Who said what?

The difference between news media coverage and governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis

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Abstract

The crash of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on July 2014 heavily affected Dutch society, as most of the passengers on board were from the Netherlands. Because of this impact the crisis received enormous attention from the Dutch news media and also the Dutch government communicated about the crisis actively.

The present study investigates the difference between the media coverage and the governmental communication in regards to the MH17 crisis. By the use of a content analysis, both media coverage and governmental communication were investigated and in total 300 newspapers articles and 50 governmental speeches were analyzed. This research focused how media coverage and the governmental communication about the MH17 crisis differ in the use of five typical news frames (i.e. the human interest frame, the conflict frame, the responsibility frame, the economic consequences frame, the morality frame) and the tone of voice. Furthermore, this study provide insights how the MH17 crisis was framed in news media coverage and the governmental communication. The results show that most of the news articles and governmental speeches were covered in terms of the human interest frame, followed by the conflict frame and the responsibility frame. Only the economic consequences frame differed between news media coverage and the governmental communication. Next, the tone of voice toward stakeholders differed significantly between media coverage and governmental communication. Thus, based on the results of this research it can be stated that news media and the Dutch government differed to some extent in their communication about the MH17 crisis.

Keywords: *MH17 crisis, media coverage, governmental communication, tone of voice, frame use*

Table of contents

1. Introduction

"The demise of almost 200 of my compatriots has left a hole in the heart of the Dutch nation, has caused grief, anger, and despair" (Frans Timmermans, 21 July 2014, at the UN Security Council)

On 17 July, 2014 Malaysia Airlines plane MH17 crashed in the conflict area of Eastern Ukraine (Doneck region), which pro-Russian rebels occupied. The plane was flying from Amsterdam (The Netherlands), to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and on board were 298 passengers from many different countries including The Netherlands (193), Australia (27), Belgium (4), Canada (1), Germany (4), Indonesia (12), Malaysia (43), Belgium (4), New Zealand (1), United Kingdom (10) and The Philippines (3). According to the official report by the Dutch Safety Board (Onderzoeksraad van Veiligheid), the MH17 plane was hit by a BUK missile system (The Guardian, 2015), but in the same report it stays unclear who pulled the trigger of the system which was produced in the Russian Federation.

Immediately after the plane crash, the MH17 crisis received enormous Dutch media attention, not only because it was an international crisis, but also because the majority of the passengers had the Dutch nationality. Moreover, directly after the Malaysian plane crash, the Dutch government established a national crisis committee. Its main goals were reparation and identification of the victims, investigation of the cause of the MH17 crash and prosecution of the possible offenders (Torenvlied, Giebels, Wessel, Gutteling, Moorkamp, & Broekema, 2015).

In times of crisis, stakeholders receive important information through media coverage and direct corporate communication. According to McCombs (2015) and Nijkrake, Gosselt and Guttering (2015) media coverage may differ from corporate communication in times of crisis, due to the fact that media emphasizes different aspects of an issue to attract an audience. Therefore, it is to be expected that media coverage and governmental communication differ in their communication about a crisis. As well during a crisis, media and government may use a different tone (i.e. positive, neutral, negative) toward relevant stakeholders or highlight different frames in their communication. Second, although different studies have focused on corporate communication in times of crisis, there is still little known about the governmental communication during a crisis. Furthermore, no studies have analyzed frame use and the tone of voice in media coverage and governmental communication in relation to the MH17 flight. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the difference between news media coverage and the governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis.

The research question under investigation is:

RQ: To what extent do the media coverage and the governmental communication differ in their frame use and tone of voice towards different stakeholders about the MH17 crisis?

2. Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework begins with an introduction of crisis communication (2.1). Secondly, governmental crisis communication will be described (2.2). Thereafter, media coverage during the crisis will be discussed (2.3). Fourth, frame use and the tone of voice will be presented (2.4). Finally, media coverage and the governmental communication will be compared (2.5).

2.1 Crisis communication

'A crisis is a sudden and unexpected event that threatens to disrupt an organization's operations and poses both a financial and reputational threat' (Coombs, 2007, p.2). Consequently, to protect an organization and its stakeholders, crisis communication is needed. Crisis communication conducted by organizations may minimize negative consequences of an event and change stakeholders' perception of the crisis. Based on the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), the most familiar management responses to a crisis are: the deny response (an organization tries to eliminate any connections with the crisis), the diminish response (an organization claims that the crisis is not that bad and the organization had lack of control over the crisis), or the rebuild response (an organization in crisis offers to compensate the victims and asks for forgiveness) (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2011). In general, stakeholders may be informed about a crisis through direct interactions with an organization (i.e. press conference), second-hand information (i.e. word of mouth), and mediated information (i.e. news media). According to Coombs (2007) the news media play a significant role during a crisis, because most of the stakeholders will learn about a crisis from media sources.

Further, an organization in crisis has to use an adequate crisis communication toward their stakeholders, because a good crisis communication may influence stakeholders' attitudes toward the organization in crisis. Moreover, in the case of a national problem, the government plays an important role in a crisis communication. The government and its authorities (i.e. ministers), through its communication, provide valuable information to reduce a crisis (Patin, 2015; Crijns, Cauberge & Hudders, 2016).

2.2 Governmental crisis communication

During a crisis, the government has the extremely challenging task to communicate a tragic event to its citizens. In their communication, the government is obligated to find a balance between the creation of awareness and avoidance of anxiety among the general public (Altheide, 2006; Mythen & Walklate, 2006; Crijns et al., 2016). For instance, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack at Brussels Airport and in the metro station in 2016, the Belgian government found an appropriate crisis communication with their citizens. The National Security Council and the Prime Minister Charles Michel expressed their condolences to the family and victims of the terrorist attack and offered their support during difficult times. Moreover, the Belgian government provided additional border controls and strengthening military presence on the streets (Belgium.be, 2016). Additionally, the government during their communication advised people to stay at home (Het Laaste Nieuws, 2016). Furthermore, political authorities are obligated to establish order during a crisis. According to previous research, a good crisis communication provided by the government is needed to protect its citizens, and can reduce the consequences of an issue. Additionally, governments have to communicate openly, show sympathy and compassion to victims, and harmonize all of their actions (Sellnow & Littlefield, 2005; Littlefield & Quenette, 2007). According to Chaques-Bonafont and Baumgartner (2013), in times of crisis, political leaders have to increase their media activities by means of frequent press releases to persuade and inform the general public. Moreover, good leadership can minimize the crisis, while weak and untransparent leadership can make problems even worse (Kapacu & Van Wart, 2008).

A meaningful example of a crisis response concerns the New York politicians, after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. Although political authorities were badly prepared for a crisis such as the terrorist attack, they implemented remarkable responses in a short period of time. For instance, the local government officials and the national government officials communicated transparent messages to the public and the mayor of New York City, Giuliani, held multiple press conferences every day to keep the general public informed of recovery efforts (Cohen, Eimicke, & Horen, 2002). On the other hand, negative governmental crisis communication is shown in the case of the MH370 disappearance crisis. The Malaysian government was criticized by the Chinese government, relatives of MH370 passengers and international media for their unreliable information provided to the public and a lack of transparency and leadership (Branigan, 2014; Pearson, 2014; Shankar, 2014; Park, Bier, & Pawlendera, 2016).

2.3 Media coverage during the crisis

As noted previously, stakeholders use news media to retrieve information about the crisis. Research conducted by The Pew Research Center for People & The Press in the United States found that for most people television, newspapers and the internet are the fundamental sources of information (Audience, 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2008). According to the study of An and Gover (2009), news media might have a great influence on the general public during a crisis, because individuals judge the crisis based on the media coverage. Moreover, news media affect attitudes and behavior in regards to an issue (Park & Reben, 2010; Park et al., 2016).

In general, news media present daily problems. The probability that an issue will become news is higher if the institution or an actor involved in a crisis is important (i.e. Government, Prime Minister) or the conflict is large and the number of individuals involved in the event is large (Ardic, Annema, & Van Wee, 2015). Additionally, Pavelka (2014) suggests that news with a high emotional acuteness (i.e. positive or negative) is more attractive for news media. Next to this, intensity of media coverage during the crisis may depend on the crisis stage. For instance, the media coverage in the Netherlands related to the epidemic swine flu was most intensive during the first month of the crisis (Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013; Pang & Meng, 2016). Thus, media coverage is the most prominent directly after the negative event.

A story exposed by media may lead to numerous interpretations (Pan & Meng, 2016). For example, media coverage during the swine flu pandemic in 2009 informed more about the economic consequences of the issue than the effectiveness of the vaccine. In consequence, the level of uncertainty among the general public about the vaccine increased during the crisis (Yu, Frohlich, Fonger & Ren, 2011; Pan & Meng, 2016). In their coverage, media frequently use different frames to attract an audience and make information more meaningful and noteworthy. Those frames propose judgments and contain arguments to praise or criticize an issue (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi & Vliegenthart, 2016).

2.4 Frame use and the tone of voice

Frame use is extremely essential for the creation of an organizational reputation, prevention of crisis escalation and the avoidance of public anxiety (Van der Meer, Verhoeven, Beentjes, & Vliegenthart, 2014). This is because, frames can influence peoples' opinion about a certain issue and help evaluate a problem. Although there is no universal definition of framing, those definitions written by scientists

mention similar characteristics. Frame can highlights some parts of reality while it covers up others. News framing may influence salience of a particular problem and affect the knowledge of the issue. Additionally, frame use helps to understand why a certain topic should be seen as a problem and how this problem should be resolved (Ford & King, 2015).

News media try to be interesting for their public. Therefore they often highlight different aspects of an issue compared to corporate communication (McCombs, 2015; Nijkrake et al., 2015). For instance, the crisis communication about flight MH370 disappearance differed between Malaysia Airlines' own communication and news media coverage. To illustrate, Malaysia Airlines highlighted efforts to find the cause of the disappearance, whereas Malaysian and Chinese news coverage emphasized information on the victims and their families (Park et al., 2016). A number of previous studies also focused on news framing during times of crisis. Schultz, Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, Utz, and Van Attevedt (2012) found that during the British Petroleum crisis, caused by an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, news framing was significantly different between British Petroleums' own communication and the US news media and the British news media communication. British Petroleum, in their press conferences, focused on the oil spill problem and on the solutions. At the same time the British and the American media emphasized the enormous environmental consequences caused by the crisis.

According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) there are several different frames that generally appear in the news: the conflict frame, the human interest frame, the economic consequences frame, the responsibility frame and the morality frame. Research conducted in the United States and Europe noted that the conflict frame is the most popular frame used by news media (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The conflict frame enhances conflict between individuals, groups or institutions and is commonly used by news media during political campaigns (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999). Also, Chinese and Malaysian newspapers framed the MH370 disappearance crisis often in terms of the conflict frame, followed by the human interest frame, the morality frame and the economic consequences frame (Park et al., 2016). Second, the human interest frame 'brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem' (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). An and Gover (2009) state that this frame affects peoples' emotional response to the event and leads them to form unfavorable attitudes toward the crisis. The human interest frame was frequently used in American news media coverage about Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (Bruken, 2006; Nijkrake et al., 2015) and a study by Nijkrake et al. (2015) about a bacteria outbreak in a Dutch hospital found that news media in the first months of the crisis framed their articles mostly in terms of the human interest frame. Third, the economic consequences frame highlights economic consequences of an event or problem, that a person or institution may have. Framing news in terms of the economic

consequences makes an event more important for the audience (Valkenburg et al., 1999). According to Valentini and Romenti (2011) the Alitalia crisis was mostly framed in terms of economic consequences. Fourthly, the morality frame underlines social, cultural, ethical and religious issues. The morality frame is less frequently used compared to other frames. According to An and Gower (2009), the morality frame is used when preventable crisis occurred. For instance, the morality frame can affect people's moral judgement about an institution (An, 2011).The final frame is the responsibility frame. This frame stresses a problem to impute the responsibility for a cause to the group, individual or government and this frame is made to build people's awareness of who is responsible for the social issue (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For instance, the Malaysian government framed their messages about the MH370 disappearance in terms of the responsibility frame (Park et al., 2016).

Besides frames, the tone of voice used by news media influences peoples' perception of an issue. Previous research found that the tone of voice in media coverage has an effect on public interest in the topic (de Vreese & Boomgarden, 2006) and may influence the public opinion about this issue. As noted by Nijkrake et al. (2015), there are three kinds of tone of voice that can be distinguished in media coverage: positive, neutral and negative. Media may use different kinds of tone in their coverage toward different stakeholders (Brunken, 2006). For instance, in the case of the Hurricane Katrina the tone of voice toward national and local government differed significantly. Whereas the tone of voice toward national government was slightly neutral, the tone of voice toward local government was rather negative. Additionally, an organization gains positive media coverage when it is glorified for its actions, negative when its actions are criticized and neutral when no specific instructive judgement about the organization is mentioned (Deephouse, 2000; Nijkrake et al., 2015).

In general, newspapers use different tones of voice in their news stories to attract their audience and highlighting importance of the story. A study by Clare and Abdelhaday (2015) found that French media coverage of immigrants differed among three national newspapers (i.e. Le Figaro, Le Monde and L'Humanite). The central-right Le Figaro had a negative tone toward the children of immigrants, the central-left Le Monde had a negative tone towards the immigrants, as well toward the French institutions. On the other hand, L'Humanite had a positive tone of voice in their news regarding the immigrants as in their coverage they emphasized the discrimination of immigrants' children (Clare & Abdelhaday, 2015). Kuttschreuter, Gutteling and de Hond (2011), analyzed media coverage regarding the Enschede fireworks accident in 2000 and the result of their study showed that the tone of voice was more negative toward the national government than the local government in the national newspapers

2.5 Media coverage vs. governmental communication

Governmental communication differs from news media coverage because a government consists of several separate ministries and decisions made by them demand consultations. Furthermore, governments face several limitations on their capacity to communicate due to regulations (Liu, Horsley & Yang, 2012). The government often deals with diplomacy rules and public safety issues. Therefore, the government cannot make fast responses compared to the news media coverage (Walgrave, Soroka, & Nutyenmans, 2008). For instance, the Dutch government was not able to release a full list of the Dutch passengers on MH17 in a short period of time, because Malaysia Airlines only had a list of the passenger's nationalities. On the other hand, media such as newspapers aim to find breaking news. Therefore, their coverage may be biased and uncertain. Governments cannot communicate dubious information, so its communication has to be error-free and reliable to convince the electorate (Baubion, 2013). Moreover, media have a more entertaining focus in times of crisis because they select information and present them in a sensational way to increase their sales ratings (Kasperson & Kasperson, 1996, Wray et al., 2004; Crijns et al., 2016), whereas the government aims to provide more objective information about an event to its citizens to minimize consequences of an event, reduce rumors and misinformation (Longstaff & Yang, 2008; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008; Crijns et al., 2016). Also, during uncertain situations governments often inform their citizens about preventive actions, while media intensify the drama of a crisis. Additionally, content and quality of information may differ between media coverage and governmental communication. For instance, according to Park et al. (2016) the Malaysian government, in their MH370 crisis communication, highlighted different aspects of the crisis compared to the Chinese and Malaysian media. For instance, the Malaysian government communicated its efforts to find the cause of the accident and responded emotionally to the crisis: "We are deeply saddened with the news on MH370". On the other hand, Malaysian and Chinese newspapers focused on a conflict issues related to the crisis.

3. Method

The purpose of this study is to investigate frame use and the tone of voice toward different stakeholders in media coverage and governmental communication. To examine these differences between media coverage and the governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis, a content analysis was conducted.

3.1 Corpus

3.1.2 Selection of media coverage

For the media coverage, news articles from four Dutch newspapers (*De Telegraaf, Algemeen Dagblad, De Volkskrant, Het Parool)* and one news agency (*Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau)* were analyzed. In total, the corpus consists of 300 new articles related to the MH17 crisis. All of the news articles were retrieved from a digital database '*LexisNexis*' by the use of keywords. The keywords used during the search procedure were: '*MH17 Dutch government* ', '*MH17 crises', 'MH17 Mark Rutte'* or *'MH17 report'.* Furthermore, to investigate the MH17 crisis two periods of time were analyzed. The first period was from 17 July 2014 (MH17 crash) until November 2014 (the wreckage of MH17 returned to the Netherlands) and the second period was from 17 July 2015 (a year after the MH17 catastrophe) until October 2015 (MH17 final report). It was expected that those two periods would have the biggest number of articles related to the MH17 crisis.

3.1.3 Selection of governmental communication

For the governmental communication, 50 governmental speeches were analyzed. A number of 35 speeches were given by representatives of the Dutch government (i.e. a speech by Mark Rutte after the meeting with the Australian Prime Minister, a parliamentary briefing, an update on the air disaster developments, a speech at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly by Mark Rutte, a letter to the President of the House of Representatives from Minister of Foreign Affairs Frans Timmermans and Minister of Security and Justice Ivo Opstelen). Next to this, a number of 15 speeches were given by several institutions related to the government (i.e. press statements by the head of the recovery mission or an Openbaar Ministerie statement). All of the speeches were retrieved from the official governmental website *government.nl* by the use of keywords. The keywords used during the

search procedure were for instance: '*MH17 Frans Timmermans', 'MH17 Mark Rutte'*, '*MH17 Openbaare Ministerie',* or *'MH17 OVV'.* The period of coding was the same as for the media coverage.

3.2 Coding and procedure

To investigate the frame use and the tone of voice of both media coverage and the governmental communication a codebook was used. The codebook of this research can be found in Appendix A1. The coding instrument consisted of two parts: news frame and tone of voice.

To analyze the appearance of frames in media coverage and the governmental communication, the framework of Nijkrake et al. (2015), which is based on the framework of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), was used. This framework consists of five frames: the human interest frame, the responsibility frame, the conflict frame, the economic consequences frame and the morality frame. For each news article the appearance of the frames was analyzed. It is important to mention that an article can contain more than one frame.

Stakeholders were coded to establish the tone of voice. Stakeholders were identified from the news articles and speeches related to the MH17 crisis. The eleven stakeholders include: (1) the Dutch government, (2) institutions related to the government, (3) international governments, (4) the general public, (5) family of victims, (6) victims, (7) Malaysia Airlines/KLM, (8) the offenders, (9) Russia, (10) international institutions, and (11) media. The tone of voice toward these stakeholders was coded on a five-point scale (very negative, negative, neutral, positive and very positive). Examples of positive tone of voice are: *'excellent'*, *'excellent cooperation'* and examples of negative tone of voice are: *'sad'* or '*reckless'*.

Before the coding procedure, a pre-test was conducted to achieve a sufficient Cohen's Kappa. The Cohen's Kappa was used to measure the agreement between coders. For the pre-test approximately 10% of the total number of news articles and speeches were used, the articles and speeches were selected randomly. Two coders conducted the content analysis independently. In Table 1 the results of the intercoder reliability are presented.

Table 1

Cohen's Kappa scores

Type of variable	Variable	Cohen's Kappa
Frames	Human interest	1
	Conflict	.817
	Responsibility	.892
	Economic consequences	.785
	Morality	1
Tone of voice (ranging from very negative to very positive)	Dutch government	.819
	Institution related to the government	.763
	International governments	.694
	The general public	.785
	Family of victims	.794
	Victims	.882
	Malaysia Airlines/KLM	.857
	Offenders	.763
	Russia	.769
	International institutions	.852
	Media	.892

4. Results

In this section the research results are presented. First, frame use toward relevant stakeholders will be presented (4.1). Second, the tone of voice of news media and governmental communication will be described (4.2), followed by the tone of voice per frame use (4.3).

4.1 Frame use

The presence of five news frames in media coverage and governmental communication is shown in Table 2. Media coverage about the MH17 crisis was framed most frequently in terms of the human interest frame (97%), followed by the conflict frame (40%), the responsibility frame (15%) and the economic consequences frame (8%). Only 4% of the news articles contained a morality frame. Governmental communication was framed most often in terms of the human interest frame (100%), followed by the conflict frame (28%), the responsibility frame (16%) and the morality frame (2%). No governmental communication was framed in terms of economic consequences. To test whether a statistically significant relationship exist between both types, Chi-square tests were conducted. Chi-square tests exposed that only the use of the economic consequences frame differs significantly between media coverage and governmental communication (X^2 (1, N=350)= 4.48, p=.003).

Finally, the number of news frames per article were almost the same for media coverage (i.e. 1.6) as for governmental communication (i.e. 1.5).

Table 2

Use of frames in media coverage and governmental communication

News frames	I Media coverage		II Governmental communication		I vs. II (Chi-Square Test)
	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	t
Human interest frame	97%	(290)	100%	(50)	n.s.
Conflict frame	40%	(119)	28%	(14)	n.s.
Responsibility frame	15%	(44)	16%	(8)	n.s.
Economic consequences frame	8%	(25)	0%	(0)	4.48*
Morality frame	4%	(13)	2%	(1)	n.s.
Total number of frames	491		73		
Number of frames per article	1.6		1.5		

* p <.05 ** p < .01, values in parentheses represent number of articles/speeches.

4.2 Tone of voice

In Table 3 the results of the average tone of voice towards stakeholders are presented. Tone of voice ranges from very negative to very positive regarding the following stakeholders: (1) the Dutch government, (2) institutions related to the government, (3) international governments, (4) the general public, (5) family of victims (6) victims, (7) Malaysia Airlines/KLM, (8) the offenders, (9) Russia, (10) international institutions and (11) media. All of the stakeholders were covered in media communication and governmental communication and independent t-test were used to compare the tone of voice toward stakeholders between media coverage and the governmental communication. The overall tone of voice was more negative in media coverage (*M*= -.19, *SD*= .349) than in governmental communication (*M*= -.02, *SD*= .273), (*t(*348)= -3.41, *p*<.05). Institutions related to the government were covered more negatively in media coverage (*M*= -.23, *SD*= .578) than in governmental communication (*M*= .18, *SD*=528*), t*(207)= -2.78, *p*<.01). Next, international governments were covered significantly more negative in media coverage (*M*= -.13, *SD*= .522), than in governmental communication (*M*=.24*, SD*= .484*), t*(214)= -4.11, *p*<.01). Also, international institutions were covered more negatively in media coverage (*M*= -.07, *SD*=.*350)* than in governmental communication (*M*= .14, *SD*= .515), (*t*(130)= -2.49, *p*<.05). On the other hand, there is no significant difference in tone of voice between media coverage and governmental communication towards: the Dutch government, the general public, family of victims, Malaysia Airlines/KLM, offenders and Russia.

Table 3

Average tone of voice toward stakeholders in media coverage, governmental communication and comparison

Stakeholders	I. Media coverage			II. Governmental communication			I vs. II
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	
The Dutch government	-.26	.732	153	-.12	.353	8	n.s.
Institutions related to the government	-.23	.578	192	.18	.528	17	-2.78*
International governments	-.13	.522	174	.24	.484	42	-4.11**
The general public	.03	.706	31	-.14	.662	14	n.s.
Family of victims	-.26	.536	108	-.22	.552	32	n.s.
Victims	-.07	.260	138	-.18	.456	38	n.s.
Malaysia Airlines/ KLM	-09	.327	79	-.05	.229	19	n.s.
The offenders	-.26	.457	127	-.27	.467	11	n.s.
Russia	-.46	.514	139	-.27	.467	11	n.s.
International institutions	-.07	.350	103	.14	.515	29	-2.49*
Media	-.13	.340	46	.00	.000	2	n.s.
Overall tone of voice	-.19	.349	300	-.02	.273	50	-3.41*

*$p <.05$ **$p < .01$
Note. Tone of voice ranges from -2(very negative) to +2 (very positive)

4.3 Frame use and tone of voice

Table 4 shows relations between frames and the tone of voice toward stakeholders in news media coverage and the governmental communication. To investigate the difference between frame use and the average tone of voice towards stakeholders in news media coverage and the governmental communication paired samples T-tests were conducted. Firstly, the selection of pairs was made, after that paired samples T-test were used to determine the difference between pairs of stakeholders. It is

important to mention that the number of pairs may differ because not in all news articles and the governmental speeches both stakeholders were present.

Firstly, news media in their coverage used a more negative tone of voice towards Russia (M= -.48, SD=.524) than international governments (M= -.21, SD=.436) when the human interest frame was present and this difference was significant (t(89)=4.11, p<.01). On the other hand, there was no significant difference in the tone of voice between Russia (M=-.10, SD= .316) and the general public (M=-.20, SD= .421) in news media coverage. Furthermore, in the governmental communication the tone of voice towards Russia (M=-.27, SD=.467) was significantly more negative than towards international governments (M=.09, SD=.301) when the human interest frame was used (t(10)=2.39, p<.05). Next, there was no significant difference between Russia (M=.00, SD=.00) and the general public (M=-50, SD=.707) when the governmental communication was characterized by the use of the human interest frame.

In news media coverage there was no significant difference in tone of voice between the Dutch government (M=-.37, SD=.667) and international governments (M=-.42, SD=.500), when the conflict frame was used. On the other hand, there was a significant difference between the Dutch government (M= -.39, SD= .667) and victims (M= -.03, SD=.179), when media articles were covered in terms of the conflict frame. In governmental communication there was no significant difference in tone of voice toward the Dutch government (M= -.50, SD= .707) and victims (M= .00, SD= .000) when the conflict frame was used. It was not possible to investigate the difference in tone of voice between the Dutch government and international governments because both stakeholders were not present at the same time in the governmental speeches when the conflict frame occurred.

Finally, the tone of voice towards the offenders (M=-.35, SD=.489) and Russia (M=-.69, SD=.558) differed significantly when media covered their information by the use of the responsibility frame (t(22)= 2.33, p<.05). On the other hand, the general public and Malaysia Airlines/KLM were not present at the same time in media articles when the responsibility frame was used. In addition, there was no significant difference between the tone of voice toward offenders (M=.00, SD=.000) and Russia (M=-50, SD=.707) in the governmental communication. In governmental communication it was not possible to investigate the difference in tone of voice toward the general public and Malaysia Airlines/KLM because both stakeholders were not present at the same time when the responsibility frame was used.

Table 4
The tone of voice per frame use in media coverage and governmental communication

Stakeholders in media coverage

News frames	The Dutch government		Institutions related to the government		International governments		The general public		Family of victims		Victims		Malaysia Airlines/ KLM		The offenders		Russia		International institutions		Media		Overall tone	
	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M
Human interest	150	-.27	186	-.23	171	-.13	31	.03	105	-.27	137	-.07	75	-.08	124	-.27	135	-.47	103	-.07	43	-.14	290	-.20
Conflict	67	-.46	76	-.42	74	-.19	5	-.40	32	-.25	46	-.02	30	-.03	69	-.29	82	-.29	56	-.16	23	-.13	119	-.35
Responsibility	21	-.14	30	-.27	30	-.10	4	-.75	12	-.08	22	-.04	13	.00	31	-.30	30	-.67	21	-.04	14	.00	44	-.20
Economic consequences	8	-.37	11	.00	16	-.25	1	.00	8	-.25	4	.00	8	-.37	6	-.17	14	-.43	11	.00	4	.00	25	-.21
Morality	5	.00	6	.00	5	-.60	6	.50	7	-.14	10	-.10	3	.00	3	.00	1	.00	1	.00	1	-.01	13	-.07

Stakeholders in governmental coverage

News frames	The Dutch government		Institutions related to the government		International governments		The general public		Family of victims		Victims		Malaysia Airlines/ KLM		The offenders		Russia		International institutions		Media		Overall tone	
	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M	N	M
Human interest	8	-.12	17	.18	42	.24	14	-.14	32	-.22	38	-.18	19	-.05	11	-.27	11	-.27	29	.14	2	.00	50	-.02
Conflict	2	-.50	2	-.50	13	.31	1	.00	7	-.28	10	-.30	5	.00	6	-.33	6	-50	10	-.10			14	-.11
Responsibility	3	.00	2	.00	7	.14	1	.00	4	-.25	5	.00	4	.00	4	.00	3.	-.67	6	.17	8	-.01	8	-.02
Economic consequences																								
Morality			1	.00	1	.00	1	-.01									1	.00	1	.00			1	-.16

Note. Tone of voice ranges from -2(very negative) to +2(very positive)

5. Discussion

In this chapter the results of this study will be discussed. First, the main findings will be discussed (5.1) and this section will end with limitations of the study (5.2) and a general conclusion (5.3).

5.1 Main findings

The main goal of this study was to investigate the possible difference between media coverage and governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis. Park et al. (2016) found that the government during the MH370 crisis framed their communication most frequently in terms of the responsibility frame, followed by the human interest frame, the conflict frame, the economic consequences frame and the morality frame. This study differs from previous research because the governmental communication about the MH17 crisis was most frequently framed by the use of the human interest frame, followed by the conflict frame, the responsibility frame and the morality frame. It is important to mention that none of the governmental speeches were framed in terms of the economic consequences. Furthermore, a study of An and Gover (2009) indicated that news media during a crisis are likely to cover their messages in terms of the responsibility frame and the economic consequences frame. This study differs from previous research because news media covered their articles about the MH17 crisis most frequently by the use of the human interest frame and the conflict frame. The difference in order of frames may be because the MH17 crisis is related to the human tragedy and a study made by An and Gover (2009) were focused on business crisis.

As stated earlier the human interest frame was the most dominant frame used both in news media coverage and the governmental communication. The human interest frame 'brought a human face' to the MH17 crisis. Moreover, by the frequent use of the human interest frame, news media and the government could highlight how Dutch society was affected by the crisis. Frequent use of the human interest frame indicates that both news media and the Dutch government prioritized human tragedy in their coverage. Next, the frequent presence of the conflict frame in news media coverage is in line with previous research about a governmental crisis (Valentini & Romenti, 2011). A possible explanation for this can be that news media by the frequent use of the conflict frame dramatized and intensified conflict between stakeholders. A third most common frame used both by news media and the government was the responsibility frame. For instance, by the use of the responsibility frame the Dutch government showed their care to find the cause of the crisis or potential offenders. Furthermore, news media coverage and the governmental communication was characterized by low frequency of the morality frame and this was expected due to previous studies (An & Gower, 2009;

Nijkrake et al. 2015; Park et al. 2016; Valentini & Romenti; 2011). For instance, news media and the government used the morality frame in their communication about the national day of mourning. It is also important to mention that none of the governmental speeches were framed by the use of the economic consequences frame. An explanation for this finding might be that the MH17 crisis is related to the human tragedy. Therefore, the Dutch government during their crisis communication focused more on their citizens than on economic consequences of an event. As mentioned earlier, the Dutch government spent much effort on identification and reparation of human remains. Moreover, it is not ethical to talk about economic consequences when the crisis is related to the human tragedy.

Secondly, prior research demonstrated that generally news media use a more negative tone of voice in their coverage than organization in a crisis (Nijkrake et al. 2015). This research is in line with these findings. News media were more critical in their communication about the MH17 crisis than the Dutch government. A study form de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2006) showed that the tone of voice in news media coverage has an effect on public interest in an issue and may influence their opinion. Hence, news media could change peoples' opinion not only towards the MH17 crisis but also towards relevant stakeholders. It is possible that Dutch citizens hold negative attitudes toward Russia due to negative media coverage. Additionally, Brunken (2006) stated that media frequently use different tone of voice toward stakeholders than organization in crisis. This study is in line with previous research, news media during their crisis communication used a different tone toward stakeholders, than the Dutch government. For instance, news media used a negative tone of voice toward international governments. On the other hand, the Dutch government had a positive tone of voice toward international governments. Next, Liu, Horsley and Yang (2012) suggested that the government has a several limitations in their communication due to regulations (i.e. national rules of law, public safety issues). The government during their communication frequently follow international and diplomatic rules and their communication cannot be that direct as news media communication. Therefore this might explain why the Dutch government used less negative tone towards relevant stakeholders in their communication than news media.

Furthermore, the tone of voice per frame use differs between news media coverage and the governmental communication. For instance, when the conflict frame occurred news media frequently used a negative tone towards the Dutch government, possibly because of the incidents during the reparation of victims and their belongings (i.e. Frans Timmermans statement about the oxygen mask around the neck of the MH17 passenger). Next, both news media and the Dutch government used a negative tone towards Russia when the responsibility frame was present. For instance, news media frequently point out that a BUK missile system was supplied by Russia.

5.2 Limitation and future research

Several limitations of this research should be taken into account when interpreting its results. First, this study has analyzed frame and the tone of voice used by Dutch newspapers and the Dutch government regarding the MH17 crisis. Perhaps, media and governments from other countries use different frames and tone of voice in their communication about the MH17 crisis, as domestic media coverage is closely related to national interest, national values and culture (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Park et al., 2016). For example, Valentini and Romenti (2011) showed that national media coverage and international media coverage about Alitalia's crisis in 2008 differed to some extent. National media had a more negative coverage about the crisis than international media. Moreover, international media used frequently the responsibility frame in their coverage. On the other hand, national media framed their stories in terms of the conflict frame. Consequently, it would be recommended for future research to investigate frame and the tone of voice used by news media from other countries regarding the MH17 crisis.

Furthermore, this study used traditional media coverage. Social media channels provide uncommon crisis communication challenges. For instance, social media platforms allow crisis communication practitioners actively engage in communication with relevant stakeholders (According Liu, Spence, Sellnow & Lachlan, 2016). Frame use and the tone of voice in social media communication may differ from the traditional media coverage. Therefore, it would be recommended to investigate digital media coverage regarding the MH17 crisis in future research.

Next, this study used frames of Nijkrake et al. (2015). It is possible that other frames can be present in the news media coverage and the governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis, which were not taken into account in this research. Therefore, it may be interesting for future research to focus on other possible frames.

The last limitation of this research is the two periods of time that were selected to analyze the crisis. The first period from 17 July 2014 until November 2014, and the second period from 17 July 2015 until October 2015. It is possible that different periods of news media coverage and the governmental communication about the MH17 crisis may lead to different results. Therefore it would be recommended for future research to investigate different periods of news media coverage and the governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis.

5.3 Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the most frequent frames used by media and the government are the human interest frame, followed by the conflict frame and the responsibility frame. Only the economic consequences frame differs between news media and governmental communication. Furthermore, this study shows that the tone of voice toward stakeholders differed significantly between media coverage and governmental communication. News media covered their articles more negatively than the government. Additionally, results of this study suggest that media often use a different tone of voice toward relevant stakeholders than organizations in crisis. Moreover, this study showed that the human interest frame is relevant when a crisis is related to the human tragedy. This means that governments and organizations in crisis should to pay more attention on the victims when planning their crisis response communication.

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Appendix A1

The Codebook of the media coverage and governmental communication regarding the MH17 crisis.

<u>Source of information:</u>

<u>Speech:</u>

1 o the Dutch government

2 o Institutions related to the government

<u>Newspaper:</u>

1 o De Volkskrant

2 o Het Parool

3 o Algemeen Dagblad

4 o Algemeen Nederlandse Persbureau

-Date (day/month/year)…….

-Number of words………..

<u>News frames:</u>

The following frames (Nijkrake et al., 2015) are present in the article:

Human-interest frame	1 o yes	2 o no
Conflict frame	1 o yes	2 o no
Responsibility frame	1 o yes	2 o no
Economic consequences frame	1 o yes	2 o no
Morality frame	1 o yes	2 o no

Appendix A1

The tone of voice:

-Tone of voice toward **the Dutch government (e.g. Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Security and Justice)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **institutions related to the government (e.g. Safety Board, Openbaare Ministerie, the Nederlands Forensic Institute)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **international government (e.g Malaysia, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **the general public (e.g. Dutch citizens)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **causalities (the victims' families)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **victims (passengers of the MH17 flight)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **Malaysia Airlines/ KLM**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive 6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **offenders (e.g. pro-Russian rebels)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive   6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **Russia**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive   6 o n.a.

-Tone of voice toward **international institutions (e.g. United Nations, NATO, OSCE and European Union)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive   6 o n.a.

Tone of voice toward **media (e.g. NOS, RTL news)**

1 o -2 very negative   2 o -1 negative   3 o 0 neutral   4 o +1 positive   5 o +2 very positive   6 o n.a.