Discursive Representation of Victims of Mosque Attacks in Egypt and New Zealand

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Abstract: This study examined the discursive representation of victims of two terrorist attacks that occurred in Egypt and New Zealand. The data include all news reports released by the online version of *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* on the attacks. To this end, we employ Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory and Entman's (1993) Framing Theory. This article filled a gap in literature as it is the first – to the best of our knowledge - to address Muslim victims of terrorist attacks in two countries, one Muslim, and one Christian. Discussion reinforced the belief that there is disparity in journalistic treatment in favour of victims in a country culturally and linguistically belonging to the west (New Zealand). All the 10 frames devised for this study, side by side with the appraisal resources deployed, reveal a marked difference between the 'high-profile' representation of Christchurch social actors and the 'low-profile' depiction of the Sinai social actors. All the socio-semantic categorisations of victims also prove such discursive disproportion.

Keywords: Appraisal Theory, Egypt, framing, New Zealand, socio-semantics, victims

1. Introduction

This paper investigated the discursive representation of victims in two terrorist attacks that occurred in Egypt and New Zealand. On November 24, 2017, Ar-Rawda mosque, located in the town of Bir Al-Abd in Egypt's north Sinai governorate, came under attack during Friday prayers, leaving 311 people killed and injuring at least 128, making it the deadliest attack in Egypt's modern history (*The Washington Post,* November 24, 2017). On March 15, 2019, New Zealand witnessed two consecutive attacks in Christchurch, also during Friday prayers, which began at Al-Noor Mosque and then continued at the Linwood Islamic Centre. The two attacks claimed the lives of 51 people and injured 35 others, also making them the deadliest in New Zealand's history (*The Guardian,* March 15, 2019). While the Sinai attack was launched by anti-government gunmen, the Christchurch onslaught was carried out by Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian man, who declared himself a 'racist' and 'ethno-nationalist eco-fascist' in a manifesto he streamed on social media, a compendium of slogans, poems and diatribes against immigrants and Muslims (*The Washington Post*, March 15, 2019).

As is usually the case with assaults of this type, recipients generally rely on news reports which carry information always involving certain representations, assessments and stances vis-à-vis such incidents. Such assessments are value-

laden, as argued by (Fowler, 1991) that "the language of the press is not a value-free, unbiased reflection of the world" (p. 11). The news reports are also amply powerful, through their characteristic language use, to influence attitudes towards those involved and inculcate particular underlying ideologies whereby news actors are judged (See, for example, Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk 1995, 2005, 2009). van Dijk (2006) argues that every detail in the encoding of discourse entails choices based on ideology (p. 125). That is why the reporting of news is imbued with journalists' viewpoints, even when they strive to remain neutral.

This article investigated the representation of victims of the Sinai and Christchurch attacks as displayed by news reports of two globally leading newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian.* It explored how those two papers positioned their readers to take what we shall broadly call a 'high-profile' or 'low-profile' stance towards those victims. We were interested in linguistically exploring such 'high/low-profile' status of victims and why they are not regarded with the same lens even though they were all Muslims. Accordingly, different framings of those victims will be under scrutiny. This article is – to the best of our knowledge – the first to examine the status of Muslim victims of two terrorist attacks that happened in two countries, one Muslim (Egypt) and the other non-Muslim (New Zealand). We should note that in order to analyse how the victims are appraised in the data, they should not be dissociated from the surrounding social actors who largely contribute to bringing forth their high- or low-profile image. The analysis aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How are social actors of the two incidents evaluated in the data; (2) What frames are dedicated to the overall attacks that have direct bearing on the victims; (3) How are victims represented socio-semantically?

2. Literature review

This paper discursively examined the representation of Muslim victims in two countries, one Muslim (Egypt) and the other non-Muslim (New Zealand). Victims have been studied from various perspectives: perpetrator-victim identity (Clifton, 2009); victims of terrorism (Ismail & Mishra 2019; Pfefferbaum, 2003); victims as migrants (Castello, 2015); Muslim versus non-Muslim victims (El-Masry & El-Nawawy, 2022); accounts of victims of racist incidents (Chahal, 2009); preference of certain types of victims and their nationalities (Hanush, 2008). Victims of terrorist incidents have captured the attention of many scholars, a lot of whom argue that Western media value Western victims more than non-Western victims (Hanusch, 2008; Hawkins, 2002; Joye, 2010). El-Nawawy and El-Masry (2017) argue that Western coverage of Third World disasters is "stereotypical, serving to exoticise non-Western victims as 'Other'" (p. 1797). This opinion is held by other scholars as well (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Campbell, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006). There might be a number of explanations for such disparity.

Firstly, media corporations do not view victims with the same lens. Greer (2016, p. 24) viewed victims in terms of 'hierarchy of victimisation' where one type of victims receives huge media attention and generates collective mourning worldwide, which Christie (1986) called 'ideal victims'. The other type of victims

is perceived as 'undeserving victims' who may receive little media attention (Smolej, 2010). According to Christie (1986), the ideal victim is "a person or category of individuals who – when hit by crime – most readily is given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim" (p. 18). He singled out old women and young children to be perceived as 'vulnerable, defenceless and worthy of sympathy'. Herman and Chomsky (1988) used different terms – albeit with the same import – of such dichotomy of victims; namely, 'worthy' and 'unworthy'. Secondly, the perpetrator's religion, whether a Muslim or non-Muslim, plays a pivotal role in news coverage of victims (Kearns et al., 2019). Thirdly, the ethnocentric nature of international news coverage is also instrumental in bringing about such difference of treatment (Kamalipour, 2002; Kim et al., 2008). The image of victims of a terrorist incident cannot, however, be changed; it is how this image with its associated circumstances is discursively and evaluatively represented that gives those victims a high or low status. Therefore, in order to examine a global stance of the news reports under investigation, we made use of the broad characterisation of 'high-profile' and 'low-profile' stance towards victims on the incidents.

This study represents a departure from those previous studies in an attempt to (1) linguistically investigate the portrayal of victims and their concomitant social actors; (2) offer systematic discursive insight into the evaluative mechanisms by employing analytical frameworks derived from Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory and Entman's (1993) Framing Theory.

3. Framing of social actors

This article aims to assess the status of victims of the Sinai and Christchurch attacks through a triangulated approach that includes framing. According to Entman (1993), framing is the selection of "some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text" (p. 52). News reporters use framing to enable them to highlight a few elements whereby to produce a narrative that reinforces a particular interpretation. Based on this construal, reporters can inculcate in their recipients whatever version of reality a news item features. Since framing, according to Page (1996), is the skilful manipulation of covering an event from the angle that best suits the reporter's standpoint, it was essential that we employ it in this study as one of the tools to exhibit the event(s) as presented through the reporter's lens. It constituted what we may call the 'discursive umbrella' of the high/low-profile dichotomy of victims proposed in this study. Not only does framing help reporters in foregrounding, or backgrounding, certain elements of the events in congruence with their own preferred perception of the situation, but it also aids them to affect audience perceptions (D'Angelo, 2002; de Vreese, 2005; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Consequently, the framing and presentation of news can systematically affect how recipients understand the events in these news items (El-Masry, 2009; Price et al., 1995). We concur with Fairhurst who (2005) specifies "language' as one key component of framing, which "emphasises ways in

which truth and reality, objectivity, and legitimacy claims manifest themselves linguistically…" (p. 168). Side by side with Entman's (1993) Framing Theory, we, therefore, employed Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory and van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory to analyse the representation of victims in Sinai and Christchurch incidents.

4. Data collection and sampling

We started collecting the data in 2020, long after the two incidents occurred. That is why it can be said that the 28 news reports collected represent all what was released on these two incidents by the online version of the U.S. *The Washington Post* and the British *The Guardian,* two high-brow, quality newspaper of globally wide circulation. News reports have been selected for their informativeness, 'ostensible' objectivity and for acting as "representation of the world in language" (Fowler 1991, p. 4). News reports are not, however, 'entirely objective' as reporters still continue to provide their own views on given events and deciding which stories and/or sources to emphasise (Conboy, 2007, p. 20). Such 'relative objectivity' allows us to apply our triangulated approach to the data (See Table 1) to develop a more nuanced view of the representation of victims of the two incidents.

Table 1. Data statistics (*The Washington Post & The Guardian*)

Newspapers	No. of news reports		Word count	
	Sinai	Christchurch	Sinai	Christchurch
The Washington Post	5	11	5,400	10,200
The Guardian	2	10	1,800	8,100
Total	7	21	7,200	18,300
	28		25,500	

5. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative eclectic approach to evaluate victims of Sinai and Christchurch mosque attacks as reported by *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian*. The proposed high-profile/low-profile dichotomy of victims was assessed through Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory and Entman's (1993) Framing Theory. The analysis was based on our belief that victims cannot be fully appraised while detached from other social actors in the news reports. Therefore, while the Appraisal Theory, under the umbrella of the Framing Theory (discussed in section 3), is employed to analyse those social actors, the victims were addressed socio-semantically through van Leeuwen's framework. It should be stressed that the analysis was confined to all parts of the data that are pertinent to the representation of the low/high-profile representation of the victims. Analysis was conducted manually, given the manageable size of the data and the fact that studies addressing appraisal and socio-semantics, as is our current case, tend to resist automation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p.70).

In order to avoid subjective or impressionistic decisions as to whether utterances were high-profile or low-profile, we employed Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. Naturally, the Appraisal Theory does not include the high/low-profile dichotomy. However, it provides the tools to operationalise such characterisations in a linguistically systematic way in that it enabled us to determine which attitudinal assessments were characteristic of either of these two positions. According to Zhenhua (2001), the Appraisal Theory "concentrates on the writer's or speaker's positive or negative attitudes to persons, places, entities, events, phenomena and the ways in which the writer or speaker conveys his or her attitudes and positions" (p. 14). The theory is interested in the way a text or a speaker "comes to express, negotiate and naturalise particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions" (White, 1998, p.1).

The Appraisal Theory is a system of interpersonal meanings that is "concerned with evaluation: the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text and the ways in which values are sourced and readers/listeners aligned" (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 25). It is an extension of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (White, 2007). This framework comprises three interrelated systems: (i) Attitude, having to do with the activation of positive or negative positioning; (ii) Engagement, targeting the extent to which the writer engages with other voices; and (iii) Graduation, including resources to scale attitudes. The third system, Graduation, will not be applied in this study as there were no significant instantiations detected in connection therewith. Attitude is divided into three regions of feeling: Affect (people's feelings), Judgement (people's character) and Appreciation (the value of things). For the purposes of this study, only Judgement and Appreciation will be applied. Judgement has two categories: social esteem and social sanction. *Social esteem* has three sub-systems: 'Normality' (how special someone is), 'Capacity' (how capable they are) and 'Tenacity' (how dependable they are). *Social sanction* has to be made according to 'Veracity' (how honest they are) and 'Propriety' (how ethical they are) (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 52-53). Appreciation is divided into three categories: *Reaction*, *Composition* and *Valuation*. *Reaction* deals with the evaluation of people's impact about something and its quality. *Composition* is related to the assessment of the balance of something, and *Valuation* refers to the value of something. *Engagement* acknowledges alternative positions, but with varying degrees. It can act to dialogically *contract* (i.e. to pronounce, reject, counter) alternative voices, or to *expand* (i.e. entertain, acknowledge) them. One of the tools of dialogic *contraction* is to *proclaim* "the proposition as highly warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, etc.)", thereby allowing the textual voice to "suppress or rule out alternative position" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). *Expansion*, on the other hand, includes the sub-category of *attribution*, where the authorial voice either *acknowledges* the proposition (through such verbs as *say*, *express*, *report*, etc.) or *distances* itself from the attributed material (usually by using the verb *claim*) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 104). Evaluations can be either inscribed (explicit) or invoked (implicit).

van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory shows how the social actors (here victims) idefined and/or described in terms of the roles assigned to them. Up to 16 out of 22 representational categories are detected and applied to the 'victims' in the data. They are discussed as follows. *Activation* occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 43). *Assimilation* represents social actors as individuals (*individualisation*) or as a group (*assimilation*). Assimilation has two kinds: *collectivisation* and *aggregation*. While *aggregation* represents social actors with statistics by quantifying group of participants, *collectivisation* uses generalised opinions, not statistically presented. *Association* represents social actors as groups. In *differentiation*, social actors are differentiated explicitly between each other. *Nomination* identifies individuals 'in terms of their unique identity' (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.52). On the other hand, *categorisation* identifies individuals in terms of identities and functions they share with others. *Identification* occurs when social actors are defined, not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they are. *Genericisation* represents social actors as class rather than specific individuals. While *personalisation* represents social actors as human beings, as realised by possessive pronouns, proper names, *impersonalisation* involves a type of representation that does not involve the semantic feature 'human' (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 59). *Exclusion* is a type of backgrounding of social actors. *Spatialisation* is deployed by means of reference to a place with which social actors are closely associated.

6. Analysis and results

We assume that one of the reasons why news items about Christchurch attack significantly outnumber those about Sinai is the notion that *The Washington Post* (WP) and *The Guardian* reporters share the same language, religion, and, generally, the culture of the country where the two mosques were attacked, i.e. New Zealand. This drove them to identify with Christchurch victims, invoking what Walter et al. (1995) called 'it could have happened to me' effect (p.587). Besides, New Zealand is largely considered to belong to the western world, the dominant part of the world which 'tends to be overrepresented and overendowed." (Gerbner, 1980, p.65), and which "reveals a very euro- and ethnocentric vision of news media in their coverage of global suffering" (Joye, 2010, p.13). Discussion in this section will be guided by Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory and Entman's (1993) Framing Theory.

6.1 High-profile representation of Christchurch social actors

Analysis has yielded six frames that all came in support of the New Zealand government and police. It is worth noting that all the frames below, except for the 'blame frame', are ours.

6.1.1 Police prowess frame

Police, a key social actor, are represented as follows. For space limitation, the words 'positive' and 'negative' will be abbreviated into '+ve' and '-ve' respectively.

1. A **heightened** [+VE APPRECIATION: REACTION] police presence is **visible** [+VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] across the country. (*Guardian*)
2. This is an active shooter situation, with **police responding to** [+VE JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY] more gunshots fired. (*Guardian*)
3. New Zealand's **entire police arsenal and personnel** [+VE APPRECIATION: COMPOSITION: BALANCE] were **deployed** [+VE JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY] throughout Christchurch. (*Guardian*)
4. Bangladesh cricket team members **returned safely** [+VE JUDGEMENT: INVOKED CAPACITY] to their hotel, Bangladesh Cricket **confirmed** [CONTRACT, PROCLAIM: CONCUR] (*Guardian*)
5. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs has urged Australians in Christchurch to **follow the instructions of local authorities** [+VE JUDGEMENT: INVOKED TENACITY], **but** [CONTRACT, DISCLAIM: COUNTER] **has not changed** [DISCLAIM: DENY] its travel advice from normal [+VE APPRECIATION, NORMALITY] safety precautions. (*Guardian*)
6. **Within hours** [CONTRACT, PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE], police had **ordered** [JUDGMENT: +VE CAPACITY] mosques across New Zealand to lock their doors. (*WP*)
7. A witness **claimed** [EXPAND: ATTRIBUTE: DISTANCE] police took 20 minutes to arrive. (*WP*)
8. Police said they had spoken to **his (i.e. Tarrant's) family, who called police** [+VE JUDGEMENT: PROPRIETY]. (*WP*)
9. Jacinda Ardern **praises** [+VE JUDGMENT: PROPRIETY] police who arrested terror suspect (*WP*)

The New Zealand police are positively judged and appreciated throughout. Immediately after the attack, the police presence is 'heightened' and 'visible', with forces 'responding' to gunshots at other locations in the city. The dialogic space is contracted when the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, out of belief in police capability of controlling the situation, is reported not to have changed its travel advice from normal safety precautions. The engagement value of [contract, proclaim: pronounce] is utilised in locutions such as 'within hours' to exhibit the expeditious police reaction. The dialogic space is further heteroglossically expanded when the reporter uses the verb 'claimed', distancing himself/herself from the fact that the police took 20 minutes to arrive, simultaneously allowing for another stance that they took less time to show up. The police potency is invoked when the very family of the perpetrator took the first reaction of calling them as the only guarantor of security after the incident. The police are also externally praised by the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, herself for arresting the terror suspect, dialogically aligning the reader to place the police in high esteem.

6.1.2 Corrective action frame

This frame is exemplified as follows:

1. Authorities **have been asked to review** [+VE JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY] why the suspect was **not** [DISCLAIM: DENY] listed on any counter-terrorism watch list, **despite** [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] **reportedly** [ATTRIBUTE: DISTANCE] planning the attack for several years. *(Guardian)*

2. Jacinda Ardern **poised to ban** [PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE] semi-automatic weapons (Headline, *Guardian*)

3. Ardern has **said** [ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] the nation's gun laws will change after it **emerged** [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN] the suspect had a firearms licence and began **legally** [INVOKED –VE APPRECIATION: REACTION] stockpiling weapons in 2017. *(WP)*

4. Ardern said the country's gun laws will be **amended** [+VE APPRECIATION: COMPOSITION, BALANCE]. *(WP)*

Rather than blaming the government or police for the attack, the two newspapers highlight measures taken by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and other top officials to secure a ban on rifles. This stance is similar, in the business environment, to a "corrective action" which is "a step that is taken to remove the causes of an existing nonconformity or undesirable situation … It tries to make sure that existing nonconformities and situations do not happen again. (Tashi, et al., 2016, p. 1). Hence comes the designation of this frame.

Both papers are shifting attention to some measures, or 'corrective actions', which will be taken. Thus, New Zealand authorities are positively judged and appreciated for launching a review into the incident and a move to ban semi-automatic weapons. In example (1), the perpetrator received no blame although *The Guardian* dialogically contracts the context by stating that the suspect was 'not' listed on counter-terrorism watch list. Simultaneously, however, the paper uses the dialogically expansive lexeme "reportedly" to dissociate itself from the confirmation that the attack was being planned for years.

6.1.3 Global condemnation frame

In order to maximise the value of victims of the New Zealand incidents, reporters quoted world leaders to globalise condemnation of the attacks.

1. World leaders **expressed** [ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] sorrow, shock and anger [-VE APPRECIATION: REACTION]. *(Guardian)*

2. The carnage **prompted** [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN] **prayers and vigils around the world** [+VE REACTION: QUALITY]. *(WP)*

3. Pope Francis **denounced** [-VE JUDGEMENT: PROPRIETY] the "**senseless** [-VE APPRECIATION: REACTION] "acts of violence". *(WP)*

Up to (28) world leaders are quoted in *The WP* condemning the attacks, outnumbering those mentioned in *The Guardian* (5). Attitudinal resources of judgement [-ve judgement: propriety] are utilised to excoriate the attacks which are negatively appreciated as 'senseless' and "odious". For space limitations, only a limited number of world leaders are cited. Others are leaders of the United

Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Hungary, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Jordan, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, as well as London Mayor and the Pope of Rome.

6.1.4 Incident appellation frame

The more the attacks are condemned, the higher the profile of the victims becomes. This can be realised through two tools. The first is to depict the attacks in as hideous an image as possible. The attacks are, therefore, negatively appreciated [-ve appreciation: reaction, valuation] with lexemes such as: 'horrible massacre', 'deadly attacks', 'terrorist attack', 'act of terror', 'terror attacks'.

The second is to label the attacks as 'terrorist'. The derivatives 'terrorist', 'terror', 'terrorism' occurred (77) times in both papers. There are (26) occurrences in *The Guardian*, among which (9) are authorial and (17) external sources. *The Washington Post* deployed (51) lexemes, including (3) authorial and (48) external. Since this number far exceeds that scored by the two papers in their reports about the Sinai attack – even if the difference in the total coverage between the Sinai and New Zealand incidents is put into account (See 6.2.1). This raises the question as to which of the two attacks fits into the definition of 'terrorism' better.

To Hoffman (1998), terrorism is the "deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of *political* change" (p. 43). He also specifies that it should be "carried out by an *organisation* … with 'subnational or non-state entity" (p. 43) (*Italics* is ours). While the Sinai attacks are fully compatible with this definition, where ISIS is a non-state 'organisation' seeking 'political' change (cf. 6.2.1), the New Zealand attack cannot be looked at with the same perspective. The attacker, who is not reported to have belonged to a terrorist organisation, is an individual driven by Islamophobic, ethnocentric ideology. By no means should this argument be construed, however, as an understatement of what Tarrant perpetrated. Rather, it should be understood within the context of according high-profile or low-profile image of the victims. Therefore, we argue here that the more frequently the word 'terrorist' and its derivatives are used, the more discursively aligned the reader is to the grisliness of the attack and the more sympathetic he/she is to the victims who are consequently given high niche of appreciation.

6.1.5 Blame frame

As shown in 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, both the New Zealand government and police are irreproachably appraised. Such irreproachability persists in this frame, where the blame – far away from the government and the police – is placed on certain ideologies that are alleged to have triggered such attacks. The two newspapers foregrounded external sources citing such practices as the potential reasons behind the assault: bigotry, demonisation of Muslims, rising tide of violent anti-Islam sentiment, hate speech, incitement against Islam and Muslims, xenophobia, Islamophobia, extremism, and rising racism. On a markedly smaller scale, the blame is generalised and globalised, being put on the shoulders of 'world leaders'

and 'the west' rather than the New Zealand government or police in particular. The following examples concretise the idea.

1. The Iranian president **accused** [-VE JUDGEMENT: PROPRIETY] <u>the West</u> of encouraging "**Islamophobia pervasive** [-VE APPRECIATION: COMPOSITION] in <u>the West</u>." (*Guardian*)
2. New Zealand attack: Al Noor mosque imam tells <u>world leaders</u> to fight **hate speech** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUAION]. (*Guardian*)
3. The Danish Foreign Minister commented that "**extremism** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] has again shown its ugly face." *(WP)*

All the blameworthy tenets above are negatively valued, discursively aligning the reader with the same proposition set forth in the examples.

6.1.6 Leader laudation frame

We propose that if the leader of the nation coming under attack is positively appraised for his/her handling of the situation, and if such appraisal is foregrounded in the news reports, while his/her potential administrative blunders that may make him/her the object of blame are backgrounded, then the value of the victims of such attack is elevated in the eye of the reader. This proposition is evidenced by the data where both newspapers foreground New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's capability of tackling the situation.

1. Arden receives **worldwide praise** [+VE APPRECIATION: COMPOSITION: BALANCE] for her response to the mosque shootings. *(Guardian)*
2. An MP described her as a "**political prodigy**" [+VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION]." (*WP*)
3. **Detractors** [-VE JUDGEMENT: VERACITY] said she was **all style** [-VE INVOKED JUDGEMENT: NORMALITY] and **no substance** [-VE INSCRIBED JUDGEMENT: NORMALITY]. **But** [DISCLAIM: DENY] these domestic problems did not dent the perception of her abroad as an **inspirational** [+VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] leader for the modern age. *(WP)*

Ardern is explicitly appreciated as an 'inspirational' leader who gained 'worldwide' acclaim. The value-laden usage of the lexeme 'detractors' implies that Ardern's opponents 'unduly' disparage her work, and that all their negative judgement of her being 'all style' and with 'no substance' may not be true. This implicitly false accusation is immediately followed by the coordinator 'but' carrying the engagement value of [disclaim: deny] contracting the dialogic space that all her domestic problems did not nibble away at the depiction of her as 'inspirational'.

6.2 Low-profile representation of Sinai social actors

Unlike the high-profile frames depicted in the New Zealand section, the Sinai attack was only given low-profile frames that are not supportive of the government, the president, or the police, and, consequently, not highly appreciative of the victims.

6.2.1 Conflict frame

In conflict frames, journalists "can intervene by adding direct commentary within a news report or *taking a stance* on issues" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 373). *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* are mostly dedicated to portraying Ar-Rawda attack within the framework of a conflict where there are two parties each of which is assumed to have their own 'defensible' case.

1. Egyptian security forces have **struggled for years** [-VE INVOKED JUDGMENT: CAPACITY] against an Islamic State affiliate that has killed hundreds in an **insurgency** against the government of President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, triggered by the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi [-VE JUDGMENT: CAPACITY]. The government has worked to keep that **war** in the shadows [-VE JUDGMENT: PROPRIETY, TENACITY], preventing journalists from accessing Sinai. (*WP*)

2. The massacre highlights the **vulnerability** [-VE INVOKED JUDGMENT: CAPACITY]   of communities trapped in a **conflict** between Egyptian security forces and one of the Islamic State's **most virulent** affiliates [+VE JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY] (*Guardian*)

Two levels of valuation are given here. First, the Egyptian security forces are judged in negative terms for lacking sufficient power to score a landslide victory over the attackers, having to 'struggle for years' trying to do that. Consequently, it is keeping the war 'in the shadows' which may invoke both negative 'propriety' and 'tenacity'. The 'vulnerability' of Ar-Rawda residents is a sign of the government's incapacity. On the other hand, the attackers are capable enough to launch 'an insurgency' and are valued as 'most virulent' affiliate of the Islamic State whose insurgency was sparked, and implicitly justified, by the overthrow of President Morsi.

Even though the Sinai attack fits within the textbook definition of terrorism (cf. 6.1.4), the word 'terrorist' has been used only (11) times (9 externally and 2 authorially) - a very small number in comparison to the word 'militant' which was used (52) times in both newspapers. When authorially used, the word 'terrorist' is put between scare quotes, in an apparent attempt by the wary reporter to distance himself/herself from this designation.

3. Egyptian warplanes strike **'terrorist'** targets after mosque attack kills 305 (*Guardian*)

6.2.2 Assailants' power frame

It may be argued here that the more powerful the assailants are, and the more persistent their operation are, the less the public are shocked at their repetitive attacks and the less the victims are valued. Both newspapers highly appraise the military power of the attackers and judge the government as unable to contain their onslaught, apparently boosting the assailants' raison d'être.

1. The attack in Bir al-Abd underscored the **ability of militants** [+VE JUDGMENT: CAPACITY] to strike at the heart of government-protected zones. *(WP)*

2. The attack is the latest sign of the **government's inability** [-VE JUDGMENT: CAPACITY] to contain a spreading insurgency that is becoming more **brazen and ambitious** [+VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION]. *(WP)*
3. The **assailants' ability** [+VE JUDGMENT: CAPACITY] to inflict a savage blow suggested **to some current U.S. officials** [EXPAND: ACKNOWLEDGE] that the **momentum** [+VE JUDGMENT: CAPACITY] lies with the 'terrorists'. *(Guardian)*

6.2.3 Apostate/Polytheist/Traitor frame

The victims of the attack are not simply 'victims'; rather, they are given different labels that would imply good reasons for the terrorists to kill them. Being Sufis, they are negatively valued by the 'Islamic State' as 'apostates', 'heretics' and 'polytheists'. They are also dubbed as 'traitors' for 'working with the armed forces'.

1. The Islamic State views Sufi Muslims as **apostates** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION]. *(WP)*
2. the Islamic State has long considered Sufism as **heretical** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION]. *(Guardian)*
3. Jihadis have targeted Sinai tribes working with the armed forces**,** branding them **traitors** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] for their cooperation. *(Guardian)*

6.2.4 Blame frame

Unlike the irreproachable appraisal received by the New Zealand government and the Prime Minister (cf. 6.1.6), the Egyptian President, security forces and the government's repression and neglect of Sinai residents are stridently criticised and blamed for the attacks.

1. Attacks by the militant group are growing more deadly **as state repression** [-VE JUDGEMENT: PROPRIETY] of the Sinai's Bedouin inhabitants worsened.*(WP)*
2. There is a background of **long-held grievances** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] among the marginalised Bedouin tribes of the Sinai. The **clumsy and brutal counter-terrorist efforts** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION] of recent years have not helped. *(Guardian)*
3. James Jeffrey, a former ambassador to Iraq and senior fellow at the Washington Institute, said the attack "will serve as an argument for Sissi to **continue** [-VE JUDGMENT: TENACITY] his **draconian crackdown and authoritarian rule** [-VE APPRECIATION: VALUATION]." *(Guardian)*

The Egyptian government is cast in negative light as repressing Sinai Bedouins and failing to respond to their grievances. President Sissi is excoriated for having been the reason behind the worsening conditions of Sinai residents after his ouster of ex-President Mohamed Morsi.

6.3 Representation of victims
Our discussion here applies van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory mainly to two topics: victims of the two incidents, and sources condemning the attacks in New Zealand and Egypt. The aim is to show whether there is a difference in portraying these two topics in both incidents. Three important remarks will, however, be made on the perpetrator, Brenton Tarrant.

6.3.1 Christchurch
Our assumption that Christchurch incidents are given high-profile coverage whereas Sinai attack received only low-profile reporting is further supported in this section. This can be instantiated below:

1. Officials said more than **40 patients,** including both **young children and adults,** were treated for gunshot wounds. *(WP)*
2. Trump tweeted: "**The U.S.** stands by New Zealand." *(WP)*
3. Hungary's president has sent a telegram to New Zealand's governor-general expressing **all Hungarians'** condolences to **the families and friends** of the victims'*(WP)*
4. Germany's Foreign Minister says "the horrific terrorist attack in Christchurch targeted **peacefully praying Muslims** — if **people** are murdered solely because of their religion, that is an attack on **all of us."** *(WP)*
5. **Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia** have condemned the attack and said their **citizens** were affected in the attack. Some names have begun to emerge, including **a three-year-old boy.** *(Guardian)*
6. **Daoud Nabi**, a native of Afghanistan, Syrian refugee **Khaled Mustafa**, and **four-year-old Abdullahi Dirie** are all said to be among the dead. *(Guardian)*
7. Among the 26 being buried on Friday at a single ceremony was **three-year-old Mucad Ibrahim.** *(Guardian)*
8. **Taj Mohammad Kamran** cried as he showed reporters photos of **his cousin** who was killed in the attack. *(Guardian)*
9. **Mohammed Shahadad** attended **his brother's** funeral on a wheelchair on Friday. *(Guardian)*

In (1), the high-level profile of 'patients' is given in the social practice as they are categorised, identified and aggregated. 'Children' are premodified with 'young' to further audience compassion and, along with 'adults', are paratactically genericised to give equal importance to both categories. In (2), 'the U.S.' is used instead of 'I' as an act of both impersonalisation and spatialisation underscoring the fact that it is not one person standing by New Zealand, but an entire country. In (3), the 'condolences' are collectivised, assimilating 'Hungarians' which are premodified by 'all' to consolidate the overall message to 'families and friends' where semantically loaded association is realised through parataxis. In (4),

'Muslims' are premodified by 'peacefully praying' to accentuate the sense of their piety and faultlessness. There is also one idea that needs unpacking here. Although the original usage of 'us' is an act of differentiation, where 'us' refers to the 'Germans' – and, more extensively, all countries having the same mores – and 'people' refers to 'Muslims', the whole sentence may give a sense of assimilation and association between the two sides that come under the same 'attack'. In (5), the paratactic association of six countries denote the notion that as if they formed a group or alliance against the attack. Their 'citizens' are categorised and identified while the 'boy' is differentiated and nominated by the premodifying phrase 'three-year-old' – all to give high status to the victims. In (6) and (7), victims are individualised and nominated to secure more prominence in the social practice. Going to an even wider spectrum of prominence, reporters not only name some of the victims, but they designate their relatives as well. This is instantiated in (8) and (9) where a 'cousin' and a 'brother' of two victims are cited.

Sources cited in the Christchurch incidents are all nominated; i.e. where social actors are represented "in terms of their unique identity" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 40). In the data, we detected nominated, personalised and individualised sources including presidents, prime ministers, ministers, secretaries-general. Up to (28) nominated sources are cited in the WP against (5) in The Guardian. The following are samples:

10. **Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez** says he's shocked at the "terrible attacks." *(WP)*
11. **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** has condemned the attacks on mosques in Christchurch. *(Guardian)*
12. **Germany's foreign minister** says the attacks on two mosques in Christchurch are a "brutal crime" that touches people of all religions. *(Guardian)*

Three remarks on the perpetrator of Christchurch attacks, Brenton Tarrant, are due here. Firstly, after closely scrutinising the data, it is observed that he is never contextualised as the 'agent' opening fire at worshippers. Such exclusion, which is implicitly meant to divert the public's attention and appease its anger at him, is remedied by phrasing sentences like:

13. **One man charged with murder after 50 killed** at two mosques in the city of Christchurch
14. **Fifty people are confirmed dead** after Friday's shootings at two mosques in Christchurch

Where in (13) the 'man' is activated to be accused of murder, and where the agent of 'killed' is elided. If exclusion were not used, it could have read 'After killing 50, the man is charged …". The agent is also excluded in (14) where the nominalisation in 'shootings' adds to the obscuration of the actor, Tarrant.

Secondly, close observation yielded the remark that none of the (33) sources cited in both WP (28) and The Guardian (5) directly criticised Brenton Tarrant himself. Rather, they pilloried certain ideologies including Islamophobia, hate speech, bigotry, etc. (cf. 6.1.6). Thus, the perpetrator is excluded from direct blame.

Thirdly, it has also been observed that, all through the data, criticism by all sources was levelled at the 'shooting', rather than the 'shooter', as shown in:

15. An Australian senator has been strongly criticised after he blamed the New Zealand **shooting** on **Muslim** immigration.

The agent is elided by the process noun 'shooting' to background the perpetrator and foreground the victims instead. The use of process nouns, or nominalisation, here contributes to "deleting agency; reifying; positing reified concepts as agents; maintaining unequal power relations" (Billig, 2008, p.6). It also obfuscates agency and responsibility for the action. Besides, it is striking that the Australian senator, a strident critic of the attack, is not observed to have lambasted Tarrant, but rather 'Muslim immigration'.

6.3.2 Sinai

"Newspapers tend to individualise elite persons and assimilate ordinary people" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 37). Unlike the individualised, 'high-profile' image of Christchurch victims, Al-Rawda victims are predominantly assimilated. They are dubbed as 'people', 'worshippers', 'civilians', 'the injured', 'deaths', and 'bodies'.

1. Militants gunned down fleeing **worshipers** at a packed mosque in Egypt's northern Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 235 **people**. *(WP)*
2. Egypt's chief prosecutor, Nabil Sadeq, said the **305 people** killed including **27 children**, while **a further 128 people** were wounded in the attack on the Rawdah mosque. *(Guardian)*

Two exceptions are detected, however, in which names of two victims and a relative, are detected in the *WP* reports. No such case of differentiation is found in *The Guardian*.

3. **Khalid Soleiman, 22,** tried to escape from the house. But as he ran, a bullet grazed his leg. *(WP)*
4. **Two of Sharawy's uncles** were killed in the attack, including **Fathy el-Tanany, 62**, who led the call to prayer at the mosque, he said. *(WP)*

7. Conclusion

News carries a unique signifying power, a power to represent events in particular ways (Fairclough, 1995). This article examined *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian's* news coverage of victims of terrorist attacks in Sinai, Egypt, and Christchurch, New Zealand. It is the first, as far as we know, to address Muslim victims of terrorist attacks in two countries, one Muslim and the other Christian. It focused on what we call the 'high-profile' or 'low-profile' representation of victims in both incidents. To this aim, we employed Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, van Leeuwen's (2008) Socio-semantic Inventory and Entman's (1993) Framing Theory. We believe that such triangulated approach is relevant because it has been able to explore the particular stances of reporters vis-à-vis each incident. As White (2005) argues: "Even the most ostensibly 'factual' report will be the product of numerous value judgements" (p. 3). Our analysis was based on two

levels: Firstly, globally investigating the representation of ambient social actors in the news reports and see whether they received high or low appraisal frames; secondly, to examine the high/low status of victims themselves.

We have shown that the attitudinal assessments of social actors in Christchurch attacks are markedly high. Six frames have been devised to prove this proposition. The New Zealand police are always positively judged and appreciated. Policemen are capable of controlling the situation and responding expeditiously to restore security. Appraisal resources of judgement, appreciation, engagement and heteroglossic contraction/expansion of dialogic space all worked in unison to serve that purpose. Authorities are not blamed, but rather take measures, or 'corrective actions' to remedy the situation. The value of Christchurch victims is maximised by the large number of world leaders who condemned the attacks. Besides being negatively valued with adjectives such as 'deadly', 'odious', among others, the Christchurch attacks were most prominently labelled as 'terrorist', even though the operation does not fit the definition of terrorism as nicely as that of Sinai. All external sources are foregrounded to place the blame of the attack on demonisation of Muslims, bigotry, hate speech, xenophobia and Islamophobia. None of those at the helm in New Zealand is blamed for the attack. The Prime Minister is positively appraised for handling the situation, with opponents being dubbed as 'detractors'. Overall, all frames in New Zealand incident accord high attitudinal assessments to social actors, thus effectively contributing to the high-profile depiction of victims.

On the other hand, all the four frames the analysis yielded for Sinai attack cast the social actors in negative light. The scene was evaluated as a conflict frame where two warring parties are assumed to have their own 'defensible' case. The Egyptian security forces are negatively judged as incapable of putting an end to an insurgency that led to the attack. The Bedouin community in Sinai is left 'vulnerable' in the face of the "Islamic State's most virulent affiliates." The assailants' power and momentum are also foregrounded, boosting their raison d'être. Victims are also dubbed as 'apostates', 'polytheists' and 'traitors'.

Our socio-semantic analysis focused on victims and quoted sources. Up to 16 representations of van Leeuwen's inventory are applied. In Christchurch attack, victims are given the high status of categorisation, identification and aggregation. Assimilation and collectivisation are used in condolences to consolidate the commiserative message. The victims are also elevated by way of individualisation and nomination, which gives them 'unique identity'. Sources are also nominated and individualised. On the other hand, Ar-Rawda victims are given low status by being predominantly assimilated, not individualised. It is recommended that future research would test the applicability of our approach to victims of natural disasters, illegal migration and rape. Finally, it can be said that such varying low/high-profile discursive representation of Sinai/Christchurch victims reveal the "predominance of western countries in controlling the discourse power in the world" (Qi, & Ye, 2020, p. 361).

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