda as wanted by the terrorist.

Terrorists adopt the use of the media to set and propagate some of their objectives of terrorism, Whitehead (2013) argues that terrorists may use the

media for purposes of seeking attention, recognition, and legitimacy, which can be achieved through the psychological interaction between them and the media to demoralize enemies. In order to achieve this, terrorists try to gain the attention of the audience to condition their thinking thus creating fear; afterward, they seek for recognition of their motives in order to gain sympathy and respect before using the media to gain quasi-legitimate status to be recognized as important political players. Terrorists participate at several levels in the media either when the media reports a terror attack, when terrorists send their messages through the media or when they have a full control of the media outlet. In the first case, the terrorists carry out an attack and wait to see how the media carries out the story or report it, while the second scenario occurs when those involved in the terror activity send their message to the media after framing their message. The third scenario is often the most desired form by the terrorist as they take full control of the media and broadcast or spread their message how they want it (Haridakis, Hugenberg and Wearden, 2009).

The media, on the other hand, is reliant on terrorism, as it is perceived as a hot subject that fascinates many people leading to an increase in viewer ratings of the media outlet concerned (Boydstun, 2013). The rating of a particular media outlet is directly related to the derived income from advertisements, and so the more people are likely to watch the news on a particular channel, the higher the revenue it generates. Therefore, the media is rewarded for broadcasting acts of terror thus energizing their competition for the size of the audience and circulation that has a direct bearing on the revenue generated from advertising.

References

Boydston, A. E. (2013). Making the news: Politics, the media, and agenda setting. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Haridakis, P. M., Hugenberg, B. S., & Wearden, S. T. (2009). War and the media: Essays on news reporting, propaganda and popular culture. Jefferson, N. C: McFarland

Nellis, A. M., & Savage, J. (September 01, 2012). Does Watching the News Affect Fear of Terrorism? The Importance of Media Exposure to Terrorism Fear. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58, 5, 748-768.

Pandalai, S., & Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. (2013). " Who sets in agenda?": Does " prime time" really pace policy? : the Indian experience. New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses.

Whitehead, J., W. (2013). Terrorism and the Media: A Symbiotic Relationship. Virginia. The Rutherford Institute. Retrieved from https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/john_whiteheads_commentary/terrorism_and_the_media_a_symbiotic_relationship