How is terrorism and perception shaped by media

I	**OUTLINE**
II	**INTRODUCTION**

Thesis Statement: Both terrorism and media go hand in hand. Both have a mutual relationship of benefit. However, there are several tactics employed by the media which can shape terrorism and have a strong influence on public perception.

III	**Technological Terrorism**
IV	**Symbiotic Relationship Terrorism and media**
V.	**Media as a culpable partner in the cycle of te violence**
VI	**How terrorism and media are shaped by media** (perception written above "media")

a. media helps to legitimize the aims of terrorists.

b. Media's usage of agenda setting and framing

c. Construction of discourse by media.

d. Threatening the public, a motif for today's media.

e. Personalisation of terrorists leads to celebritisation.

f.	Spectacularisation of terrorist attacks.
g.	Terrorist motives are oversimplified.
h.	Imitation of successful attacks.

VII — Impacts of Mass Media

a.	Impacts of mass media on health.
b.	Impacts of mass media on public opinion.

VIII — Recommendations

a.	Desecuritisation
b.	Objectivity
c.	Clarity
d.	Differentiation
e.	Governmental assistance

IX — CONCLUSION

According to the United States Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), "terrorism means premediated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."

The way the mass media approaches the reporting of terrorism has evolved rapidly over the last several decades with the impact of globalisation and development of technology. Research has shown that social media, propaganda, fake news and several others can be successful without the use of a physical force. In fact, both terrorism and media go hand in hand. Both have a mutual relationship of benefit. However, there are several tactics employed by media which can shape public terrorism and have strong influence on public perception.

Terrorist organizations today are better positioned than they were before. Today, they possess advanced warfare equipments and have wider audience. Terrorists now use nuclear, chemical or biological agents to trigger disaster, thus posing severe threat

to society.

There is the most commonly held view regarding the role of media in terrorism is that a symbiotic relationship exists. Social contagion theory also talks of this kind of relationship. Essentially, it means that mass media does not actively seek out terrorism to boost their viewing, but the two mutually benefit from each other. Hoffman in his "Terrorism and Communication" states that 'with the help of media - willingly or not - terrorism easily reaches a global audience. Between media and terrorism, there exists a symbiotic relationship.'

media is generally considered a culpable participant in the cycle of terrorism violence. To prove this, Mahmoud Eid in his Terrorism and political violence argues that news media are driven by competition and profit, and subsequently thrive on violence and controversy. They profit from sensationalising stories as much as possible, as it boosts their ratings and viewing numbers. Thus, media are happy to broadcast the violence of terror attacks, giving a platform to perpetrators of

violence and expanding their impact across the globe. This perspective places the media as culpable participants in the cycle of violence.

Media helps to legitimize the aims of terrorists. To prove this, Brigitte L. Nacos in his Terrorism and the Media terrorists aim to publicize their political causes, inform both friends and foes about the motives for terrorist deeds, and explain their rationale for resorting to violence. They further aim to be treated like regular, accepted, legitimate world leaders, as the media gives them a similar status. Given these motives, terrorists arguably carry out their attacks rationally and strategically with full awareness of the influence of the media coverage on almost every segment of a society. In short, terrorism media acts as a tool legitimizing the goals of terrorists.

One should take a closer look at how media portrays terrorists and terrorism related stories and news. Brigitte L Nacos in his Terrorism and the media says that agenda setting is the theory media generally uses agenda setting and framing to highlight and make certain issues more prominent than

others. Agenda setting is the theory that the more attention a media outlet pays to a certain phenomenon, the more importance the public attributes to such as issue. Framing, on the other hand, is selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, giving them moral evaluation. Hence, it is likely that the news that any media are presenting to their audience might be based on agenda setting and framing.

Construction of discourse is also a tactic used by media to influence the public perception. In creating discourse, some media organizations↓ use propaganda to create unfounded stereotypes against terrorists belonging to certain religions and areas. Jeff Lewis in his The Role of Media and Culture in Global Terror and political violence states that after 9/11, the response of the media in the US was often far from objective, calm, and prudent. Instead, media organs oozed hatred and hystria, calling for action against mainly Arabs and Muslims and crying for revenge. The major corporate media tended

to support the patriotic discourse and the policies of the then president George W. Bush, who was leading the nation against the forces of "political and cosmological evil". The way of media coverage after the traumatic event dramatically changed the public perceptions, discourse at government and public political events. In other words, 9/11 was used by the media and politicians to promote fear related agendas and ideologies.

There is another strategy of fear used by the media to influence public perception. The media covers terrorist acts by writing sensation-seeking, enlarging anecdotic stories, especially on who is to blame, repeating the same images over and over again. David L. Altheide in his Terror Post 9/11 and the media states that media traumatizes the audience by exaggerating the threats, or, as it was in the US after 9/11, showing non-stop footage of combat scenes. In other words, as Altheide underlines, the politics of fear is a dominant motif for news and popular culture today.

The personalisation of major terrorists in media leads to celebritisation of them.

This happens mainly when media highlights certain terrorists again and again. For instance David L. Altheide and Robert P. Snow in their work media Logic argue that personalisation of a leading terrorist results in popularisation of an association of one individual, his/her name/nickname with the whole terrorist organisation, as in Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda. Media focuses on leading terrorist organisation's leadership, their personal life, motivations, psyche, personality, experiences and other details which may be recognized by the recipient as 'attractive' or 'interesting', but not informative. As a result, the leader and his terrorist organization become commonly recognized and become a brand. Osama bin Laden was commonly recognized as the 'world's terrorist number one, emerging as a symbol and brand of l Al-Qaeda. In short, Personalisation of terrorists becomes celebritisation.

Spectacularisation of terror attacks also have strong impacts on public. Terrorists wish to gain maximum media attention. For that they choose their areas of attack rationally where there is a maximum presence

of media. Media taking advantage of this, present the images and videos to the public through internet and television. These images and videos are presented repeatedly and in a detailed way, explaining every detail. Later, movies are also produced based on these attacks. J.M. Berger in his Extremism says that the vision and sound influence both recipient's perception and recipient's emotional response to a stimuli, what, as a result, increases his/her interest in a presented story. The television's need to present an 'attractive' and 'interesting' information leads to the recreation of a terrorist attack as a spectacle-its form has to be dramatic, and it has to inspire people's emotions. The act of terror becomes a performed spectacle that competes with other media spectacles for a viewer's attention.

The next strategy used by the media is terrorists' motivations and objectives are oversimplified by the media for their own ease. As it is also said by Hoskins and O'Loughlin in their Television and Terror: conflicting Times and the crisis of News Discourse. They say that

Terrorists motivations and objectives are are oversimplified and highly generalised, Thus they become a simple and general catch-phrase. This is done with reference to the logic of media communication. Media construct their (terrorists) message through a combination of simple phrases (that describe major motivation of terrorists), but they prefer these interpretations which are easy to memorise. These phrases sometimes become slogans, resultantly become so common in public.

Media also contributes in imitation of terrorist attacks by like minded people. Being inspired by the wide coverage of terrorist attacks on television and the successful implementation of terrorist attacks, like-minded people start imitating the actions of terrorists. Gus Martin in his Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues notes that when terrorists manage to get wide exposure or a higher degree of compassion from the media and their audiences, future terrorists may be inspired to emulate the methods of the

first successful incident. True causes of successful contagion effect include political & commercial kidnappings for payment and concessions in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, hijackings in support of middle Eastern causes (usually Palestinian) from the late 1960s to the 1980s and the hostage taking of Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s. Thus, media becomes a part in spreading terrorism by influencing like-minded people to emulate the successfull terrorist attacks.

The violence being publicised by the media poses severe threat to public health. Media in order to get increased viewership and taking the advantage of violence committed by the terrorists is repeatedly showing its content to the audience, which may have negative impacts on public. Audiovisual expressions of violence being publicised by the media may contribute to increased social violence and aggression.

The terrorism have portrayed by the media have a great impact on public opinion. After the physical acts of terror, people follow the events from the media sources, because

they think they could find the most detailed information from the media sources. media impacts on public opinion can be seen at both to individual and state level. Bruce Hoffman in his Inside Terrorism states that: "The news sometimes has a ~~strong~~ wrong influence both on public opinion and political decisions making." It is also likely that the media may ~~in~~ construct biased opinion on terrorists. To sum up, the news are the most important element that affects public opinion.

There are many recommendations regarding the way media courages terrorism. The first one is desecuritization. There is no doubt that terrorism must be reported. However, the way the events are framed and the extent to which it is covered is also important. Accordingly in order to alter the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the media, it is of the high importance for the media to reevaluate and change its rhetoric when covering the terrorism-related news and stories. Just as the security elite can desecuritize issues in international affairs

through speech acts, media can adopt the same approach and desecuritize terrorism-related acts through covering those incidents just as any other story in a more reasonable and less "sensational" manner. It may not only prevent terrorists from using media coverage as an important publicity tool, but may also prevent the emergence of an atmosphere of fear at the public level. It may also force government and security elite to make more rational decisions regarding countering terrorism. Thus, desecuritization is helpful in many ways.

Secondly, objectivity and bipartisanship to should be key when reporting a story. The media should present both sides of the story to the audience fairly and accurately without bias, so that the audience can make their own opinion of the news and/or story independent of the media's negative influence.

Thirdly, media should uphold clarity. The media should provide the clearest, most factual, and most balanced information to the extent it is possible to prevent the misinterpretation of terrorism-related incidents

by the public and government officials who can possibly make suboptimal decisions regarding the countering moves. The media should avoid presenting extreme and blindly partisan viewpoints to raise raitings and use a plain language that everybody can understand in order not to invite panic.

Fourthly, since no terrorist group is alike, the media should differentiate between different types of terrorism and terrorist groups in order not to provoke and mobilize public against certain ethnic and/or religious minorities. In other words, it is of high importance not to cover news and stories in such a way as to contribute to the "otherization" of the group in question and create an "us" vs. "them" scenario. Such dichotomy can give way to social unrest in multicultural societies. So, differentiation is necessary to prevent further unrest.

Lastly, governments can give assistance to media organs by giving the political context and background of any terrorism-related act or storys as it is ideally the ultimate goal of the media to correctly inform the

audience. To this end, a government-media partnership that is better informing the public, refuting the arguments of terrorists, and depriving them of the publicity they need can be formed.

To conclude, with the passage of time, both terrorism and media have been strongly influenced by globalisation and ~~terrorism~~ development of technology. Taking the advantage of technology, both are fulfilling the objectives of each other. However, the way media coverages terrorism today, media, due to some reasons can utterly alter the perception of public on terrorism and terrorists, leaving negative impacts on people.