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The day after: A discourse analysis of terrorism's representations in an Italian newspaper

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Introduction

This dissertation proposes to study the concept of terrorism and how it is portrayed in the language of newspapers. Specifically, it is going to provide an analysis of pieces of discourse related to events with a terroristic nature, confronting cases that belong to different historical contexts with the aim of identifying differences and similarities through time.

The first section of this paper will provide some background theory on the notion of terrorism, going through the historical phases that brought the phenomenon to the present days. Moreover, it is going to introduce the idea of terrorism in a sociological framework, outlining the features and characteristics that make it a social issue. The social causes and consequences will be examined, also inquiring how terrorism could be defined as an example of social deviance and explaining its impact on society through media.

A further section of this essay will be dedicated to the definition of the sources that will constitute the basis of the analysis. In fact, an Italian newspaper called *Il Corriere della Sera* has been chosen to provide the articles for the investigation and five cases have been selected, namely the attack in Piazza Fontana, Milan, in 1969; the bomb placed at Bologna's station in 1980; the attack to the Twin Towers of 2001; the series of coordinated attacks in Paris, in 2015 and the massacre of La Rambla, Barcelona, in 2017. That same chapter will define the methodology that has been adopted to conduct the discourse analysis, and will also set out the research question.

The chapters dedicated to the cases will be structured as follows: a first part will present an historical account of the event, summarizing the most important facts relative to the occasion. A second part will instead be a report and analysis of some extracts of the articles related, highlighting what kind of words and phrases are employed by journalists.

The results of this process of inquiry will be presented in the last chapter, which features a discussion that points out the main differences and similarities between the pieces of discourse taken under scrutiny, reporting the relevant findings.

The conclusion of this dissertation will thus seek to provide an answer to the question that prompted this research, summarizing the results achieved with the analysis and hopefully serving as a tool to better understand the changes in the portrayal of terrorism in newspapers.

1. Analysing terrorism through sociology

1.1 What is terrorism: definition and evolution of the phenomenon

The word terrorism originates from the Latin verb *terreo (-es, terrui territum, -ere),* which means to frighten, terrify, or dissuade with fear. Historically the first use of the term can be reconducted to the Revolutionary France, regarding the Reign of Terror carried out by Maximilien Robespierre, consisting in the forceful repression of any entity proved, or even just considered, to be a political enemy.

This concurs to draw attention onto the negative connotation that this concept bears, even though a universal definition has not been agreed upon yet.

The causes for the lack of a clear definition are to be found in the political and emotional charge this expression holds and in the wide variety of characteristics that describe specific events and may, or may not, need to be included in the definition.

Nevertheless, organizations like the United Nations, as well as scholars such as Bruce Hoffman in his book "Inside Terrorism", have tried to identify the essential features of terrorism, common to every act or event classified as such.

Generally, to be recognized as terroristic, an attack must be marked by:

· An intentional threat or use of illegal force and violence

· Damages to private and public property

· Neutral targets

· An action designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions

· Organized sub-national, non-state actors

· Political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation

· An action outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law [1]

These points are common to almost every description of terrorism produced in the past years, even though singular countries have added their own criteria, making a universal and fixed definition impossible. An example is certainly the UK Terrorism Act 2000, which for the first time includes the "interference or disruption to an electronic system" as a feature of terrorism.

As a consequence, it has been unattainable for the United Nations to propose a realistic and agreed upon international counterterrorism treaty, due to the fact that the principle of *nullum crimen sine lege* requires to define precisely which acts will be prohibited in order

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[1] Hoffman, B., (2006) *"Inside Terrorism"* Rev. and expanded ed., Columbia University Press

to claim prosecution and punishment, and "terrorism currently lacks the precision, objectivity and certainty demanded by legal discourse[2] ".

However, for the purpose of collecting in a single index the events related to terrorism, the GTD (Global Terrorism Database)[3] has selected some of the listed above features (specific goals, coercion and lack of legitimacy), making them essential for the admittance into the database, thus creating a chronological assemblage of cases attributable to terrorism.

Depending on how broadly it is defined, the first traces of terrorism can be found in a period that goes from the 1st to the 6th century AD, when the Sicarii and Jewish Zealots rebelled to the Roman rule and started killing members of the Jewish and Roman wealthy élite. Despite being organized in groups linked by the same ideas, those assassins mostly acted alone, killing specific targets.

In fact, to find an attempt to execute a mass murder it is necessary to look at the 17th century, 1605 precisely, at what is known as the Gunpowder Plot. A group of conspirators guided by Robert Catesby sought to destroy the English Parliament and kill the King James I and his parliamentarians, by placing a large quantity of gunpowder beneath the Palace of Westminster. The plot was uncovered, impeding an attack that would have also killed a massive number of civilians.

The 19th century saw the birth of terrorist groups, with specific objectives and ideals and a more or less fixed geographical area of action.

In the majority of cases, the organizations' goals were of political nature, claiming independence or fighting for social issues, and this will remain true for more than one century.

Additionally, the totalitarian regimes that characterized the first half of the 20th century can also be considered forms of terrorism. In particular, this is true for the Nazi Regime in Germany. If on the one hand Hitler initially gained power through legitimate democratic means, being elected and spreading his ideas throughout society with legit ways, on the other hand it soon became impossible to rebel to the regime. The turning point for this specific case is to be found in the Reichstag Fire Decree; a document that established a permanent state of emergency in the nation, which allowed the police to intervene into the private life of citizens, depriving them of their personal rights. A fire that destroyed the

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[2] Saul, B., (2008) *"Defining 'Terrorism' to Protect Human Rights"* in Sydney Law School Legal Studies Research Paper, No. 08-125 p. 11.
[3] https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

German Parliament had made this decree possible, masking it with the fear for an armed Communist uprising.

After WWII the general tendency, at least in Europe, was the creation of extremely politically polarized terroristic groups. A case in point is the post-war Italy, characterized by the presence of the "black" (right) and "red" (left) terrorism. In particular the most active organizations were the Brigate Rosse and Ordine Nuovo.

Religion driven terrorism will only appear in the last decades of 1900, rising from the Middle East and Asia, in particular through the Islamic Jihad Organizations, the Aleph Religious Group in Japan and the Babbar Khalsa in India.

The attack of 09/11/01 is seen as a milestone for the World's history, cutting the timeline as much as the First and the Second World Wars. 2977 civilians and 19 hijackers were killed, both in New York and in the Pentagon, making it the deadliest terrorist attack until then. Terrorism suddenly became a tangible reality through media portrayal of the event, and fear started to spread all over the globe, influencing people's lives.

As a matter of fact, mass media have a really strong power on public opinion, shaping people's ideas and point of view. A study upon media representation of terrorism[4] suggests that there could be certain patterns that reporters follow when deciding how to illustrate this kind of cases. The study shows that a Muslim perpetrator receives up to 357% more coverage by media, as well as if the perpetrator gets arrested (287%) or the target is a member of the government (211%). This confirms the theory that what people perceive about reality through media is not always devoid of bias. In spite of this, it is true that the 21st century opened with a number of terrorist attacks far higher than in the past, and that the majority of them are indeed attributable to religious groups.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that discerning one typology of terrorism from another is of crucial importance when trying to understand the dynamics behind the phenomenon.

If totalitarian regimes are to be included in the category, they would be classified as State-sponsored terrorism, as it is the State itself that perpetrates the terroristic act upon citizens. All those movements born to gain independence or to fight against the government are instead forms of Dissent terrorism, and it is defined Criminal terrorism the type of acts aimed at criminal profit. But most importantly, a clear distinction should be made between the two most common types: Religious and Political[5].

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[4] Kearns, E. M., Betus, A. E., & Lemieux, A. F. (2019). *"Why do some terrorist attacks receive more media attention than others?"*, Justice Quarterly, 1-24.

[5] https://ekuonline.eku.edu/homeland-security/definition-history-and-types-terrorism

The main difference, as among the other typologies, lies in the objectives and the ideas that trigger the action. Religious terrorism is based on spiritual beliefs and on the thought that the "real" truth, possessed by one's own religion, should be spread and revealed to every other man by forcefully converting them. The Jihad, for example, is the holy commitment for Muslims, and it implies constant improvement of faith, for one's self and for the others[6]. When this will of transmitting doctrine is filled with violence and threat, it turns into Religious terrorism.

Differently, Political terrorism is founded, as the name suggests, on ideas related to the political sphere. More often than not, the political parties appear to be the true perpetrators of attacks that have as main objective the undermining of the government and its organs. In these cases, violence is used to threaten people in power, to take command of power positions and use it for personal purposes. As stated previously, this kind of dynamics characterized the Italian political framework of the second post-war, notably, the never-ending struggle between left and right parties to dominate the political environment, forming violent groups and attempting to gain power by scaring and eliminating their opponents.

This dissertation is now going to analyse terrorism from a sociological perspective, attempting to understand how it develops as a social phenomenon and which are the elements that constitute its social dimension. This will be done through theories belonging to the field of sociology of deviance. Indeed, in the next paragraph, the major views on the theme of deviance will be discussed with the purpose of being applied to the interpretation of terrorism.

1.2 What is deviance: sociological theories

Deviance, according to sociology, is a term that describes behaviours that violate cultural norms and social expectations. However, a distinction should be done between violations of formal laws, which constitute formal acts of deviance (or criminality), and infractions of uncodified social rules, that are instead called informal deviance.

Moreover, Edwin Lemert also recognizes a basic variation between primary and secondary deviance: an act is to be considered of primary deviance when the reaction to it remains restricted within a limited number of entities and its effects are primarily on the main actor,

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[6] Corrao, F., (2015), *"Islam, religione e politica"*, Rome, Luiss University Press

whereas a repeated behaviour, usually brought on by the reactions of society to the primary deviant act, becomes of secondary deviance[7].

Sociological theories seek to explain deviance searching for reasons, meanings and inner mechanisms. The first currents of thought born in the field of criminology affirmed that deviance would be connected to biology, in particular to specific physical characteristics. This was, as a matter of fact, the basic assumption of Cesare Lombroso's work. He was convinced that criminal traits are genetically inherited and that they are externally shown through atavism[8]. In spite of being among the first theories about criminal anthropology, the belief that physical traits influence the conduct of an individual has been widely discredited over time, giving way to theories based mostly on the analysis of social dynamics.

Structural Functionalism is built on the inference that deviance would be the result of anomie, a social crisis of values in which standards of what is acceptable and what is not become blurred and people misuse their freedom of choice. Indeed, the objective of functionalism is, as the name suggests, to identify the functions that a certain phenomenon has within society. Émile Durkheim, a well-known sociologist following this stream of theories, stated that there are three main positive aspects of the presence of deviance, namely:
- Affirmation of cultural norms and values, through the punishment of deviant acts that reinforces the importance of rules.
- Social unification against what is perceived as wrong.
- Social change, as behaviours that are deemed deviant in a certain historical time can be reconsidered as part of the regular social framework over time (e.g. homosexuality, gradually seen as less of a disorder by society as a whole)[9].

So, deviance is not just "bad behaviours", but also an important element of social cohesion.

Stemming from society's perception is the Labeling theory, that views as fundamental the consideration that society has of individuals; their role in the community and the labels attached to them. George Herbert Mead grasps how one's self is socially constructed and

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[7] Lemert, E., (1967), "*Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control"*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

[8] Atavism: a modification of a biological structure whereby an ancestral trait reappears after having been lost through evolutionary change in previous generations.

[9] Durkheim, E., (1897). "*Le Suicide: étude de sociologie"*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France

sensitive to the others' judgement[10], while Howard Becker develops the idea that any behaviour cannot be deviant until it is labelled so, placing a stigma on it and its actors, turning it into something that is no more socially acceptable[11].

In the same way, social influence is also dealt with by Symbolic Interactionism. The social group an individual identifies into, as well as the kind of people they are surrounded by, has a remarkably high influence on their behaviour and their view of right and wrong. Notably, the theory of Differential Association by Edwin Sutherland explains how a subject would be more prone to choose the criminal path if the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding, that is to say if they have more deviant inputs from their surroundings rather than regular ones. To clarify how this is likely to happen, he pinpoints nine key elements:

- "Criminal behaviour is learned from other individuals.
- Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
- The principle part of the learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups.
- When criminal behaviour is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
- The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favourable or unfavourable.
- A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of the law.
- Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
- The process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
- While criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values"[12].

[10] Mead, G. H., (1934), *"Mind, Self, and Society"*, Chicago; University of Chicago Press
[11] Becker, H., (1973), "*Outsiders",* New York; Free Press
[12] Sutherland, H. E., (1924) "*Principles of Criminology*", Philadelphia

Conflict theory, on its hand, identifies the social trigger of deviance in social inequalities. Dating back to Marx, this theory is centred on how classism, and therefore capitalism, creates disparities among people belonging to different social groups, resulting in distinct treatment and social reactions. Moreover, social inequalities lay the foundations for the development of different kinds of criminality, mainly the struggle upon resources (that also influences the type of crime committed).
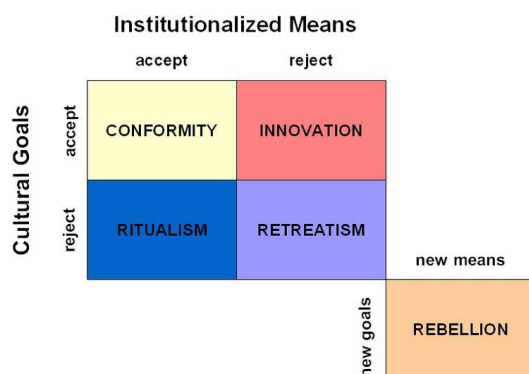
Finally, inequalities in power distribution are the basis for the legal and social reactions to the various kinds of criminal activities.

The most common example is related to white-collar crimes, that are deviant acts committed by wealthy members of society involving money, like fraud, embezzlement, insider stock trading and the breakage of regulatory laws. The main point is that the working class has no power on laws and regulations, resulting in a total control by the capitalist class which is far less likely to be convicted for its felonies.

Robert King Merton, an American sociologist studying deviance in the 20th century, proposed the Social Strain Typology, establishing a connection between adherence to cultural goals and belief in how to attain them. As a result, five principal attitudes have been observed:

- Conformity: acceptance of goals and institutionalized means to achieve them
- Innovation: acceptance of goals but rejection of institutionalized means
- Ritualism: rejection of goals but acceptance of means as routine
- Retreatism: rejection of both; complete lack of interest
- Rebellion: rejection of both and replacement with own goals and means, outside of social approval

Robert K. Merton's Deviance Typology

	Institutionalized Means	
	accept	reject
Cultural Goals — accept	CONFORMITY	INNOVATION
Cultural Goals — reject	RITUALISM	RETREATISM
new goals		REBELLION (new means)

[13]

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[13] Merton, K. R., (1949), "*Social Theory and Social Structure*", New York; Free Press

In this way, he gives a portrait of the major groups in which a community can be divided, explaining how the distinction is affected by life objectives and perception of the means given to reach them.

One last point worth making concerns the so-called Control theory that relies on the belief that strong enough social bonds are what constitutes the primary deterrent to deviance. Particularly, Travis Hirschi stated that conformity comes from elements such as attachment (relationships), commitment (to legitimate goals), involvement (in regular activities) and belief (in moral values), that constitute control over one's actions[14]. In fact, Walter Reckless corroborated this view, adding a fundamental distinction between inner and outer control, exercised respectively by morality and social influence[15].

All the theories mentioned above make a basic but paramount assumption; that those individuals who behave as deviant are mainly characterized by different living conditions, cultural norms and reactions to standard social rules. This appears to be the essential premise to the notion of deviant subculture; a group of people living differently from the majority, that constitutes the dominant culture, which determines what is socially accepted and what is labelled as deviant. This last point is particularly relevant in that the concept of deviant subculture appears to be at the core of any explanation of deviant behaviour and allows to interpret the concept of radicalization in light of differential socialization (societies' expectations as to how different people should behave, and employment of multiple aspects of social living to ensure that those expectations will be met)[16], allowing a deeper and more complete understanding of the issue.

1.3 Terrorism as deviance

In spite of the lack of a universal definition, terrorism can be described as a social phenomenon through the notion of deviant behaviour. In fact, elements like ideology, social influence and interpersonal dynamics can be factors explaining the mechanisms governing a person's decision to become a terrorist.

It is important to note that different currents of thought exist regarding paths of transition to terrorism, but a generally agreed notion concerns the idea that these can be understood as processes of socialization to radicalism. As a consequence, the relevance of the concept

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[14] Hirschi, T., (1969) *"Causes of Delinquency",* Berkeley: University of California Press
[15] Reckless, W. C., (1955) "*The Crime Problem*", New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts
[16] Airth, M., (2016) "*Differential Socialization: Definition, Theory & Examples"*

of radicalization has emerged in literature on terrorism. Defined as the adoption of increasingly extreme ideals and aspirations that reject the status quo, radicalization is the process that turns an idea into a lifetime objective to be reached and spread at any condition.

Dr. John G. Horgan, a political psychologist, classifies radicalization as composed by two phases: the first one is a cognitive radicalization, which is about the formation of ideas at odds with the socially accepted patterns and the refusal of the existing system of legitimacy, while the second one (violent radicalization) takes a step further by involving the use of violence to attain the goals set by those ideas.

Also based on ideology are the main points of a terrorist's radical mental universe recognized by the Italian sociologist Alessandro Orsini[17]:

· Radical catastrophism (the World is made of pain and misery – the phase in which the terrorist sees reality as full of problems that need radical solutions)

· Identification of evil (all those problems are the consequence of the actions of a certain category of people, targeted by the terrorist)

· Obsession with purification and purity (the terrorist's mantra: "I am pure and have to clean the World from corruption")

· Desire to be persecuted (sacrifice is the only way to spiritual excellence; if the terrorist gives their life for the World, their soul will be welcomed by God)

· Purification of the means through the end (murder is justified for a greater good)

He underlines how the Idea is the main drive pushing a terrorist's actions and his moral detachment from society.

The moment in which an individual gets in contact with the deviant ideology and internalizes it, making it their own, appears to be of utmost importance for the sociologists who pursue this line of thought (that is, focused on ideas). It is portrayed as a process of both self-identification and external indoctrination, facilitated by groups and people who already form part of the terrorist subculture[18].

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[17] Orsini, A., (2016), "*La radicalisation des terroristes de vocation",* Commentaire, numéro 156(4), 783-790

[18] Silber, M.D., & Bhatt, A.M., (2007), *"Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat: The NYPD Jihadist Report",* OccupyBawlStreet.com Press

As mentioned, not every sociologist studying the phenomenon of terrorism accepts ideology as an explanation. Indeed, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko did focus their research on society and how social interactions and life experiences can shape a person's attitude towards radicalization, making them more or less prone to develop a terroristic behaviour.

For what concerns individuals, they pointed out six experiences that could be regarded as triggers of a deviant behaviour, leading to terrorism:

- Personal grievance, to be interpreted as a revenge for social injustice. The subject of an unjust event wants to take action against what (or who) produced and allowed it.
- Group grievance, as fighting for injustice suffered by a group of people that the subject supports but does not belong to.
- Slippery slope: the action of a group not originally based on violence that becomes unintentionally violent due to changing circumstances and the presence of subjects that foster the use of violence.
- Love for a partner, that may change one's perception of reality.
- Love for risk and social prestige, that brings people to take action just for the sake of being recognized or becoming popular.
- Unfreezing: anyone that comes out of an extreme life experience (such as losing jobs, families or social networks), in search for a new point of reference, could become a victim of terrorist groups that offer new certainties and clear values, giving something to hold onto.

They also stress the fact that these mechanisms alone cannot explain the birth of a terrorist identity but combined among them and integrated with extremist ideas can surely contribute to define what is the development of such deviant attitudes.

For what concerns groups, McCauley and Moskalenko have described some features that could lead a closed community to terrorism. Inner polarization is one of them, which is based on the phenomenon of radicalization through discussion, that parts the group into separate factions. Moreover, competition with other groups can be a crucial determinant, in that it fosters the "us-versus-them" mentality, focusing the group towards the fight of the common enemy. Lastly, isolation from society has been identified as of a great influence, as it allows group leaders to set their personal values and principles within the community without being affected or criticized by the rest of society which is external to

the group. In this way, radical ideology can be conveyed and easily "normalized", getting deep into the mentality of the members of the group who absorb it and turn it into their objective[19].

To conclude, terrorism can be certainly seen as a form of social deviance, as it represents a detachment from commonly accepted moral and cultural values, replacing them with new and extreme ones, pursued even at the expenses of life itself. But at the same time, it is not an antisocial behaviour, as links with other people and the belonging to a group are fundamental elements in order for terrorists to feel legitimized in what they do and in the means they use to achieve goals.

1.4 The social representation of terrorism

Having defined the concept of terrorism ascribing it in a sociological framework, this dissertation is now going to briefly examine its representation through media and its impact on society. Terrorist attacks often appear in media as soon as they occur, thanks to the modern means of communication. However, even in less recent times, television and newspapers used to bring the horror of terrorism into the houses of people, telling about places, times and victims. The dramatic portrayal, according to a study conducted by Anat Shoshani and Michelle Slone[20], causes a series of emotive reactions, shocking, stunning and distressing the public. The "theatre of terror", as it is called, aims at the global stage to reach the masses and expose the criminal event. The study suggests that this mechanism not only favours the primary scope of terrorists, which is the one of threatening as many people as possible with a single attack, but also is likely to provoke a number of psychological conditions in the audience. In particular, it is pointed out how depression or the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) might be consequences of the exposure to abhorrent and crude scenes, coming from media portrayal of overwhelming displays.

If the eventuality of developing such a condition appears relatively low in percentage compared to the quantity of people that are presented with the news, it is interesting to investigate the processes that take unconsciously place in the audience after a report about terrorism.

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[19] McCauley, C., & Moskalenko, S., (2016), *"Friction: How Conflict Radicalizes Them and Us",* Oxford University Press

[20] Shoshani, A. & Slone, M., (2008),"The Drama of Media Coverage of Terrorism:Emotional and Attitudinal Impact on the Audience, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism", Tel Aviv University, 627-640

There are two main mental systems that are used to process information: one is called probabilistic reasoning ability or *risk as analysis* and it is centred on an objective evaluation based on statistics, rationality and reasoned decision-making. The other system, that is subjective evaluation or *risk as feeling*, lays on emotive reactions, intuitive thinking, experience and interpretations. Logic, reason and rational judgements are counterweighted by fast associative processes guided by heuristics and affective bias[21]. A correlation has been found[22] between these two mechanisms and the attitude towards the events reported in the news. Namely, probabilistic reasoning has been deemed relevant in people's perception of risk because of the concrete nature of that type of thinking process, while subjective evaluation has been blamed for the behavioural changes in attitude that often follow, which may include changes in habits as well as radical transformations of the routine (e.g. the massive quantity of people that started travelling by car rather than plane following the 9/11 attack, which resulted in a substantial increase in car accidents, mostly in the United States, even though the risks of driving are statistically higher than those of flying).

Some studies[23] identify the bias in people's perception to be in their expectations. When given the news, people start making a number of assumptions about the event, based on their personal expectations and beliefs, regardless of the real circumstances. The stereotypes that form part of everyone's cultural background have a major impact in this phase, in shaping and directing one's thoughts, often bringing them far from the real situation. A case in point is embodied by the frequent connection between the concepts of terrorism and Muslim fundamentalism. In fact, demographic traits are among the characteristics that appear more likely to be assigned following stereotypical convictions.

Another important mechanism that is worth mentioning stems from the Social Identity Theory (SIT), and is based on the distinction between social groups, in particular the "in-group" and the "out-group". The theory explains how the in-group, which the subject belongs to, and its characteristics, are used as a frame of reference to formulate judgements and opinions about the out-group, which is formed by that part of society that is seen as not sharing any similarity with the subject. This perceived cultural distance leads to the

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[21] Tversky and Kahneman, 1973
[22] Denovan, A., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., Parker, A., & Clough, P., (2017), "Perception of Risk and Terrorism-Related Behaviour Change: Dual Influences of Probabilistic Reasoning and Reality Testing", Frontiers in psychology, 8, 1721
[23] D'Orazio and Salehyan (2016); Huff and Kertzer (2018)

attribution of negative features to the members of the out-group, accentuating its contrast with the in-group, whose bad aspects are often forgiven or attributed to atypical situational factors. These dynamics create in-group love and empathy, juxtaposed to out-group animosity and hostility, which become relevant when the assumption is formulated that perpetrators of terrorist attacks would be making part of the out-group.

A study conducted by Nazli Avdan and Clayton Webb[24] uses this theory as a basis to investigate what kinds of variable influence the audience's reaction to terrorism accounts. The experimentation reveals the decisive factors to be physical and personal proximity. Physical proximity is referred to concrete distances between the subject and the attack, and reports that closeness is linked to greater familiarity, sense of vulnerability and the "if it can happen there, it can happen here" kind of mentality, that makes it positively related to the perception of threat. In the same way, also personal proximity plays a fundamental role in risk perception, but it is more abstract as a variable. In fact, stemming directly from the above-mentioned SIT, it highlights how the distance from the event can be perceived also in emotional and psychological terms. Characteristics of victims and actors, such as religion or race, are crucial determinants both of the affinity felt by the public and of the strategy and means used by media to portray the cases.

Media have certainly a strong impact on society, acting like a filter between people and reality and affecting how the outside world is known and perceived. This paper has the task to analyse their representation of terrorism, in order to point out the schemes and approaches employed, and to formulate hypothesis about the reasons behind these particular choices.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research question

Taking into account the given explanation of the concept of terrorism in the sociological framework of deviance, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate its portrayal in what is known, in the sphere of sociology, as *discourse* (or *narrative*).

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[24] Avdan, N., & Webb, C., (2019), "Not in My Back Yard: Public Perceptions and Terrorism", Political Research Quarterly, 72(1), 90–103.

Discourse refers to how objects, actions, and events are illustrated and represented in statements, assumptions, concepts and shared beliefs. The easiest way to think of the concept of *discourse* is that it provides a frame through which we see reality[25].

For the sake of its objective, this thesis is going to be centred on the analysis of said discourses, taking as a source articles of an Italian newspaper and confronting words, terms and expressions used at different points in time, describing different types of terroristic attacks. The point is to discover how those words are modified, shaped and varied through time, how they are used to convey different meanings, to arouse certain emotions in the reader and to influence public opinion.

To investigate this query, a number of cases have been selected, together with an Italian periodical, "Il Corriere della Sera"[26], from which the single articles have been analysed.

So, the founding question that fuels this research would be: how does discourse in "Il Corriere della Sera" change through the period of time between 1969 and 2017 for what concerns the depiction of events related to terrorism?

2.2 Sources and data selection

The process of selection of the articles, whose discourses have been analysed, has required a deep research, as it was necessary to find articles dated back to the late 20th century. In fact, one of the main objectives of this dissertation is to study and compare said discourses from different points in time. For the sake of this aim, some cases have been preferred, mainly on the basis of the consideration of factors like media exposure, social impact and historical relevance.

The result of this process has left with five events to be analysed:

· Piazza Fontana in Milan, Italy 12/12/1969
· Bologna's Station, Italy 08/02/1980
· New York, Washington and Arlington, USA 09/11/2001
· Paris, France 11/13/2015
· Barcelona, Spain 08/17/2017

In particular, Piazza Fontana is known to be the first attack of a period called "the Years of Lead", marked by a series of events related to terrorism with political aims.

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[25] Braham, P., (2013), *"Key Concepts in Sociology"*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC; Sage Publications.
[26] For the criterion of election see chapter 2.2 on Sources and data selection

Together with that occurrence, another tragedy that became sorrowfully famous is the one that, in a sense, closed the Years of Lead, and which is remembered as the most serious assault attributable to terrorism during the second post-war: the massacre of Bologna.

The American case taken under inspection is probably one of the most well-known examples of terrorism, and the reason for its selection is that it represents an important milestone; an historical turning point as relevant as the two World Wars, both for the number of its casualties and its coverage by all means of media diffusion.

Last but not least, the cases of Paris and Barcelona are emblematic of the more recent terroristic activity in Europe, which has been at the centre of the news for several years between 2014 and 2018. In these cases, the type of terrorism has a religious connotation, making it quite different from the Italian one.[27]

However, in the next chapter, each of these events will be closely presented and examined to provide the analysis with a more complete contextual framework.

To investigate these events, "Il Corriere della Sera"[28] has been chosen, taking under scrutiny the articles that could best give an answer to the research question. It is one of the major Italian newspapers, founded in Milan in 1876 by Eugenio Torelli Viollier. It has been picked for this research mostly because of the wide dimension of its available archive, which permitted to access every piece of material needed, and also because of its tendency to be politically neutral. Moreover, its relevance in the Italian socio-cultural landscape made it a reliable and valuable source of information.

The choice of a single periodical does not want to generalize over other Italian newspapers. On the contrary, it has been deemed necessary, as the purpose of the research is not to confront different articles on the same topic, but rather to see how the same source changes its reports through time.

The source material for this discourse analysis will thus be a number of newspaper articles, written in Italian by an Italian journal, covering the mentioned events and presenting them to the public through pieces of written text and images. For this research 80 articles have been analysed, for a total of 46 pages of 5 different newspapers.

Namely the analysis includes:

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[27] For the distinction between political and religious terrorism see chapter 1.1 on What is terrorism: definition and evolution of the phenomenon

[28] https://www.corriere.it/

- 18 articles for case 1 – Piazza Fontana
- 10 articles for case 2 – Bologna's station
- 28 articles for case 3 – 9/11
- 13 articles for case 4 – Paris 2015
- 11 articles for case 5 – Barcelona 2017

Tables concerning the articles[29] can be found in *Appendix 1*.

For the sake of completeness, the original text in Italian will be reported in *italics* and the images will be collected in *Appendix 2* and referred to as (*figure x*).

2.3 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a qualitative method of examination, applied to the study of written and verbal language destined to a communicative end. Its bases are to be found in the disciplines of linguistics and sociology but, as interdisciplinary as it is, also in psychology, anthropology and philosophy. The objective of this kind of inquiry is to uncover the layers of meaning underlying a certain discourse, added by social and cultural variables.

Differently from grammar analysis, which is focused on the structure of the sentences and their logical consequence, discourse analysis is centred on the broader function of language to convey a certain message, and its use among people.

A definition originating from the field of sociology describes discourse analysis as "examining the way knowledge is produced within different discourses, and the performances, linguistic styles and rhetorical devices used in particular accounts"[30]

A piece of discourse can be anything between a one-word sentence and a full novel.

The study of discourse is about "real language use, by real speakers, in real situations"[31], that means context is a crucial element in all the aspects of the analysis. Together with the background information, also the added elements like images, sounds or symbols are of utmost importance in detecting the nuances of meaning of a discourse. Indeed, those devices are frequently used to convey specific ideas or to give strength to a certain thesis. The in-depth analysis of discourse shows how language fills the gap between single persons and the social world surrounding them, building bridges of shared ideas and knowledge.

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[29] Last consulted in April 2020
[30] Snape, D. & Spencer, L. (2003) *"The Foundations of Qualitative Research"*
[31] Van Dijk, T. A., (1983), *"Introduction: The Role of Discourse Analysis in Society"*

Different kind of views about discourse produce different types of conceptions for what concerns its functions:

- · Mental model: discourse is viewed as representing people's personal knowledge and understanding of reality[32]
- · Frame model: discourse describes people's behaviours and influences how they are perceived[33]
- · Script model: discourse portrays how certain situations develop and the many different scenarios that can be created from them[34]
- · Situational model: discourse appears as the combination of social context and personal knowledge, where the framework in which it is placed heavily influences the interpretation[35]

The model taken as reference guides the way the analysis is conducted, shaping the point of view and the further considerations about the discourse.

This dissertation is going to be based on a Frame type of assumption, without neglecting the necessary role of historical background and context.

When investigating discourse, the points to focus on should be: purposes and effects of language, cultural rules and conventions, context, values, beliefs and assumptions.

There are specific elements which shall be taken into consideration, namely:

- · Vocabulary – words and phrases, figures of speech
- · Grammar – use of nouns, adjectives, verb tenses etc.
- · Structure – construction of sentences
- · Genre – aim of the piece of discourse
- · Non-verbal communication – (only for verbal discourse) tone of voice, gestures etc.
- · Conversational codes – (only for verbal discourse) interactions between people[36]

Starting from these features, the objective of the analysis would be to develop an interpretation of said discourse, and to produce a dissertation aimed at a better comprehension of the texts taken under scrutiny.

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[32] Johnson-Laird, (2001), *"Mental models and deduction",* Trends in cognitive sciences

[33] Minsky, M., (1969), *"Semantic information processing",* MIT Press

[34] Schank, R. C., Abelson, R. P., (1977), *"Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: an inquiry into human knowledge structures"*, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

[35] Van Dijk, T. A., (2009), *"Society and discourse: how social contexts influence text and talk"*, New York, Cambridge University Press

[36] Luo, A., https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/discourse-analysis/

The approach to the inquiry should be interdisciplinary and adductive, in a constant shift between theory and empirical observations. Context and theories can be used as a foundation but suppositions, inferences and assumptions are the fuel that boosts the research and allows a deeper examination of the discourse.

This essay is particularly focused on the analysis of written discourse, namely newspaper articles. According to Terry Locke, a text can be studied in the following ways:

· Prosody: the study of the system underlying the metrical structure

· Contextualization signals: reinforcing a concept with the reiteration of certain words/phrases

· Cohesion: establishment of coordination and subordination relationships between sentences through the use of conjunctions

· Discourse organization: analysis of the discourse's division into paragraphs and chapters[37]

The kind of text, the content, the plot and the message are essential elements of the analysis.

This attitude, employed towards a written text, undergoes a number of adjustments in relation to the piece of discourse taken under inspection. The inquiry on a conversation, a lecture or an oral presentation would thus be marked by different features and points of focus.

This essay, in particular, uses discourse analysis as a method to explore and confront the discourses on terrorism developed in the Italian context in relation to different terrorist attack. Beyond seeking to understand how the different events are framed – which words, metaphors are used to tell facts -, the dissertation aims at considering similarities and differences between the words through which different case of terrorism are told.

3. Telling terrorism "the day after"

3.1 Years of Lead

The period of Italian history known as Years of Lead (*Anni di Piombo*) covers approximately the span of time between the end of the sixties and the beginning of the eighties. Even though there exist different lines of thought about the precise limits of this time frame, the majority agrees the starting point to be the massacre of Piazza Fontana, in

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[37] Locke, T., (2004), "*Critical discourse analysis*", London, Cromwell Press

1969. Those years were characterized by a series of terrorist attacks of political origin, perpetrated by groups belonging to both the extreme right faction, also called neo-fascist, and the radical left one. In the Italian tradition, colours are used to refer to the perpetrators of these political terroristic attacks, in order to discriminate as soon as possible between left and right, respectively talking about red and black terrorism. Some of the most relevant and active groups were *Brigate Rosse* and *Prima Linea* for the left, and *Ordine Nuovo*, *Avanguardia Nazionale* and *NAR* for the right. This continuous exchange of provocative actions, in response to one another, has been defined as the Strategy of Tension (*Strategia della Tensione*), and was aimed at destabilizing the existing political equilibria by terrorizing the population and thus triggering the request for more rigid and authoritative measures. The label "strategy of tension" was first employed by Leslie Finer in the magazine "The Observer", in 1969, to describe a situation in Italy where the State, the Secret Services and some extremist political groups were all involved in a system of social actions with the goal of establishing a new and authoritative political order, with more or less relevant roles, such that some sources also talk about organized State terrorism. The terrorism of the Years of Lead, from December 1969 to August 1980, has made about 400 victims, from both public massacres and specific individual targets. In fact, the plans of action of single groups were different: the neo-fascist movements' strategy was to make mass murders and use bombs, while the far-left groups used to target specific people and kidnap them with the intention to kill them. An example of this last point is the kidnapping of the president of the Christian Democratic party, Aldo Moro, by the *Brigate Rosse* in 1968. For the sake of analysing the events that opened and closed the historical period, this dissertation in going to take under scrutiny two attacks of far-right terrorism.

3.1.1 Piazza Fontana (1969)

EVENTS

The event that marked the beginning of the Years of Lead dates back to the 12th of December 1969, and took place in Piazza Fontana, in the city of Milan, more precisely into the National Bank of Agriculture (*Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura*). A bomb had been placed into the bank, and exploded that day at around 4.30 p.m., killing 17 people and hurting other 88.

The inquiry about the case was long and complex, and often misdirected by false beliefs and public opinion. In fact, the first lead of the investigation was based on anarchical suspects. Along with this assumption, a huge number of members of anarchic groups were

arrested and questioned. After extremely long trials that took almost 36 years, the Court of Cassation established, in 2005, that the perpetrators belonged to a neofascist group called *Ordine Nuovo*, but they could not be prosecuted due to a previous definitive acquittal (in an appeal of 1987).

ANALYSIS

The case has been dealt with widely in the newspaper published on the 13th of December of 1969, the day after the attack. The title in the first page is "Hideous massacre in Milan" ("*Orrenda strage a Milano*"), so it starts with a strong adjective, followed by the number of deaths and injuries in the subtitle. The image of the destroyed bank (*figure 1 and 2*) is accompanied by a tale of the facts, narrating how a scary explosion mowed down those present (*spaventosa deflagrazione ha falciato i presenti*).

The article develops with a strong moral character, claiming that the event has brought the total dissolution of the principles of coexistence (*totale dissoluzione dei princìpi di convivenza*), making it a wild and criminal challenge against the values of tolerance, mutual respect and civilization (*sfida selvaggia e criminale contro i valori di tolleranza, mutuo rispetto, […] civiltà*). A powerful sentence states that the seed of violence has given its poisonous fruits (*il seme della violenza ha dato i suoi frutti avvelenati*), giving a strong ethical judgement. The highlight is put onto the concept of democracy, underlining how freedom can only be generated by freedom itself (*occorre salvare la libertà con la libertà*). The writer of the article recognizes the role of the government and how complex it appears, in light of this event, to stamp out the spiral of crime (*stroncare la criminosa spirale*), punishing violence in order to safeguard the democratic tissue of the country.

> *La violenza non può restare impunita se non si vuole che si dissolva il tessuto democratico del Paese.*

The act is compared to the Diana massacre, happened back in 1921 in Milan, when a similar explosion killed about twenty people in a theatre, to stress the fact that the only possible analogy is with a case belonging to the first post-war due to the extreme amount of violence involved.

The perpetrators are described as monsters with clearheaded homicidal awareness, willing to upset the values of social life, to plunge the country into chaos and to hit the system to death.

> *Lucida consapevolezza omicida, volontà di sconvolgere le tavole*
>
> *di valori della nostra vita associata, di precipitare il paese nel*
>
> *caos, di colpire a morte [...] il Sistema.*

The words used to refer to the actors of the massacre are angry and full of hatred. There is no pity for those irrational extremists, followers of violence for the sake of violence and of oppression for the sake of oppression.

> *Estremisti irrazionali [...] seguaci della violenza per la violenza,*
>
> *teorici della sopraffazione per la sopraffazione.*

In the words of the journalist, the terrorists' fury is wild (*furia selvaggia*), their determination is cold (*fredda determinazione*) and their cruelty is ruthless (*crudeltà spietata*). They are called "men" just because of their anthropometric features, but any characteristic is dehumanized.

> *Un uomo – almeno una creatura che ha le caratteristiche*
>
> *antropometriche di tutti noi – [...] se vogliamo chiamarlo così.*

The largest space is reserved to the victims. The article deals at length with the social status and hypothetical feelings of the people that got killed or injured by the attack. The lower middle class of farmers they belonged to and the specific time of the day (4:37 p.m.), when they usually deposited or collected their savings at the end of the week, are reported as symbols of a dimension of ordered and stable values that the perpetrators wanted to hurt and overthrow.

> *La scelta dell'ora: l'ora di maggiore affollamento dei correntisti,*
>
> *piccola e media borghesia, ceto minuto di agricoltori che a fine*
>
> *settimana consegnano i loro risparmi o ritirano i loro depositi,*
>
> *espressione di un mondo di valori ordinati e stabili che si vuole*
>
> *ferire e rovesciare*

The writer underlines how a normal afternoon has been transformed into a hell, marked by death, blood, grief, yelling and delirium, while the bodies of the victims were torn apart, mangled and made unrecognizable by the blaze of fire.

> *Un inferno [...] un pomeriggio di morte, di sangue, di lutto [...]*
>
> *urlanti nel delirio [...] I corpi delle vittime sono stati dilaniati,*
>
> *maciullati, resi irriconoscibili dalla vampata di fuoco*

The article also tells about a map that was found in the hands of a victim, indicating how to grow asparagus. This, together with a picture of how happy everybody must have been before the explosion, conducting their lives in peace and making projects for the future,

contributes to infuse a sense of guilt in the readers, making them feel sorrow for the loss and anger for an action at least obnoxious.

> *In mano a uno dei morti hanno trovato un biglietto con una pianta disegnata su dove seminare gli asparagi [...] erano contenti, ieri, gli impiegati della banca, contenti come i loro client con i quali il soffio mortale li ha travolti [...] non hanno fatto in tempo [...] più odioso attentato della recente storia*

A column entitled "Anguished appeals" ("*Appelli angosciosi*") is particularly vivid and crude in its descriptions and represents without censures the consequences of the attack, giving details on the condition of the victims and the building: the hall is devastated, blinded by a cloud of smoke, of dust, of collapsing rubble, it was a bedlam of screaming, yelling, despair, panic and cries. Everything was down to pieces, crumbled, shattered, twisted, wrecked. Bursts of splinters had run over and hit employees and clients. A boy was crying, his face had been blood-stained by a whip of splinters. And in the middle, horrifying, the bright red of blood. Huge stains, spots, stripes. Mauled corps.

> *Nella rotonda sconvolta, accecata da una nube di fumo, di polvere, di calcinacci che crollavano, era una bolgia di urla, di grida, di disperazione, di panico, di lamenti. Tutto era in pezzi, sgretolato, frantumato, contorto, sfasciato. Raffiche di schegge avevano investito e colpito [...] impiegati e clienti. Un bambino piangeva, il volto insanguinato sotto la frustata di una sventagliata di schegge. E in mezzo a tutto, impressionante, il rosso vivo del sangue. Chiazze enormi, macchie strisce. Corpi dilaniati.*

The writers that contributed to the production of the columns that fill the first three pages of the newspaper of the 13th of December 1969 offer a full picture of the event, with large emotional participation and detailed descriptions, with the supposed aim of involving the readers in the story and condemning the terroristic act, making the position of the newspaper on the issue clear.

3.1.2 Bologna's Station (1980)

EVENTS

The massacre of Bologna's station happened on the 2nd of August of 1980. It may be considered as the last attack of the Years of Lead, closing that obscure historical period for Italy. 85 people got killed by a timed bomb located in a suitcase in the waiting area of the station. The west wing of the building collapsed, together with the parking lot dedicated to taxis and a train got run over by the explosion that also injured 200 people.

The Government, together with the Police, firstly thought that some old boiler was to be blamed for the explosion, but as soon as witnesses were heard and the place was carefully observed, it became clear that the detonation was caused by a device, deliberately set to damage the structure and kill people. Even in this case, trials have been really long, the last one ending in February 2020 and finding guilty the members of an extremist right-wing movement called *NAR* (Revolutionary Armed Nuclei).

Still today, the station's clock, broken by the blast at 10.25, is a symbol of that day and a way to commemorate the victims.

ANALYSIS

On the 3rd of August 1980 the first page of the newspaper titles "Apocalypse outbreak in Bologna" ("*Scoppio apocalisse a Bologna*"); a terrifying explosion has blown away the second class waiting room of the Central station (*terrificante esplosione […] la sala d'aspetto di seconda classe salta in aria*). The particular time of the year, characterized by summer holidays, fosters and amplifies the sense of fraud, of being deprived of the conquered vacations (*la villeggiatura è una conquista della cività*). The article describes the event through words that convey a sense of bewilderment: there is a deafening roar, the waiting room and the self-service disintegrate, the tunnel that leads to the train tracks collapses and the blast flings people under the wagons (*figure 3*).

> *Un boato sordo. La sala d'aspetto e il self-service si disintegrano.*
> *Il sottopassaggio che porta agli altri binari sprofonda,*
> *l'esplosione scaraventa la gente […] fin sotto le carrozze*

The atmosphere after the detonation is described as silent and still, full of fear. In a city that is dizzy, anguished and whipped to death (*Bologna frastornata, angosciata, frustata a sangue*), people do not know who or what is to blame for the tragic event. The writer criticizes the government for allowing the creation of extremist violent groups, claiming that unpunished violence has led to deliberately murderous terrorism that has produced an unprecedented massacre.

> *Di violenza impunita in violenza impunita si è arrivati al terrorismo deliberatamente assassino e da questo [...] ad un massacro che non avrebbe precedenti in tempo di pace.*

The critique also involves information, that is deemed vague, unprecise and fragmentary (*le notizie sono vaghe, imprecise, frammentarie*). The article, that also contains interviews of people that were present during the attack, is full of metaphors: the sulphurous smell of a thousand of matches (*forte odore di zolfo, come avessero acceso migliaia di fiammiferi*), a sepulchre (*una stazione che è diventata un sepolcro*), the eruption of a volcano (*scoppio di un vulcano*) and a mushroom of rubble and smoke (*fungo di macerie e fumo ha spaccato in due la sala d'aspetto*).

The attack has initially been claimed by both the *Brigate Rosse* and the *NAR*

> *L'eccidio è stato rivendicato telefonicamente tanto dall'organizzazione neofascista dei Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari, quanto dalle Brigate Rosse*

and the writer makes a consideration on how easy it is to belong to an extremist group and to exploit ideology to commit such monstrous bloodsheds.

> *Le stoffe si lasciano tingere a piacimento, le ideologie si prestano a qualsiasi strumentalizzazione [...] mostruosi spargimenti di sangue*

Terrorists do not want peace; they want war and therefore they shall be prosecuted as war criminals, responding of their material and moral responsibilities in a proportionate way.

> *I terroristi non vogliono la pace. Vogliono la guerra e devono essere trattati da criminali di guerra. [...] dovrebbero rispondere in misura proporzionale alle loro responsabilità materiali e morali.*

The act, is said, has been perpetrated with Luciferian lucidity, provoking the agony of innocent victims and their relatives (*luciferina lucidità [...] strazio di molte decine di innocenti e dei loro congiunti*).

A train had just arrived, and people were leaving for their deserved holidays, when the bomb exploded, making more than 70 victims. The journalist underlines the vulnerability of the people involved by clearly stating their condition of vacationers and in this way introducing an element of unexpectedness. Some of them, says the article, had nothing human left after the blast: a far-fetched show of mangled bodies.

> *Ci sono morti che non hanno più niente di umano [...] spettacolo*
> *inverosimile [...] corpi maciullati*

The station, symbol of freedom, joy and connection, is now a place where you can meet love but also death, that tastes like ambush and gunpowder, and that sends people to a journey of no return.

> *Incontri con l'amore, incontri con la morte [...] ha sapore di*
> *agguato e di tritolo [...] si può anche partire per un viaggio senza*
> *ritorno*

Tourists, normal people, children (*turiste straniere [...] compaesani [...] bambini in sandali e canottiera*). These are the victims of the tragedy. In the silence that follows the explosion, the speaker says "The kid Zanesi Claudio is invited to move to platform 6" as nothing had happened, while a red dressed doll lies among the rubble.

> *"il bambino Zanesi Claudio è invitato a recarsi al binario 6" [...]*
> *c'è anche una bambolina col vestito rosso*

A guy interviewed by the journalist tells: "fifty-seven people, among which six children of a colony, have been crushed, torn apart, reduced to bloody rags without limbs nor head. Human figures appeared, with shredded clothes covered in blood. Someone was running like crazy. Some others lay down on the floor with their eyes wide open. Everything seemed frighteningly motionless. Many bodies had been flung under the wagons. I saw a boy of seven with a splattered leg; I couldn't tell where his face was. People were picked up by the ambulances like bloody sacks."

> *"cinquantasette persone, tra cui sei bambini di una colonia, sono*
> *state schiacciate, dilaniate, ridotte a stracci insanguinati, senza*
> *arti, senza testa. Sono apparse figure umane con gli abiti a*
> *brandelli, coperte di sangue. Qualcuno correva come impazzito.*
> *Altri erano in terra con gli occhi sbarrati. Tutto sembrava*
> *spaventosamente immobile. Molti corpi erano stati scaraventati*
> *sotto le carrozze. Ho visto un bambino sui sette anni con una*
> *gamba spappolata. Non si capiva più dov'era la faccia. I fagotti*
> *insanguinati erano caricati sulle ambulanze"*

The pages of the newspaper narrate the event with particular attention to the context of the case, underlining how the bomb has violently interrupted an absolutely ordinary moment of ordinary people's daily life. This element highlights the nature of the victims, innocent people who found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, contributing to

dehumanize the act, that stands out for its barbarity. Moreover, some detailed descriptions of what the victims were doing in those moments before the outburst have the effect of producing curiosity in the reader who wants to know more about the lives of those people like, as the writer says, in Thornton Wilder's book "The bridge of San Luis Rey"[38], that narrates about a monk who witnesses an accident and starts inquiring into the lives of the victims in search of an answer to their death.

3.2 The terror of 09/11

HISTORY

Globally known as 9/11 or the attack to the Twin Towers, the 11th of September 2001 is a date that became infamous for a terrorist attack that killed approximately 2996 people.
A total of 4 planes flying over the United States were hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists belonging to the group of Al-Qaida, leaded by Osama Bin Laden, who claimed the attacks only in 2004. They declared that the reason behind the attacks was to be researched in the presence of the American army in Saudi Arabia, even after the Gulf War, seen as a threat to the integrity of the Islamic identity and culture. Two of the planes were directed towards Lower Manhattan and crashed against the North and South Towers of the World Trade Centre, which caught fire and collapsed. Another plane impacted with the Pentagon (Defence Department) in Arlington, Virginia, while a fourth one was intended to arrive to Washington DC, but the passengers managed to re-direct it towards a field in Pennsylvania. Those planes had been accurately chosen for the purpose, as they were ready for long journeys and therefore stocked with sufficient fuel.
As a reaction to these disastrous events, the American Government employed some strict measures for what concerned flights and international relations, creating policies aimed at controlling as much of the life of the citizens as possible.

ANALYSIS

Surprise is everything that concerns the incapacity of a government of effectively anticipating it.

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[38] Wilder, T., (1927), "*The bridge of San Luis Rey*", United States, Albert & Charles Boni. (The book tells the story of several interrelated people who die in the collapse of a bridge in Peru, and the events that led up to their being on the bridge. A monk who witnesses the accident starts inquiring into the lives of the victims, seeking some sort of cosmic answer to the reason why each had to die.)

> *La sorpresa è tutto ciò che riguarda l'incapacità stessa di un*
> *governo nell'averla anticipata con efficacia.*

This is just one of the deep and meaningful sentences that constellate the pages of the newspaper of the 12 of September 2001, regarding the attack to the Twin Towers (*figure 4*). The act that shocked and paralyzed America is considered the worst act of war after 1945, deemed as serious and upsetting as Pearl Harbour.

> *Sconvolto e paralizzato […] il più grave atto di Guerra dal 1945*
> *[…] una seconda Pearl Harbour.*

It is not the only historical comparison that the journalist reports; in fact, the series of hijackings is likened to a sequence of attacks to monarchs and heads of government between the end of 1800 and the beginning of the next century by anarchists (*Serie di attentati a teste coronate e capi di Stato tra la fine del 1800 ed i primi del 1900*). One more reference is made to the Berlin Wall, whose destruction had meant belonging to a safer and better World for a lot of people, cancelled by the fire that burnt thousands of unaware lives together with their hopes of peace. The period of prosperity and peace now appears to fade among the bloody dust of the Manhattan Towers (*figure 5*).

> *Il Muro, per fortuna, non c'è più e noi ci sentivamo, fino a ieri, più*
> *sicuri e cittadini di un mondo migliore. Non era così. Il risveglio*
> *è stato bruciante come quelle fiamme che […] avvolgevano*
> *migliaia di vite inconsapevoli. Ora siamo veramente in guerra.*
> *[…] Lungo periodo di prosperità e pace […] che ora sembra*
> *dissolversi fra la polvere, rossa di sangue delle Torri di*
> *Manhattan.*

The whole civilization is under attack, as together with the Towers also collapsed faith, humanity, dignity, cooperation and greatness. The two populous, lively and exaggerated sentries, unique and spectacular symbols of work have been transformed into monstrous clouds of dark smoke and flames, brutally twisting their image and what they represented in the eyes of New York citizens.

> *È tutta la civiltà sotto attacco. […] Con le Torri […] ieri, sono*
> *crollate fiducia, umanità, dignità, cooperazione tra gli uomini,*
> *grandezza. […] sentinelle esagerate, popolate e vive. […] Simbolo*
> *unico e spettacolare […] Mostruose nuvole di fumo scuro.*

The high tongues of fire have spilled darkness into the blue sky, and no one can claim to be immune from this tragedy that is bigger than words can explain.

> *Le altissime lingue di fuoco [...] hanno rovesciato le tenebre nel*
> *cielo azzurro. Nessuno può dirsi immune da questa tragedia,*
> *troppo grande per le parole.*

The airplanes get tangled in the skyscrapers (*si impiglia nei grattacieli*), the explosion crumbles the buildings like huge cookies (*si sbriciolano [...] come fossero colossali biscotti*) and a cloud of rubble and dust falls like snow, enveloping a silent and paralyzed New York.

> *Una nube di [...] detriti avvolge la città [...] polvere che sembra*
> *una specie di neve [...] New York è paralizzata.*

The movie-like terrible atmosphere inspires a comparison with the Armageddon; a Last Judgement made by that ball of fire that kills and destroys without discrimination (*un film orribile [...] Armageddon, il giorno del giudizio biblico [...] palla di fuoco*).

The suspects fall onto the Islamic fundamentalists guided by Bin Laden (*sospettati gli islamici di Bin Laden*) and the writer recognizes how that sophisticated and terrifying plan has been realized by an invisible enemy that not only hit the military heart of America, but also its civil heart, with the aim to shock mass media, terrorize people and humiliate the nation.

> *Terrificante e sofisticato piano terroristico [...] il nemico è*
> *invisibile [...] non ha colpito solo il cuore militare dell'America*
> *[...] ma anche il cuore civile. [...] Stupire i mass media,*
> *terrorizzare il pubblico e umiliare il nemico: l'America.*

The article also reports a speech of the President Bush, calling the perpetrators cowards without fait (*codardi senza fede*), underlining how America will not stay indifferent to their horrendous action (*non la farete franca*).

The Americans wake up on the 11th of September and for 60 seconds, it is still a morning like any other (*Gli americani si svegliano, e l'11 settembre è ancora una mattina qualunque, ancora per 60 secondi*). But nobody is safe; neither the ones that got on the planes nor the people who went working at the World Trade Centre or the Pentagon (*nessuno è sicuro*). The journalist wonders, maybe someone was there, right behind the glass of the window, and saw the metallic snout of death coming onto him.

> *Chissà se qualcuno era là dietro i vetri, e ha visto il muso metallico*
> *della morte arrivargli addosso.*

Thousands of employees have met their death in a tragic, sudden, violent and absurd way. Trapped in an imploding building, some people caught fire and had no choice but to dive into the void; poor bodies that fell together with the rubble. A famous picture called "The Flying man" (*figure 6*) shows one of the many victims of the attack falling from the Tower.

> *Decine di migliaia di impiegati […] tragico incontro con una morte così repentina, violenta, assurda. […] persone intrappolate […] in fiamme […]si lanciano nel vuoto […] poveri corpi che precipitavano insieme ai detriti.*

The lives of those people have been shredded, reduced to a pile of ash by other people, transformed into human bullets by the hijackers (*tante vite ridotte a brandelli e cenere […] trasformati in proiettili umani*).

The writer grasps the fear in the American population, also spread across the rest of the World, by recognizing the feelings of concern and impotence everybody will experience every time they see a plane low-flying (*d'ora in poi ci sentiremo […] inquieti e impotenti ogni volta che vedremo volare un aereo a bassa quota*).

But the victims were not only the people in the Towers; Manhattan is always crowded, and a flood of people started running like crazy without control, trying to escape the hell that was becoming that area of New York.

> *Tutti insieme, come impazziti, abbiamo cominciato a correre. […] scappare via […] marea di gente senza controllo.*

The fear of being hit by the debris, of being suffocated by the dust, of remaining trapped, has prompted the runaway; that huge tide of sore and scared people that also ran over a baby.

> *Paura di essere colpiti dai detriti, di essere soffocati dalla polvere, di finire intrappolati. […] siamo tutti evacuati […] marea umana gigantesca e dolorante […] la folla che correva terrorizzata calpestando un neonato*

The article collects the witness of an Italian survivor, Lucio Caputo, who tells his terrifying experience: "I'm alive for three reasons: I never lost my temper, I keep fit and most of all, I decided on my own what to do, following a logical process. I went down the emergency stairs and I found a huge but ordered crowd. I saw a woman completely naked, without skin. She looked like a peeled peach. At the 23rd floor I found a policeman that told me to leave the stairs and group with the other people in the hall. I didn't listen to him and dove

down the stairs and out of the building. I reached Church Street when my Tower collapsed. I lost everything.

> *Sono vivo per 3 motivi: non ho mai perso la calma, sono in ottima forma fisica e soprattutto ho agito di testa mia, seguendo la logica. [...] Mi sono buttato a slalom lungo le scale d'emergenza. [...] folla gigantesca ma ordinata. [...] una donna completamente nuda e senza più pelle. Sembrava una pesca sbucciata [...] al 23° piano abbiamo incontrato un poliziotto che ci ha intimato di abbandonare le scale d'emergenza, raggruppandoci nella hall del piano. Io non l'ho ascoltato e [...] mi sono tuffato a picco giù dalle scale, sino al piano terra [...]. Ho fatto in tempo a raggiungere Church Street quando la mia Torre è crollata. Ho perso tutto.*

The articles that the newspaper has reserved to this case cover about 20 pages and tell the events without losing focus on the entity of the attack, that has upset the entire World. The columns also contain a detailed chronology of the terrible hours in which the event has taken place, going over every atrocious minute of that day and describing the facts as well as the emotions that filled a moment that is difficult even to imagine.

3.3 Recent attacks in Europe

3.3.1 Paris (2015)

EVENTS

In 2015, more precisely on the 13th of November, a series of Islamic terrorist attacks took place across the city of Paris. The locations were the I, X and XI arrondissements and the Stade de France, for a total of three explosions, six shootings and 137 victims.

The most known (thanks to media coverage) part of these events regards the Bataclan theatre, that was hosting the concert of the American group Eagles of Death Metal and that witnessed the raid of the terrorists, shooting across the hall. The negotiations between the fundamentalists and the French president François Hollande lasted many hours through the night, ending with the members of the ISIS (Islamic State) claiming their role in the attack.

The lights of the Eiffel Tower were kept off for the entire day as a symbol of grief (*figure 8*).

ANALYSIS

The first explosion has been initially mistaken for a firecracker (*prima esplosione scambiata inizialmente per un petardo*), but it was just the beginning of a series of bursts (*serie di raffiche*) that would have turned that night into a nightmare (*figure 7*). The heart of the city has been transformed into a battlefield, confused and complicated, making clear what it really means to be in a war.

> *Da questa notte sappiamo che cos'è una guerra nel cuore di una*
> *città. […] confuso e complicato […] Parigi trasformata in un*
> *campo di battaglia.*

The coordinated attack on a large scale that frightened many parts of the city has been compared to the tragedy of the Twin Towers of 2001 (*attacco coordinato su larga scala […] rivede in diretta la tragedia dell'11 settembre*).

The atmosphere in the besieged metropolis is surreal and terrible, shattered by the first encounter of France with the kamikaze.

> *L'atmosfera è terribile e surreale […] una metropoli assediata e*
> *deserta […] sconvolta […] La Francia conosce per la prima volta*
> *i kamikaze.*

Tonight, Paris is a place of humanity invaded by inhumanity, prisoner of a nightmare.

> *Questa notte, [Parigi] è un luogo dell'umanità assediato dalla*
> *barbarie […] prigioniera di un incubo.*

The city is described as a place of horrors, gripped by fear, despair and death in the worst possible nightmare.

> *Luogo degli orrori […] in preda al panico, fra la disperazione e*
> *la morte […] peggiore degli incubi possibili.*

After the attacks have been dealt with through the night, the ones who were not directly involved start realizing how Paris has been bloodstained by terrorists (*insanguinato Parigi*).

Outside the stadium (*figure 9*), where the match between France and Germany was taking place, the ultras, incredulous and shocked, sing the Marseillaise[39] as a sign of patriotism and grief (*il pubblico esce cantando la Marseillaise […] incredulo […] sotto choc*).

---

[39] The French national anthem

The news is contradictory; some say that people should stay where they are and do not go out on the streets, while others invite them to go home. Fear and confusion fill the air, together with a deafening silence and the enormity of what has happened.

> *Notizie contraddittorie [...] "restate dove siete, non uscite per strada" [...] si può tornare a casa" [...] Silenzio [...] paura [...] enormità di quello che stava accadendo.*

The owners of apartments near the areas hit by the attack start giving hospitality to the ones who are stuck outside and have no way of reaching their homes. The hashtag #porteouverte[40] becomes viral as more and more people tweet about an available room or even just a spare bed, reaching 200.000 tweets in just an hour.

> *Quella solidarietà spontanea per chi non può tornare a casa [...] rimboccarsi le maniche subito. [...] Non ci si arrende [...] #porteouverte [...] subito virale [...] 200.000 tweet in un'ora.*

The President François Hollande (*figure 10*) appears on television to talk to the citizens, and while he tries to hold back his emotions, as upset as he could be, appeals to compassion, solidarity, unity and composure to encourage his people to react to the horror that surrounds them.

> *Turbato [...] in difficoltà nel mantenere il controllo delle emozioni [...] compassione, solidarietà, unità, sangue freddo [...] orrore.*

In the same way, also Obama sends contributes to the grief of France by stating how the attack has been against humanity and the universally shared values (*è un attacco contro l'umanità e ai valori che condividiamo*).

The ISIS claimed the carnage on Twitter and, even though it seemed so far away, its criminal plan has stroke blindly, killing without mercy.

> *L'ISIS ha rivendicato la carneficina di Parigi su Twitter [...] sembrava lontanissimo [...] piano criminale [...] colpito alla cieca [...] sparavano a caso [...] ammazzavano senza pietà.*

The accurate planning has allowed those professionals of violence to make multiple and simultaneous raids, taking hostages to multiply the sense of lack of security. After the first shove, they targeted the critical points, creating as much chaos as possible.

> *Accurata pianificazione [...] professionisti della violenza [...] incursione multipla e simultanea [...] prendono ostaggi per*

---

[40] "Open door" in French

> *moltiplicare il senso di insicurezza […] dopo la prima "spallata"*
>
> *[…] punti critici, confusione.*

Their strategy has been compared to that of the *ghazi*; the warriors that attacked the enemies catching them by surprise (*strategia del ghazi, il guerrigliero che conduce una scorreria nel campo nemico cogliendolo di sorpresa*).

The title in the first page suggests the victims to be about 150; more than a hundred helpless people have been mowed by the attack that brough a cape of fear and pain onto the French capital city.

> *Falciando cittadini inermi […] cappa di paura e di dolore che*
>
> *aleggia questa notte sulla Capitale francese.*

The ultras that were into the stadium started yelling "it's an attack!" after two dismembered bodies were found at the entrance, while the people into the Bataclan theatre were falling like bowling pins, surrounded by blood and unaware of the tragedy that was affecting them.

> *Gli spettatori hanno cominciato a gridare "un attacco, un*
>
> *attacco!" […] due corpi smembrati sono stati trovati all'esterno*
>
> *dello stadio […] hanno visto i ragazzi della fila accanto cadere*
>
> *giù come birilli […] corpi senza vita e sangue […] sangue*
>
> *dappertutto […] non capiscono cosa stia succedendo.*

"We're at war". That is the sentence that Marc Lazar, historian and sociologist specialized in Italian politics and employed at Luiss Guido Carli in Rome, keeps repeating while the journalist interviews him. In this bloody night the terrorists decided to terrify common people, frightening France and devastating its routine. If they want to plant the seed of fear among our people, we will have to learn how to live with terrorism, like Italy did during the tragic and famous Years of Lead.

> *Siamo in guerra. […] notte di sangue […] terrorizzare la gente*
>
> *comune […] terrorizzare la Francia, devastare la sua vita*
>
> *quotidiana […] seminare la paura tra la nostra gente […]*
>
> *convivere col terrorismo esattamente come voi italiani avete fatto*
>
> *negli anni Settanta, durante i tragici e famosi Anni di Piombo.*

The many attacks that upset the night of the 13 of November 2015 are described by the newspaper as shocking and completely unattended. The chaos is tangible through the

words of the writers that try to reconstruct the events that lead to that huge number of victims.

3.3.2 Barcelona (2017)

EVENTS

The most recent attack taken under scrutiny in this dissertation is the one perpetrated in Barcelona the 17th of August 2017, on the city's main street La Rambla. The ISIS recognized its role in the attack as a response to the Spanish political participation in the anti-ISIS coalition. A white Fiat truck entered the pedestrian area of La Rambla, covering about 550 metres at high speed, running over all the people it encountered on its path and killing 14 of them. The terrorist, Abouyaaqoub, was stopped by the activation of the airbag, and tried to escape stealing a car, but after 4 days he was found and killed. That same day, other five terrorists were stopped and killed by the Spanish police in Cambrils while they were trying to run over pedestrians with a car. However, the men had managed to hurt six people and a police officer and to kill a woman, taking the count of the victims to 16.

ANALYSIS

The assassins have no imagination, but we have no memory. With this sentence, the journalist expresses the anger and dissatisfaction towards a system that has not been able to prevent the attack, which is just a link in the chain of terrorist attacks that, in less than a year, have stroke 8 times with the same, simple, yet horrible strategy: mowing the crowds.

> *Gli assassini non hanno fantasia; noi non abbiamo memoria […]*
> *in poco più di un anno, otto attentati con la stessa tecnica,*
> *orribilmente semplice: falciare la folla […] non ce lo possiamo*
> *permettere.*

The news has been uncertain and contradictory, but the horrifying images of the van that launched onto the crowd are vivid and hard to forget.

> *Le notizie su ciò che stava avvenendo sono state diverse e*
> *contraddittorie […] immagini raccapriccianti […] un furgone che*
> *si lancia sulla folla.*

In a split-second people were told to leave the streets, stay closed in their houses and limit their movements. Some found shelter into the shops of La Rambla, while others did not

manage even to realize what was going on around them. A Russian roulette, this is what the attack is compared to; a mechanism that decides about who gets to live and who does not, without caring about the consequences.

> *Una frazione di secondo [...] trovato rifugio [...] negozi [...]*
> *roulette russa [...] devastante.*

Nausea, horror, shame. A storm that is bringing Europe down to its knees making the life of citizen an impossible nightmare.

> *Nausea [...] orrore [...] vergogna [...] mettere in ginocchio*
> *l'Europa [...] rendendo la vita impossibile.*

What is important, according to the writer, is to find a way to defuse the identity schizophrenias of those who radicalize ideas to the point of committing massacres like this. Looking the other way will not be of any use; even though empathy is fatally destined to bring frustration, thinking of these events as "far from us" and pretending not to be affected by the phenomenon would be nothing more than a coward's consolation.

> *Capire come disinnescare le schizofrenie identitarie [...]*
> *un'empatia fatalmente destinata alla frustrazione [...] senso di*
> *ingiustizia senza rimedio [...] consolazione dettata dalla*
> *vigliaccheria [...] spartirsene il peso [...] nessun possibile*
> *palliativo.*

The suspects have fallen on a Moroccan guy called Driss Oukabir (*figure 11*) whose identity has been revealed by the rental company who owned the van. However, Driss appears to have denounced the theft of his documents, so his brother Moussa is also considered for the attack.

> *Arrestato un ragazzo marocchino, ha noleggiato il mezzo [...] non*
> *è ben chiaro [...] Driss è il primo sospettato, poi il fratello*
> *Moussa.*

According to the witnesses, the terrorist was smiling and laughing while zigzagging on La Rambla to kill as many people as possible. "He could have been twenty" they say, "he was good-looking".

And while the ISIS claims the attack, the king Felipe VI states "they are assassins. Simple criminals that will not terrorize us".

> *Rideva mentre puntava dritto sulle persone [...] sterzando per*
> *centrare più vittime [...] sorrideva soddisfatto della scia di morti*
> *dietro di sé [...] "avrà avuto vent'anni" [...] "aveva un bel viso"*

> *[…] l'ISIS ha comunque rivendicato […] "assassini, semplici criminali che non riusciranno a terrorizzarci"*

The journalist makes some considerations on how these terrorists do not choose their targets anymore like they used to years ago. Now they hit where and when it is possible, taking easy and predictable targets, which increases the sense of frustration. They aim at parties, shows, crowded places, symbolic sites in symbolic cities, to make as many victims as possible in the least time possible, in a sort of economy of the efforts. The main goal is to kill and take the merit for it, details are not important. Massacres have become trivial, as the industrials of terrorism have left their place to some craftsman of terror. "If they have a God, he must be so ashamed" states the writer.

> *Non è più nemmeno una scelta […] lo fanno dove lo possono fare, quando riescono a farlo […] target facile e scontato […] prendete di mira feste e spettacoli. […] colpire luoghi simbolici in città simboliche in modo da ampliare il terrore […] molto male in poco spazio e in breve tempo […] spaventosa economia degli sforzi […] l'importante è fare, senza badare ai dettagli […] indispensabile trovare il sistema per prendersi il merito del gesto […] banalità della strage […] gli industriali del terrorismo sono fermi; al loro posto, gli artigiani del terrore […] se hanno un Dio, chissà come si vergogna di loro.*

The victims are common people; men and women walking up and down La Rambla in a usual summer Thursday. When the van starts running over the crowd (*figure 12*), they start swarming inordinately trying to survive and find a shelter.

> *Ragazzi a passeggio un giovedì d'estate […] sciamano scomposti […] tentando di mettersi in salvo.*

"I saw people getting hit and jumping into the air […] they flew away". This is one of the many witnesses of shocked survivors who will never forget what they experienced (*"vedevo le persone colpite che saltavano in aria […] persone volare via"*).

People cry and run desperately in a shouted mix of languages. Some yell, insulting the terrorists in Spanish. When the crazy ride of the van reaches an end, panic leaves its place to horror. Children and young women lay still on the white waves of the flooring. The bodies take unnatural poses with their limbs broken, disjointed, the clothes lifted, and the shoes mismatched and lost. The scarlet blood looks like the fake one in the movies.

> *Urlano e corrono spaventate [...] pianti e lingue mescolate [...]*
> *panico [...] orrore [...] bambini e giovani donne immobili sulle*
> *onde bianche della pavimentazione delle Ramblas [...] pose*
> *innaturali dei corpi, i vestiti sollevati, le scarpe spaiate e smarrite,*
> *il sangue scarlatto che sembra finto, cinematografico [...] con*
> *gambe e braccia rotti [...] disarticolati.*

The articles deal with the events with particular focus on the terrorists. They are described as puppets in the hands of their ideological groups, without a real objective. Their actions are devalued and despised, giving no importance to their motive and underlining their ineffectuality.

Discussion and conclusive remarks

Having analysed five different cases, this paper is now going to discuss how the results may answer to its research question, that is "how does discourse in "Il Corriere della Sera" change through the period of time between 1969 and 2017 for what concerns the depiction of events related to terrorism?".
Being the articles located at different points on the timeline, observations can be done on how the discourse and all its components vary across the decades, and what kind of variables stay the same through time. Moreover, considerations about the different portrayals of political and religious terrorism can be expressed, pointing out analogies and discrepancies in the report of the two types of event.

Firstly, what can be observed is how the articles related to the first two cases present more vivid descriptions of locations, events and people when compared to the more recent ones. The adjectives and nouns used to tell about the victims of the attacks belong to a lexical register that appears crude and with barely any filters. In the last three cases instead, although still being very intense, the language of the reports is less direct and seems watered down to better serve the sensitivity of the public. So, while in case 2 it can be read that there was "*a boy of seven with a splattered leg; I could not tell where his face was*", in case 4, the crudest passage tells: "*two dismembered bodies were found at the entrance, while the people into the Bataclan theatre were falling like bowling pins, surrounded by blood*". The same process applies when the object of the description is the area where the attack has taken place. It is possible to imagine the National Bank of Agriculture just by reading that "*the hall is devastated, blinded by a cloud of smoke, of dust, of collapsing*

rubble […]. Everything was down to pieces, crumbled, shattered, twisted, wrecked.". The image portrayed is eloquent and memorable, full of details that contribute to convey the idea of a destroyed place. On the other hand, little information is given on La Rambla other than the "*white waves of the flooring*" where the victims lay, leaving the rest of the description to the images.

A consideration that is strictly correlated to the first one, should be made for what concerns images. Even though reasons of copyright have not permitted the inclusion of all the pictures contained in the articles (*Appendix 2*), it is worth noting that the amount of data that has been produced is almost equal for each of the five cases even though a smaller quantity of articles has been observed for the first two and a larger number has been taken under scrutiny, for example, in case 3 (where 28 articles have been analysed). This is due to the fact that in cases 1 and 2 the images were used in very little proportion compared to the quantity of written columns. Moreover, they were in black and white because of the time the newspaper was published. Thus, the need of writing more detailed descriptions in order to give a precise idea of what were the characteristics of the events. On the contrary, the newspapers related to cases 3, 4 and 5 do contain a great collection of images that in some cases cover up to 50% of the page. Their presence allows the readers to visualize the elements of the story they are reading about and to better contextualize the event without the journalist needing to write every detail of it.

An element that certainly deserves to be noted is the presence of moral judgements. Even though a newspaper article is commonly supposed to remain impartial and tell the facts in a straightforward way, it appears evident how the journalists' opinion is widely expressed in all the columns analysed. The condemnation of the acts is perceived through words and entire sentences. A case in point would be "*If they have a God, he must be so ashamed*", taken from case 5. However, it can be observed that, in the last cases, the focus of the articles is centred on the events, and just a little part of it is dedicated to this kind of statements. In opposition to this, the cases dating back to the end of the 20th century are filled with ethical remarks that can be found in almost every column, intermingled with the reported events.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning the influence that the historical context has onto these pieces of discourse. As mentioned in section 2.3, context is a crucial element when making a discourse analysis, in that it gives explanation for certain characteristics of the discourse observed. The American case represents a bridge in this sense, between two extremely

different historical contexts. That can be noted simply by the fact that after case 3, internet starts playing an important role in the dynamics of the attack, from the terrorists' claim made on social networks like Twitter, to the hashtags that spread all around the Globe and become viral a few seconds after the episodes. This of course was not possible before 2001, when internet was not a part of people's lives and the best way to spread the news was by framing it as memorably as possible in newspapers. This may be one of the reasons why the attack of 9/11 did receive a whole special section of the newspaper dedicated to it, as an event of such relevance and seriousness deserved as much media coverage as possible.

For what concerns figures of speech, it can be observed that the overall use of them is quite constant throughout the years. Similes and metaphors are widely used in all five cases, even though with different intensity. An example is the list of metaphors collected in the articles of case 2 (*the sulphurous smell of a thousand of matches, a sepulchre, the eruption of a volcano* and *a mushroom of rubble and smoke*), as well as the comparison of the Barcelona event to a Russian roulette. Personifications also play a major role in some of the articles, as often the places where the attacks happen are described as they were living beings, hurt as much as the victims of the tragedies. In case 1, the values of society have been *hurt* and *upset*; the city of Bologna is *dizzy, anguished and whipped to death*, as well as New York, which is *silent and paralyzed* together with its Towers; *populous, lively and exaggerated sentries*. In case 4, Paris is *prisoner of a nightmare and invaded by inhumanity*, while in case 5 it is Europe that is brought *down to its knees*. Oxymorons are less used, but of great impact. An example can be found in case 4, when the journalist talks about the *deafening silence* that was invading Paris after the series of attacks. This figure of speech is particularly effective in conveying a multidimensional idea of the atmosphere and the situation as a whole, in that it grasps characteristics that may seem opposite but form part of the spectrum of shades that a single scene can evoke. More particular to single pieces of writing are for example the anaphora ("*followers of violence for the sake of violence and of oppression for the sake of oppression*", case 1; "*-we're at war- this is the sentence that Marc Lazar […] keeps repeating*", case 4; "*symbolic sites in symbolic cities*", case 5), the synaesthesia ("*the station […] is now a place […] that tastes like ambush and gunpowder*", case 2) and the hyperbole ("*They are called "men" just because of their anthropometric features*", case 1; "*huge tide of sore and scared people*", case 3; "*I saw people getting hit and jumping into the air […] they flew away*", case 5).

Furthermore, a significant role is played by historical references, made to better explain the seriousness of the event, comparing it to other famous cases. In case 1, the massacre is correlated to *the Diana massacre, happened back in 1921 in Milan, when a similar explosion killed about twenty people in a theatre*. The attack of 9/11 is deemed *as serious and upsetting as Pearl Harbour* and *likened to a sequence of attacks to monarchs and heads of government between the end of 1800 and the beginning of the next century by anarchists.* In the same way, the event in case 4 is compared to 9/11 and the Years of Lead themselves, while case 5 is treated as an element in a chain of similar and repeated attacks. It is interesting to note how the point of reference shifts in time, reconsidering and resizing the perception of the events as soon as a new attack takes place and new standards are constructed.

A detail worth noting regards the titles in the first pages of the newspapers taken into consideration. When the attack concerns a single city, it is always mentioned in the title:

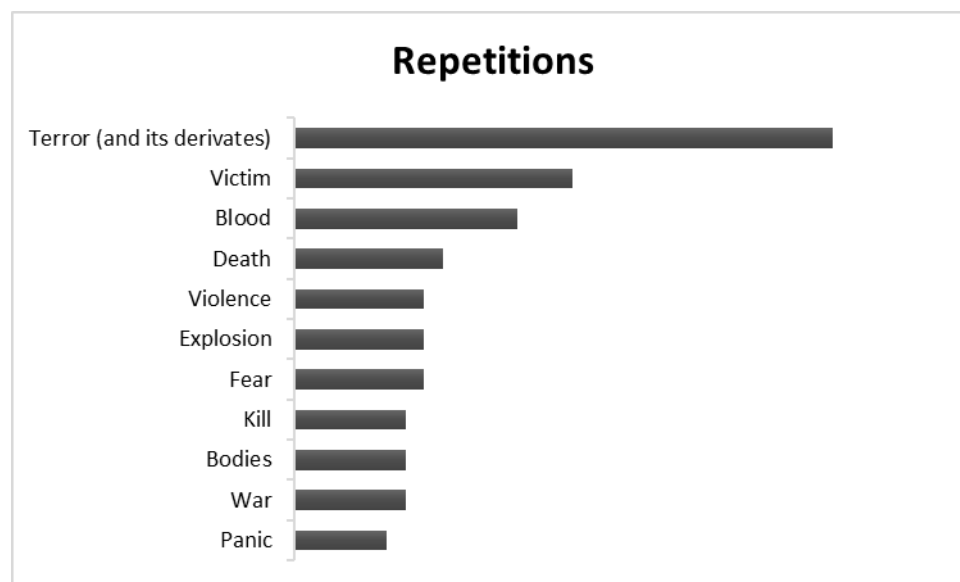*Orrenda strage a <u>Milano</u> – case 1*

Scoppio apocalisse a <u>Bologna</u> – case 2

La guerra a <u>Parigi</u> – case 4

Terrore e morte a <u>Barcellona</u> – case 5

The only occasion when this does not verify is with case 3, mainly because New York is not the only place hit by terrorists, as also the Pentagon in the city of Arlington was struck.

Finally, it has been possible to identify a number of words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc.) that appear more than once in most of the newspapers that have been analysed:

Repetitions

- Terror (and its derivates)
- Victim
- Blood
- Death
- Violence
- Explosion
- Fear
- Kill
- Bodies
- War
- Panic

The chart shows how the word "terror" and its derivates like "terrorism" or "terrorist" are the most repeated word throughout the analysed articles, followed suit by "victim" and "blood". The terms that fall into this graph do belong to the semantic area of crime, and directly transmit the nature of the content that fills the columns.

It should be noted that the graphical analysis is indicative, as it has been conducted on a translation of the original texts.

Discourse changes through time mainly in accordance with the necessities of the writers and the devices they have at their disposal to convey the message, that imply elements like images and means of communication. So, it is again the historical context that is the main variable influencing the final product.

For what concerns the analysis of the typology of terrorism reported, this paper shall now refer to the theory of SIT[41]. Taking into account the nationality of the newspaper examined, although the very act of terrorism is clearly condemned in all the cases investigated, it is possible to observe that the moral judgement expressed varies from case to case. Beyond the reasons that have already been discussed, personal proximity plays a fundamental role in the structure of the articles, in a way that appears inspired by the sociological theory but develops, incorporating the single cases' circumstances.

In the cases of political terrorism, the perpetrators are assumed to be of Italian nationality, the same as the victims and the journalists, and therefore supposed to belong to the social in-group. This element, which should have fostered a sense of commonality, is instead seen as being betrayed by the terrorists, making the sentiment of violation and treason strong and determinant in the assessment of the occurrence. People expect co-nationals to share the same sets of values and beliefs. At the same time, stereotypes influence people's convictions and thoughts about Muslims, often failing to clarify the distinction between criminals and devotees. As a result, it could be argued that one would expect a terrorist attack to be perpetrated with religious motives and would thus be more shocked to learn that the actors are Italian and have a political motivation.

Religious terrorists are instead clearly part of an out-group and therefore considered as radically different from the writers. However, it should also be noted that in the cases of religious attacks (3, 4 and 5), also the victims are of a different nationality and thus the link of personal proximity is loosened.

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[41] Explained in chapter 1.4

Following the social theories, it can be observed how the mechanism of physical proximity comes into play when dealing with cases about France and Spain which are, as the article about Barcelona suggests, "downstairs"[42]. This cannot be applied to the American case but is substituted with the impact of the event and its global relevance.

The result is that apparently, in each of the five cases taken under scrutiny, terrorism is treated in the same way, blaming the responsible and denouncing the atrocity of violence. However, as observed, the rationale behind each article reveals the multiplicity of variables that influence the writing and how the events are presented to society.

Aiming at providing a tool for the comprehension of the differences and similarities that arise through time in the newspapers' portrayal of terroristic attacks, this paper is designed to supply information on specific characteristics of discourse analysis, and thus leaves space for future research that may inquire different aspects of the same phenomenon or insert it in a broader framework to investigate more general issues.

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[42] *"Sotto casa"* in the article

Riassunto in italiano

Questa tesi è finalizzata alla realizzazione di un'analisi dei discorsi sul tema della rappresentazione mediatica del terrorismo, condotta sugli articoli pubblicati sul Corriere della Sera il giorno successivo ad una serie di episodi relativi a questo tipo di violenza. Nello specifico, i casi presi in considerazione sono:

- · La strage di Piazza Fontana, Milano, 1969
- · L'attacco alla stazione di Bologna, 1980
- · L'11 settembre, USA, 2001
- · La serie di attacchi coordinati di Parigi, 2015
- · L'attacco su La Rambla a Barcellona, 2017

Lo scopo della ricerca è quello di osservare le possibili differenze e similitudini nel linguaggio utilizzato per raccontare i fatti e descrivere eventi e personaggi, confrontando casi occorsi in diversi contesti storico-sociali e che si riferiscono a diverse forme di terrorismo, politico e religioso.

I primi capitoli sono destinati a fornire una base teorica che si propone di introdurre il concetto di terrorismo alla luce del dibattito sociologico, nonché di definire la metodologia di ricerca.

Il capitolo 1, corrispondente alla dissertazione teorica sul terrorismo, si occupa di delineare un tratto temporale su cui procura segnalare le tappe principali della storia del fenomeno in questione. Partendo dall'epoca romana ed arrivando ai tempi moderni, la storia è ripercorsa prestando particolare attenzione all'evoluzione del fenomeno, alle modalità con cui gli atti vengono perpetrati e ai cambiamenti nell'organizzazione dei gruppi terroristici. Il capitolo delinea, inoltre, le caratteristiche principali di un attacco terroristico, utili a differenziarlo rispetto a crimini di diverso tipo, ma non sufficienti a dare una definizione universale del fenomeno, impedendo quindi la realizzazione di una legge valida globalmente a riguardo. In particolare, si riconosce come terrorismo un evento che comporti:

- · La minaccia o l'uso illegale ed intenzionale di forza e violenza
- · Danni a proprietà pubblica e privata
- · Obiettivi neutrali
- · Un'azione designata a ripercussioni psicologiche protratte nel tempo
- · Organizzazioni di attori non statali

- Obiettivi politici, economici, religiosi o sociali raggiunti per mezzo di paura, minaccia o coercizione
- Un'azione che viola i parametri della legge umanitaria internazionale

Il concetto di terrorismo viene poi inserito in un contesto sociologico, indagandone origini ed effetti a livello sociale, spiegando, inoltre, come esso possa essere classificato come atto di devianza. Superando le teorie di Cesare Lombroso, che attribuivano ai criminali specifiche caratteristiche fisiche e biologiche, il capitolo si sofferma ad analizzare il punto di vista di alcune teorie sociologiche che appaiono rilevanti ai fini della dissertazione. Iniziando dal Funzionalismo, che indaga le funzioni sociali del fenomeno, si continua con la Teoria dell'Etichettamento, la quale riconosce nei giudizi espressi dalla società la causa principale dei comportamenti devianti. L'Interazionismo Simbolico, invece, si concentra sugli input provenienti dall'ambiente esterno, che sembrano causare l'allontanamento dalle norme sociali per mancanza di esempi positivi, mentre la Teoria del Conflitto, seguendo l'ideale marxista, trova la ragione della devianza nella distribuzione iniqua del potere. La Teoria del Controllo, infine, afferma come i legami sociali possano fungere da deterrente alla devianza, fornendo dei validi motivi per seguire le regole della società.

Volendo poi inserire, all'interno della definizione sociologica di devianza, il concetto di terrorismo, questa tesi si avvale di due principali correnti di pensiero. La prima si fonda sulle idee, e su come la radicalizzazione sia un processo anzitutto cognitivo, e solo successivamente pratico e finalizzato alla violenza. La seconda, d'altra parte, afferma come le esperienze di vita e le dinamiche di gruppo siano fondamentali al fine di fornire una spiegazione idonea al perché un individuo decida di partecipare ad un'azione terroristica.

Inoltre, ad introdurre il tema all'interno del contesto mediatico, è un paragrafo che ripercorre alcune delle principali teorie sociali che regolano la percezione di fatti inerenti al terrorismo e diffusi dai media, e ne spiega cause e conseguenze. Viene rilevato come le reazioni del pubblico possano variare in base alla distanza geografica dall'evento, ma anche, e soprattutto, in base all'affinità che i soggetti sentono di avere con vittime ed autori degli attacchi. Inoltre, viene sottolineato come la risposta all'ascolto ed alla visione di eventi traumatici possa essere più o meno rilevante, ed avere più o meno conseguenze sulla vita del pubblico, in base al grado di razionalità con cui le notizie sono elaborate.

Dunque, dopo aver delineato cosa si intende per terrorismo e come esso influisca sulla società, questa dissertazione si dedica a definire la domanda di ricerca, ovvero il fine dell'analisi. Come cambiano i discorsi nel Corriere della Sera nel periodo compreso tra il 1969 ed il 2017 per quanto riguarda la rappresentazione di eventi legati al terrorismo? Questo è ciò che l'analisi ha il compito di indagare.

Per analisi dei discorsi, si intende quel processo qualitativo atto ad osservare un discorso, scomponendolo nelle sue parti, con lo scopo di rivelarne le sfumature ed i significati meno evidenti, attraverso l'inserimento dello stesso nel contesto socioculturale di appartenenza. Un discorso è una qualsiasi forma di linguaggio, sia scritto che orale, dalla singola parola all'intero romanzo. Esso comprende anche qualsiasi strumento ausiliario utilizzato per comunicare un messaggio, tra cui suoni, immagini e linguaggio del corpo.

Dopo aver illustrato, quindi, la metodologia adottata nello studio degli articoli, questa dissertazione procede a riportare il processo di analisi. Quest'ultimo consiste nell'osservazione di articoli pertinenti al tema del terrorismo, riportanti i fatti relativi ai casi scelti, prestando particolare attenzione a lemmi, costruzioni, registro linguistico e figure retoriche o sintattiche adoperate nella stesura delle colonne giornalistiche. Ogni caso è introdotto da un breve quadro storico, utile a delineare il contesto in cui è inscritto l'evento e a riassumere i principali avvenimenti in modo neutrale, imparziale e privo di opinioni personali. A questo paragrafo segue l'analisi, costituita da porzioni del testo originale degli articoli riportate in lingua italiana, e poi tradotte e commentate al fine di fornire un quadro completo sulla quantità e tipologia di informazioni fornite dal quotidiano. Sono accuratamente sottolineate tutte quelle frasi, parole ed espressioni riferite a vittime, fatti ed autori degli attacchi, con lo scopo di estrapolare i concetti più rilevanti ai fini della comparazione tra i cinque casi.

La discussione dei risultati ha come obiettivo quello di riassumere le scoperte ritenute di rilevanza ai fini della ricerca, e pertanto si sofferma sull'influenza del contesto storico sullo stile di scrittura. In particolare, viene rilevato come la struttura di articoli appartenenti a quotidiani più datati appaia più incentrata sull'evocazione di immagini attraverso le parole, che quindi risultano dirette, vivide e crude, soprattutto quando impiegate in sequenze di tipo descrittivo. Al contrario, fatti più recenti sembrano essere trattati con un registro lessicale più distaccato e finalizzato all'informazione piuttosto che alla visualizzazione. La ragione di questa differenza è riscontrata nella più ampia presenza di immagini nei giornali attuali, che quindi elimina la necessità per lo scrittore di adoperare

dovizia di particolari. Allo stesso modo, la presenza di un giudizio morale riguardo la vicenda si fa sempre meno invadente con il passare degli anni, sebbene non accenni a scomparire.

Viene ulteriormente indagato l'utilizzo di figure retoriche all'interno degli articoli, il quale, seppur variando da caso a caso, rimane ugualmente presente in ognuno di essi.

Uno studio più specifico sulla frequenza di singoli lemmi denota, inoltre, come la parola "terrore" ed i suoi derivati (quali terrorismo, terrorizzare etc.) siano i più utilizzati, seguiti da "vittima" e "sangue".

È poi possibile condurre un'analisi che abbia come obiettivo quello di spiegare come terrorismo politico e religioso siano diversamente trattati negli articoli presi in esame. Questa si basa sulle nozioni di prossimità, fisica e personale, introdotte nel capitolo 1. In particolare la prima si riferisce alla distanza in chilometri tra il pubblico, in questo caso i lettori del giornale, e l'evento terroristico. La seconda, invece, si focalizza sull'affinità percepita dall'audience con i responsabili e le vittime, determinata da una serie di variabili quali ad esempio nazionalità, religione, estrazione sociale, che risultano determinanti nella rielaborazione degli accadimenti e nella formazione di un pensiero critico a riguardo.

In conclusione, questa tesi si propone di fornire un punto di vista alternativo su fatti di cronaca inerenti al terrorismo, che possa andare oltre la mera ricezione di informazioni e produrre, invece, un'analisi critica e multidimensionale del fenomeno preso in esame, sia all'interno di una cornice teorica, quale quella sociologica, sia praticamente, attraverso l'osservazione e lo studio di casi concreti. L'obiettivo è quello di offrire un punto di vista che permetta una conoscenza approfondita dei meccanismi che regolano questo tipo di devianza sociale, e di quelli che ne determinano l'immagine offerta al pubblico. L'indagine, pertanto, risulta focalizzata su dinamiche specifiche e, soffermandosi su una singola testata giornalistica, affida a ricerche future ulteriori e più ampie considerazioni.

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Appendix 1

Here are reported the newspapers that have been used to realize the analysis in chapter 4 of this dissertation, together with charts that contain the titles of the single articles taken under scrutiny. For the sake of simplicity, for all those cases in which an article is divided across many pages, the one indicated corresponds to where the article starts.

CASE 1 – PIAZZA FONTANA

Date: 13/12/1969 N.286 - Anno 94	N. of pages: 3
Title of the article	**Page**
Orrenda strage a Milano	1
Difendere la libertà	1
Saragat condanna la violenza omicida	1
Fermati molti estremisti	1
Un inferno	1
Lampo accecante	1
Commossa reazione in tutto il paese	2
I sospetti	2
Vento di follia	2
Unità democratica	2
Al Parlamento	2
Appelli angosciosi	2
Inchiesta capillare	2
Un mistero sconvolgente	3
Crudeltà spietata	3
Le innocenti vittime dell'odio	3
Dalle campagne	3
La cattedrale	3

CASE 2 – BOLOGNA'S STATION

Date: 03/08/1980 N. 175 - Anno 105	N. of pages: 4
Title of the article	**Page**
Scoppio apocalisse a Bologna	1
Un'ombra nera sul riposo degli italiani	1
Sconvolto tra nord e sud un sistema ferroviario	1
Il capostazione: "Come la guerra, corpi dilaniati fin sotto le carrozze"	1
Anche l'autobus "37" trasformato in ambulanza	1
Tutte intatte le caldaie dell'edificio sventrato	1
Roma attende che si sciolga il tragico rebus: ordigno o disgrazia?	1
Pertini sconvolto sui luoghi della tragedia: la stazione, gli ospedali della città, l'obitorio	2
Quante trame di vita su quei binari	3
un ex carrista: c'era odore di polvere da sparo	4

CASE 3 – 09/11

Date: 12/09/2001	N. of pages: 18
N. 216 - Anno 126	

Title of the article	Page
Il più grave atto di guerra dal 1945. Il mondo sconvolto e paralizzato. Bush: puniremo i colpevoli e i paesi che li proteggono	1
Siamo tutti Americani	1
La potenza vulnerabile	1
Il nemico invisibile	1
Ho visto decine di persone lanciarsi dalle finestre	1
Quattro earei come bombe sull'America	2
New York, ventimila morti tra le macerie	3
Sono tutti boeing gli aerei coinvolti	4
Luciano Caputo, uomo d'affari, era nelle Twin Towers	4
Inferno di fuoco, distrutte le Torri Gemelle. Un'esplosione dopo l'altra, il World Trade Center crolla	5
Apocalisse a Manhattan, una metropoli in fuga	6
Dalla più alta di quelle 43.000 finestre si poteva vedere fino a 100 chilometri	6
Il Pentagono brucia, Washington paralizzata	7
I caccia pattugliano sul ponte di Brooklyn	7
Se attaccassero l'Europa colpirebbero il Colosseo	7
La disfatta dei servizi segreti americani	8
Non hanno scosso le fondamenta dell'America	9
Rivendicazioni dalla Palestina e dal Giappone	10
Una giornalista della CNN a bordo. "I dirottatori hanno solo coltelli"	10
Solo Bin Laden può aver fatto tutto questo. Tutti u sospetti sul principe del terrorismo	11
Gli Stati Uniti sconvolti in 15 minuti	12
Palestinesi in festa a Gerusalemme e Beirut	13
Wall street chiusa, borse europee nel panico	14
Cieli americani vietati, paralisi nel mondo	15
Sulle televisioni di tutto il mondo va in onda l'apocalisse in diretta	15
"Punire i colpevoli" Putin si schiera con Bush, il Papa prega per le "vittime innocenti"	16
L'Italia si ferma e si blinda, basi in allarme	18
I turisti americani in lacrime "Ci hanno colpiti al cuore"	18

CASE 4 – PARIS

Date: 14/11/2015	N. of pages: 10
N.270 - Anno 140	

Title of the article	Page
La guerra a Parigi	1
L'umanità è sotto attacco	1
I segnali rimasti inascoltati	1
La minaccia dell'ISIS: ora Roma e Londra	1
Spari, esecuzioni, corpi nelle strade	2
È stata la notte in cui la barbarie ha sconfitto la vita	2
Gli ostaggi - li uccidevano a freddo e lanciavano bombe	4
Kamikaze fuori dallo stadio	5
#porteouverte - quella solidarietà spontanea per chi non può tornare a casa	6
Anatomia di un massacro	7
Hollande	8
Obama	8
Vogliono devastare la nostra vita quotidiana	10

CASE 5 – BARCELONA

Date: 18/08/2017	N. of pages: 11
N. 194 - Anno 142	
Title of the article	**Page**
Terrore e morte a Barcellona	1
Passaporto scambiato: il giallo dei due fratelli	1
Le nostre illusioni perdute	1
L'inferno nel cuore di Barcellona	2
Andava a zigzag per fare più morti - al volante rideva	2
Lacrime e panico, turisti asserragliati nei negozi, bambini feriti e passeggini riversi	3
Una donna belga, tre tedeschi e un uomo di 40 anni i primi morti accertati.	5
Gli italiani - "Le persone saltavano per aria" "Per ore rifugiati in libreria", i racconti di chi si è salvato	6
Driss "la faina" e lo spaccone Moussa	8
Le immagini che ti spingono nella tragedia	10
L'orrore ce si ripete ma non ri può prevedere	30

Appendix 2

This section will be collecting the images published on the newspapers, divided by case. For a reason of copyright, some of the pictures could not be included.

CASE 1 – PIAZZA FONTANA

Figure 1- 12/12/69, inside view of the Bank of Agriculture after the explosion - www.cinquantamila.it

Figure 2- 12/12/1969, outside view of the National Bank of Agriculture, www.tommasofiore.it

CASE 2 – BOLOGNA'S STATION

Figure 3 - 02/08/1980, what remains of the station after the explosion - www.italiaoggi.it

CASE 3 – 09/11

Figure 4 - 11/09/2001, first page of the Corriere della Sera

Figure 5 - 11/09/2001, an American flag lays where the World Trade Centre collapsed, Il Corriere

Figure 6 - 11/09/2001, one of the men that "flew" from the Towers, Il Corriere

CASE 4 – PARIS

Figure 7 - 13/11/2015, first page of the Corriere della Sera
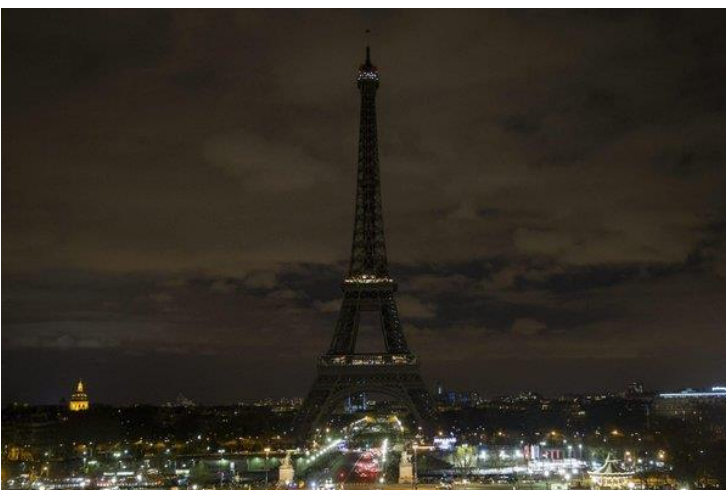

Figure 8 - 13/11/2015, an image of the Eiffel Tower turned off as a sign of grief - embed.scribblelive.com

Figure 9 - 13/11/2015, internal view of the stadium during the attack, www.ilpost.it

Figure 10 - 13/11/2015, the President Holland during his speech to the Nation, www.limesonline.com

CASE 5 – BARCELONA

Figure 11 - 17/08/2017, images on the first page of the Corriere; down-right corner: the presumed terrorist Driss Oukabir

Figure 12 - 17/08/2017, the route of the terrorist, Il Corriere