Article

Social and Emotional Intelligence as Factors in Terrorist Propaganda: An Analysis of the Way Mass Media Portrays the Behavior of Islamic Terrorist Groups

Claudiu Coman [1,*] **, Felicia Andrioni** [2] **, Roxana-Catalina Ghita** [3] **and Maria Cristina Bularca** [1]

1 Faculty of Sociology and Communication, Transilvania University of Brasov, 500036 Brașov, Romania; maria-cristina.bularca@student.unitbv.ro
2 Faculty of Sciences, University of Petroșani, 332006 Petroșani, Romania; feliciaandrioni@gmail.com
3 Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Craiova, 200585 Craiova, Romania; ac.roxana24@gmail.com
* Correspondence: claudiu.coman@unitbv.ro

Abstract: In the era of speed and technology, mass media has an important role in keeping people informed about events happening all around the world, but also in shaping their opinion. One of the main issues that mass-media focuses on is represented by terrorist propaganda. Nowadays, terrorist attacks have become more frequent, and we argue that, due to their social and emotional intelligence, terrorists have the power to manipulate not only people but also mass media. The purpose of our paper was to assess the way Romanian and foreign online mass-media channels present information about Islamic terrorist groups and the activities developed by them, in order to raise awareness about the matter of propaganda and the role of mass media in promoting it. In order to conduct the research, content analysis was used as a method. A total of 36 news presented online by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels were analyzed. The result of the research revealed that Romanian mass-media channels focus more on using words with aggressive content, and that foreign mass-media channels focus on religious and cultural-geographic content. Therefore, the results of the research revealed that the way mass media presents terrorist attacks can unintentionally contribute to the promotion of terrorist propaganda.

Keywords: mass-media; propaganda; terrorism; social intelligence; emotional intelligence; communication

1. Introduction

In today's society, dominated by technology and continuous change, mass media plays an essential role not only in describing and communicating information about certain events but also in shaping the way people perceive and understand the world around them. In this regard, mass media can be considered "the voice of our society" [1], and its power is given by the fact that, while it satisfies peoples' need for information, mass media also influences their opinions as well as their behavior [2].

In this context, mass media is often associated with the phenomenon of propaganda. Broadly, propaganda represents a process of communication that includes a wide range of techniques, such as persuasion, and a wide range of communication means, whose purpose is to "influence the ideology or behavior of a target group" [3]. When it comes to propaganda, it is important to take into consideration its psychological and social dimensions. Thus, propaganda can also be described as a psychological operation that is aimed at destabilizing the efforts and the morale of the enemies [4], and the importance of understanding this phenomenon is highlighted by its power to influence people. According to Jaques Ellul, one consequence of exposure to propaganda is the elimination of critical thinking. In the view of the author, as a result of this phenomenon, when a person accepts public opinion as to his own, the person loses his "personal judgment" [5] (pp. 170–171). In

other words, even though propaganda is based on evidence and information, its negative impact is emphasized by the fact that it intentionally aims at diminishing the individual's ability to think rationally and critically [6]. Even more, the aim of propagandists is to influence individuals in such a way that they no longer act on the basis of facts or data, but on the basis of the emotions, they feel after being exposed to propaganda [5].

Hence, propaganda is frequently discussed in relation to terrorism, Islamic groups, and the actions carried out by members of these groups. In the context of terrorist acts across the world, four waves of modern terrorism were identified. According to David Rapoport, the first was as an anarchist wave in which the people involved in violent acts used to describe themselves as terrorists. Thus, one incident marking the beginning of this was the act of violence carried out by a Russian woman in 1878 against a police officer who used to abuse prisoners. The second wave, called 'The anticolonial wave', began in the 1920s, after the end of World War I, and lasted approximately forty years. The third wave, known as the 'New left wave', began in 1960, it was stimulated by the Vietnam War, and ended around 1979, when the fourth wave—called the 'Religious wave' started to emerge [7].

With regards to the fourth wave of terrorism, the motivation for conducting terrorist acts shifted, it being represented mostly by religion and religious aspects [8]. In this regard, several events contributed to the emergence of the wave which dates to the present day, and among these events are a bus attack that took place in Munich in 1970, the 1972 Summer Olympics massacre, and the Islamic Revolution which took place in Iran in 1979 [9]. Hence, over time many terrorist acts were carried out by individuals or groups of people who followed certain leaders and who had various motives for getting involved in such actions.

Taking into account the aspects mentioned above, it can be inferred that terrorists, especially those in leadership positions, possess certain traits such as confidence, charisma, or intelligence [10]. In this regard, we argue that terrorist also possesses social and emotional intelligence, which helps them manipulate public opinion and peoples' emotions, and which also help them anticipate emotional response and the behavior of individuals. Since the use of emotional factors can have the potential to determine people to better memorize information [11], by promoting emotional content, and by using shocking images and spectacular, sensational headlines, we also argue that mass media acts as an accomplice to propaganda.

Furthermore, propaganda and the way mass media presents certain events can negatively influence the image of people who belong to social groups. These people become stigmatized due to the activities carried out by minorities, such as terrorist groups. As an example, we refer to the Islamic community from European countries, which is unable to socially integrate due to the terrorist acts committed by certain ethnic groups. One of the most popular Islamic terrorist groups is ISIS. The founder of the organization is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and over time, through its propaganda, ISIS managed to convince many people to become members of the organization [12]. ISIS is located in parts of Syria and Iraq and it is known all over the world as an extremist and violent group [13].

Considering the aspects previously mentioned, the paper aims to assess the way Romanian and foreign online mass-media channels present information about Islamic terrorist groups and the activities developed by them, in order to raise awareness about the matter of propaganda and the role of mass media in promoting it. In other words, we were interested in finding out how news reported by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels portray Islamic terrorist acts so as to help people better understand the messages that are sent to them, and implicitly to help them interpret those messages in a more critical, rational manner.

Thus, firstly we provide a brief literature review on the concepts of social and emotional intelligence, terrorist propaganda, terrorist profiles, and the connection between mass media and terrorism. Then, we describe the material and methods used in order to conduct the research, the purpose, and objectives of the research, the results of the research, followed by discussions and conclusions, limitations, and future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concepts of Social and Emotional Intelligence

Social intelligence and emotional intelligence are two concepts relatively new in the history of psychology and sociology, them becoming very popular in the latter half of the twentieth century. Social intelligence was firstly defined in 1920 by psychologist Edward Thorndike who described it as "the ability to understand and manage man, women, boys, and girls—to act intelligently in human relationships." [14] (p. 228). However, social intelligence has been defined over time in many ways, and it can also be described as the ability of the individual to understand the environment he lives in and to react to certain situations in a way that can bring him success from a social point of view [15].

As any cognitive ability, social intelligence can be used not only for pro-social purposes but also as a way to achieve personal gain by any means, as an ability to communicate and manipulate the masses in order to obtain success, which theorists designate as the dark side of social and emotional intelligence, more precisely, Machiavellian intelligence. In this regard, according to the Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis "intelligence is an adaptation to deal with the complexity of living in semi-permanent groups", and that in such situations it may be difficult to maintain the balance between cooperation and competition with the other members of the group [16]. In other words, intelligence is thought to be linked to the concept of social living and all the complex issues it involves [17].

In psychology, the term Machiavellianism is part of the dark triad of personality made up of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. In the psychology of personality, the term is linked to personality traits such as manipulation and amorality and people who possess Machiavellian intelligence tend to have cynical views of the world [18]. Even more, it is thought that people with this type of intelligence possess a certain mechanism that helps them make a flexible decisions and adjust the way they behave to the changes that take place in the social environment [19], and Machiavellianism is also considered an appropriate trait to be taken into consideration when assessing processes of decision making in the political field [20]. Thus, considering these aspects it can be inferred that people involved in terrorism, especially people with leadership positions possess this type of intelligence, them having the ability to adapt to change and to persuade and manipulate other people.

As the concept of social intelligence, emotional intelligence is also a complex concept that has been defined in multiple ways. The term was firstly introduced in 1985 by Payne Wayne Leon, who stated that emotional intelligence is the ability to "relate creatively to fear, pain and desire" [21]. Thus, described in a more comprehensive manner, this type of intelligence is considered to be a form of social intelligence, that refers to people's ability to be examined and be aware of their own and other people's emotions and feelings, to be able to differentiate between them and to use such information in order to shape the thoughts and behavior of others [22]. Thus, emotionally intelligent people possess the skill of knowing themselves very well as well as the skill of recognizing the emotions of other people [23].

In other words, when it comes to emotional intelligence, emotions are seen as important elements and sources of information that can help individuals understand the world around them and behave in a social context [24]. Identifying emotions is necessary, as they communicate information to others about how people relate and react to the environment, and emotional factors can improve the way people memorize information in the long term [8]. Thus, very often, successful leaders, those who can determine people to take action, are people who not only register high IQ scores but who are also able to control their feelings and to understand what is important to their followers [25].

2.2. Terrorist Propaganda

Propaganda, as a method of mass manipulation, has a long history and it has been widely used over time. Definitions of the term propaganda are common, both in terms of meaning and description of the social phenomenon of communication. Hence, the

aspects that are common in most definitions of propaganda are the ones that state that this phenomenon involves acts of manipulation, control, or influence in order to "secure the acceptance of opinions, attitudes or behaviors" [26].

Propaganda is understood as a type of information meant to manipulate and influence peoples' attitudes and to determine them to engage in specific actions [27]. However, the type of influence mostly used in the case of propaganda is an influence based on mechanisms of behavior that are not rational [28]. In other words, propaganda aims at determining people to sacrifice, and give up on their personal needs, desires, or even their personal lives for a greater good, for something more important [29] (p. 309). In the context of propaganda, there are many reasons why people are asked to give up on their personal needs, but usually, they are manipulated into taking certain actions in the name of a divine force, of their country or even of their political party [29] (p. 312).

Often, the concept is used as a synonym for persuasion, but even though it involves persuasion strategies, propaganda differs from it in terms of purpose [30], (p. 1). Thus, propaganda is deliberately and systematically aims at shaping perceptions, manipulating thoughts, opinions in order to obtain responses that fulfill the desire of those who initiated the propaganda [30] (p. 7). While being a complex concept, propaganda comes in many forms, and three of the most well-known forms are white, grey, and black propaganda. In the case of white propaganda, the information sent is accurate, and the identity of the persons who send it is known. In the case of grey propaganda, it is not clear whether the information is true or not, and black propaganda promotes false information [31].

Between propaganda and terrorism there is a close connection because usually, terrorist acts involve "elements of propaganda" [32]. Terrorism is a complex concept too, which is a broad sense, is defined as the use of violent acts that induce fear in order to achieve political purposes [33]. Terrorism can also be understood in terms of symbolic violence [34], which is considered "a voluntary submission to legally sanctioned relations of domination that lead to an imbalance of social power" [35]. Thus, due to its complexity, terrorism is a concept that was approached from various perspectives over time, but the diversity of these perspectives created chaos around understanding the concept. From an etymological point of view, the term terrorism comes from the Latin word *terrere*, which has the meaning of trembling, and which was often used in the context of the French revolution by the Jacobins, a group of revolutionaries, in order to describe their actions [36]. In this regard, terrorism was a term which was used to define a wide range of activities such as acts of violence, conflicts over power, violent protests, revolutions whose aim was to achieve independence from the state, but it was also used to describe the battles and disputes between different religious groups [36].

Furthermore, when trying to define terrorism, most definitions emphasized the aim of terrorists and terrorist organizations to create and inflict terror, but in order to have a better understanding of the concept, Omar Lizardo argues that definitions of terrorism should shift their focus from the idea of causing terror and should approach the concept from the perspective of the actors who initiate the act of violence as well as the actors who are targeted [37]. In this regard, modern terrorism can be seen as a violent interaction initiated by a non-state actor which is not formally recognized as a legitimate and valid initiator of violence against the representatives of a state, which does not follow the rules and conventions of military engagement [37] (p. 102)Worldwide, there are many terrorist groups and many terrorist actions have been carried out over time, but currently, the propaganda and terrorist attacks of the Islamic State became frequent events [38], them having a powerful impact on the world by generating large political and social effects.

At the socio-political level, most of the decisions taken by leaders of terrorist groups are based on the ability to read and anticipate the emotions of others. Thus, in order for their actions to have a greater impact, usually, all the details of the terrorist act such as the exact time and location are carefully chosen. In this regard, we can take, for example, the attack of the federal building in Oklahoma, carried out by Timothy McVeigh from Al-Qaeda, which was carried out at a specific hour: 09:02 a.m., at the entrance of the building, to generate a

strong reaction of fear and insecurity among civilians. Thus, two elements that occupy a central place in the strategy of terrorism are the ability to generate fear and create a somber atmosphere [39]. Hence, the terrorism act known as the Oklahoma City bombing caused the death of 168 people and severely damaged the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building [40]. In this regard, it can be observed that in the context of this terrorism act but also in the context of terrorist acts carried out by Islamic groups, violence was directed against a state or a symbol, and this type of approach can be considered a characteristic of terrorism. In other words, any type of terrorism usually involves violent acts which are directed against a specific state or symbol.

The activities carried out by ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, have long been a subject of interest for many researchers. When it comes to propaganda, the terrorist group has a well consolidated and modern propaganda strategy, which focuses on the use of the internet and social networks, but also on the use of high-quality videos [41]. The content of these videos is varied and it contains elements related to the goals of the group but also emotional messages [42].

The messages communicated by them often differ depending on the audience that is being targeted. Hence, to local audiences, ISIS sends messages which are meant to convince people to support the group's politico-military efforts to the detriment of the efforts of other opposed groups. However, for international audiences, which are not under the group's direct area of control, messages about the Muslims' duty to support their caliphate, might be more appealing [43].

Even though the communication strategy of ISIS contains diversified and complex strategies and tactics, previous studies have identified certain recurrent themes that are promoted by the terrorist groups. These themes include urgency—the need to act now, agency—the idea that it is up to the Muslims to take action in order to help the Muslim community, authenticity—the idea that authentic Muslims can only feel complete by being part of an authentic organization, and last but not least, victory and the idea of power, which is often expressed through the act of humiliating members who are not loyal or destroying idols [44]. Other themes involve threats regarding new attacks, religion, assassinating hostages, denying responsibility for attacks [45], but also the idea of being special- of Muslims which are members of the group being different, more special than other people, the idea of superpower–of giving the followers the feeling of being superheroes that have a specific mission [46]. Even more, another theme that is often present in the communication strategy of ISIS is recruitment. Messages meant to recruit members are sent by the terrorist group in many languages, and an analysis of those messages revealed differences regarding the type of audiences targeted. For example, in order to communicate about recruitment topics, the group uses local languages, and thus such topics are not discussed in publications written in Arabic or English language [47].

Terrorist Propaganda and the Profile of the Socio-Emotional Intelligent Terrorist

Terrorist propaganda appeals to social and emotional intelligence by exposing images that generate fear for its opponents and success and power for its followers, by seeking to generate strong emotions for followers and non-followers. From this point of view, propaganda can be described through the lenses of Machiavellian intelligence. Hence, since Machiavellianism can be considered a part of the terrorist personality and attitude, terrorism itself can be regarded as a Machiavellian act, for it aims at manipulating the public opinion, the authorities as well as the media [48].

In this context, terrorism differs from other forms of criminal violence, due to the fact that, in order to become a terrorist, an individual must have certain political goals or interests. These goals are usually related to the idea of overcoming and eliminating some political injustices perceived by the individual, which may or may not be real [48].

The leaders of terrorist groups have a high level of social and emotional intelligence, and through their actions, they highly impact the attitudes and behavior of people. Thus, leaders and members of such groups are committed to their cause and are capable of making

tremendous sacrifices themselves but are also capable of making other people suffer [49]. For example, the promotion of images of civilians being tortured or assassinated is not only a form of brutal violence, but an element that emphasizes the emotional justification of such acts, and the type of activities that terrorists usually engage with [50]. Even more, in the case of ISIS, it can be observed that the group usually uses violence in order to attract attention and evoke emotions [51].

Terrorist groups adapt their communication style and channels so as to reach as many people as possible. In this regard, the propaganda strategy of ISIS implies sending messages to large audiences while using a set of communication means. In this regard, ISIS communicates through magazines such as Dabiq or Rumiyah, through its newsletter entitled Al-Naba, through its own radio channel, entitled Al-Bayan, and its auxiliary organization: Amaq news agency [50], but it also makes use of the internet and social platforms.

Another approach to socio-emotional intelligence in relation to groups of people is in the context of military leadership, which highlights the importance of emotional and social intelligence in leading and coordinating a group with a common social or military mission. In the context of transformational leadership, leaders take into account the followers' desires and their needs for achievement, thus fostering the growth and development of the organization. These types of leaders possess specific characteristics such as charisma, individualized consideration, the ability to stimulate people's intellect, and the ability to motivate them [52]. Moreover, transformational leadership is positively associated with emotional intelligence [53], and a leader who is self-aware of its abilities and behavior, may lead more effectively [54], and implicitly may be more efficient in inspiring its followers. Moreover, by taking into consideration the emotions of the followers, and the reasons for feeling those, leaders may be able to determine followers to develop a common sense regarding the vision and goals of the organization [55].

In regard to the profile of the terrorist, considering that social intelligence comprises factors such as pro-social attitude, emotionality, social skills, social anxiety, and also empathy [56], terrorists are people with high levels of social intelligence, but their level is incomplete because of the lack of empathy. In other words, although the terrorist possesses the side of social and emotional intelligence aimed at understanding the emotions that their actions can generate on others, the psychosocial nature of a terrorist is devoid of empathy. Thus, people tend not to blame themselves for cruel and inhumane acts if they believe they act for a greater good or in order to fulfill important purposes, and the feeling of not being guilty is also influenced by the inability to feel empathy [57]. Even more, due to the incapacity of expressing empathy, other researchers questioned the socially intelligent nature of social sociopaths, stating that only their skills of attracting people with a sort of charm that is rather superficial, is not enough for them to be considered social intelligent people [58].

2.3. The Relationship between Mass-Media and Terrorism Justified by Social and Emotional Intelligence

Mass media is known to have a tremendous impact on influencing the values, beliefs, and even the behavior of people [59]. Islamic terrorist groups use direct means of manipulating public opinion by disseminating information through their own channels of communication, but also indirect means, through mainstream media channels, which presents their messages as well as their actions. Thus, news and articles describing the behavior of terrorist groups such as ISIS involve strong emotional, aggressive content, and sometimes, in a non-intentional way, they end cultivating the propaganda of this group [60].

In this regard, terrorist groups started to acknowledge more the importance of mass media, and this aspect can be observed by taking into account their orientation to diverse communication channels and the tactics used by a modern terrorist, who "have become more media-minded" [61] (p. 883). In this context, terrorists include mass media into their propaganda strategy, and thus researchers state that this relationship can be seen as a

symbiosis: terrorism needs media involvement, and media counts on the terrorist attacks in order to provide people with sensational and outstanding information [62].

In other words, by constantly promoting messages and pictures regarding terrorist groups, mass media influences peoples' general perception about the entire culture of the people who carried out terrorist attacks. The results of a previous study conducted on Italian students support the idea that mass media can influence people's perceptions. Thus, the study showed that after being exposed to mass media information and pictures regarding terrorist attacks, certain students—those who are more sensitive to what happens in the environment around them and those more sensitive to stressors from that environment, tended to feel more threatened about the occurrence of a terrorist attack. In this regard, such people can be more susceptible to media manipulation, and implicitly, mass media can have a more negative influence on their perception [63]. Even more, another study which analyzed the way people involved in terrorism are described by magazines from the United States of America revealed that the word mostly used in describing them as "terrorist" and that people were labeled according to their political affiliation, for example, they were referred to as radical, extremists or nationalists [64].

Taking into account the aspects previously mentioned, we argue that mass media can contribute to the promotion of terrorist propaganda through the way it sends information about the activities of terrorist groups. Thus, due to their socio-emotional intelligence, terrorists manage to convince and manipulate not only people but also the media, which frequently reports on their actions and indirectly promotes their propaganda.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Purpose and Objectives of the Research

Our research focused on the matter of the way terrorism acts are portrayed by news and articles posted on the official websites of Romanian and foreign news channels.

The purpose of the paper was to assess the way Romanian and foreign online mass-media channels present information about Islamic terrorist groups and the activities developed by them, in order to raise awareness about the matter of propaganda and the role of mass media in promoting it.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the paper, specific objectives were also established. The objectives of the research include identifying the main words used in order to describe terrorist attacks, the main punctuation marks used in order to highlight aspects of the events described, and identifying the type of messages sent and their emotional valences. Another objective of the research was to identify similarities and differences between the news reported online by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels. At the basis of this last objective stands the idea that in the Romanian space there are no social problems related to terrorism and the Islamic minority, compared to the USA or other European countries. In this context, we considered it necessary to examine if and how the social reality can cause differences in the way information is being sent regarding terrorist attacks.

Thus, the choice to focus our research on Romanian mass-media channels is motivated by several reasons. Firstly, while the subject of terrorist attacks being portrayed by mass-media channels from the United States of America was approached by many studies, studies which among other aspects also revealed that attributes linked to Islam were mainly presented in a negative manner by mass media [65], in Romania, research on the way such acts are presented mass-media channels is rather scarce and limited.

Secondly, in the context of the adherence of Romania to organizations such as The North Atlantic Treaty Organization—NATO, or the European Union, in the Romanian popular and intellectual narrative tendencies of identification and fraternization with western ideologies and attitudes can be observed. Thus, Romania's efforts to integrate into Western structures (EU, NATO) were manifested by its participation in the wars taking place in Iraq and Afghanistan. The association of these conflicts with the phenomenon of terrorism is a fact known and manifested both in the media and public opinion. In addition, we were interested in analyzing the way Romanian mass-media portrays terrorist attacks,

because Romania is a country that was ruled by communism, a period in which media information was limited and was controlled by the state, and we thought a comparative analysis, between Romanian and foreign mass-media channels will reveal differences in the way terrorism is approached.

3.2. Hypotheses of the Research

Before conducting the research, we established several hypotheses which reveal our expectations about the way terrorism is presented by online mass-media channels from Romania compared to foreign channels. Thus, in the formulation of the hypotheses, the expression: external mass-media refers to foreign or multinational mass-media channels (for example BBC, or ABC). Furthermore, when establishing the hypotheses of the research we also took into account the results of previous studies which revealed that American media registered more tweets about terrorist attacks in core- industrialized countries than in non-core countries [66], and the results of studies that focused on analyzing several issues of the magazine of the Islamic State Group, entitled Dabiq. In this regard, the study revealed that in the magazine the most prominent visual theme was the theme of war and that the main messages sent by the visual elements presented in the magazine had political (49%), and religious content (37%), and only a few of them (14%) had social content [67]. Considering these aspects we expected multinational, foreign media channels to focus more than Romanian media channels, on religious or aggressive messages.

Hence, the general hypothesis is that news about members of terrorist groups performs a latent function of emotional ventilation and instigation to violence. This function is more visible in environments where society faces real social issues due to terrorist attacks. In this regard, we further present the specific hypotheses of our research.

Hypothesis (H1). *The messages sent by external mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have a higher negative emotional load than the messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels.*

Hypothesis (H2.) *The messages sent by external mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have a higher degree of religious content than the messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels.*

Hypothesis (H3). *The messages sent by external mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have a higher degree of aggressive content than the messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels.*

Hypothesis (H4). *The messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have more positive content than the messages sent by external mass-media channels.*

Hypothesis (H5). *The messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have a more neutral content than the messages sent by external mass-media channels.*

Hypothesis (H6). *The messages sent by external mass-media channels regarding the Islamic terrorist groups have a more cultural-geographic and institutional content than the messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels.*

3.3. Procedure

In order to conduct the research, content analysis was used as a method. The subject was approached from a quantitative as well as a qualitative perspective. Thus, we performed a comparative analysis of the way Romanian and foreign mass-media channels present information about terrorist groups on their official websites. Hence, a total of 12 mass-media channels were selected, and a total of 36 news presented online by these channels were analyzed. In this regard, our analysis comprises 6 mass-media channels from Romania: Pro TV, DIGI TV, Antena 3, Realitatea TV, Kanal-D, Agerpress, and 6 internation-

ally renowned mass-media channels, from the USA, the United Kingdom, and Australia: Euronews, ABC News, BBC, CBS, New York Times and Washington Post. From each of these channels, we selected 3 news, the selection is made based on the relevance of the topic of that news for our research, which is focused on the information regarding the profile and activity of the Islamic terrorists. The analysis took into account the text of the news, and in order to examine the text comparatively, categories referring to words and punctuation marks were established. Hence, besides words, we also analyzed the punctuation marks used in the text of the news, because such an analysis can contribute to achieving a global, more unitary view on the messages sent by the online media channels. Recent approaches regarding profiling and behavior analysis focus on investigation methods that take into account the concept of write prints which includes the assessment of lexical and syntactic elements, form punctuation marks, to expressions frequently used, or abbreviations that reflect the author's specific way of organizing the information in the text. Furthermore, a previous similar study, which also focused on analyzing the placement of the comma and certain appositions used in newspapers while describing fatwas—certain legal opinions of members of Islamic groups [68], emphasized the importance of paying attention to these elements when assessing the messages sent by certain texts. Another previous study, focused on the importance of stylebooks in presenting news and information and highlighted the role of normative language in describing and shaping "the Middle East" for the public [69]. Hence taking into account these aspects, and the fact that other researchers suggest that certain attributes of the authors' writing, known as stylometric features, could help with the identification of patterns of writing and implicitly with the identification of the authors of specific texts [70], we were of the opinion that the analysis of punctuation marks can reflect both the characteristics of the author in this case, of the mass-media channel, and the emotional tone of the messages sent.

Next, the categories established in our research are presented in Table 1, while Table 2 presents the news selected from Romanian mass-media channels, and Table 3 the news selected from foreign mass-media channels.

Table 1. Categories used in order to conduct the research.

Category	Description of the Category
Neutral words	those words without emotional-affective connotations
Words with negative content	words with negative emotional-affective connotations
Words with positive content	words with positive emotional-affective connotations
Words with religious content	words from the semantic field of religion, spirituality, faith, religious rituals
Words with aggressive content	words with negative emotional-affective connotations that refer to aggressive acts, abuse, or power
Words with cultural-geographic and institutional content	words referring to institutions of the state, media agencies, geographical areas, and culture
Total of words	all the words used in the text of the news was registered, including linkers and those words used in the title
Most frequently used word	the word which was most used in the news analyzed
Most frequently used punctuation mark	the punctuation mark that appeared most in the news analyzed
Total of punctuation marks	all the punctuation marks used in the text of the news, except for the hyphen which is considered a spelling mark

Table 2. Romanian mass-media channels and the articles selected.

Mass-Media Channel	Title of News and Year
PRO TV	"UN warns: Europe hit by a new wave of terrorist attacks", 2019 "ISIS jihadists are urging new attacks in a country severely affected by bombings in the past", 2019 "Black widow", "wanted in Russia. Police fear she could blow herself up", 2019

Table 2. *Cont.*

Mass-Media Channel	Title of News and Year
DIGI TV	"One of the leaders of the Islamic State terrorist network, killed in a military operation in Iraq", 2021 "ISIS-affiliated jihadists have beheaded dozens of people. Witness of the massacre: "They kidnapped women and children and set fire to entire villages", 2020 "Terrorist attack in Vienna. The moments of horror, described by the witnesses: "He did not shoot randomly. He killed in cold blood." Who are the victims?" 2020
ANTENA 3	"Islamist leader: Romania should convert to Islam!", 2016 "JIHAD in Islam. Terrorist attack on Tel Aviv. The 11-month-old son of a BBC reporter died in the airstrike", 2012 "The enemy of Allah!" "How a Russian radio announcer paid for his beliefs about Islam", 2012
KANAL-D	"A new terrorist attack was committed in France, in Nice, 3 people being killed", 2020 "The head of ISIS died like a coward, killing three children. Statements by President Donald Trump", 2019 "They escaped the bombings in Syria, but now they are starving in Romania! The heartbreaking confessions of a woman with four children: "I only saw people with their heads cut off! It was terrible!", 2017
AGERPRESS	"The Islamic State extremist group is no longer capable of complex attacks, says a terrorism expert", 2021 "Islamic State terrorist group claims double suicide attack in Baghdad, killing 32 people and injuring 110", 2021 "DIICOT: Man from Neamț County converted to Islam, detained for terrorism", 2017
REALITATEA TV	"France declares war on Islamist terrorism after the attack in Paris", 2020 "Germany announces the arrest of 14 citizens who wanted to organize a terrorist attack", 2021 "Terrorist attack—Several university professors were killed in a bomb attack", 2021

Table 3. Foreign mass-media channels and the articles selected.

Mass-Media Channel	Title of News and Year
BBC	"Vienna shooting: Austria hunts suspects after 'Islamist terror' attack", 2020 "Sahayb Abu: Terror plot accused made pro-IS comments for a 'thrill'", 2020 "Hervé Gourdel: Man sentenced over French tourist's killing", 2014
Euronews	"Europe's problem with jihad: The foreign fighters who tore families apart", 2019 "Dutch photographer shot dead by ISIS-linked captors in Philippines", 2019 "To stop the potential "Jihadi Jacks" of the future, British Muslim converts need support", 2019
ABC	"'It is going to become worse': ISIS prisoner predicts attack on Europe after al-Baghdadi death", 2019 "New ISIS leader is 'a nobody,' but US knows 'almost nothing' about him: Official", 2019 "Islamic State never needed a caliphate to keep menacing the world. Now it's regrouping", 2020
CBS NEWS	"Suspect arrested for plotting New York City attack in the name of ISIS", 2019 "American Airlines mechanic charged with sabotaging plane accused of having ISIS videos", 2019 "FBI warns of the "continued threat" of violent extremists and hate crimes", 2019
NEW YORK TIMES	"The Politics of Terrorism in a Combustible Europe", 2020 "Terrorism Fears Feed the Rise of France's Extreme Right", 2021 "After Terror Attacks, Muslims Wonder About Their Place in France", 2020
WASHINGTON POST	"Opinion: Ten years later, Islamist terrorism isn't the threat it used to be", 2021 "Before becoming a terrorist leader, ISIS chief was a prison informer in Iraq for U.S., records show", 2021 "The Islamic State has 'provinces' in Africa. That doesn't mean what you might think. Africa's militant groups retain considerable autonomy, research shows", 2021

3.4. Measures

Firstly, the text of each selected news was analyzed according to the categories established. After examining the 36 news selected, the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and Microsoft Excel. For the descriptive statistical analysis, the Explore-Descriptive Statistics option in SPSS was used, and for the creation of visual

charts in Microsoft Excel, we used the Chart Tools-3D Bar option. Thus, we used as an independent variable the affiliation of the news (Romanian or foreign) and as a dependent variable the categories referring to words and punctuation marks. In this regard, we calculated the mean and standard deviation for each of the categories according to which the news presented by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels were analyzed. Thus, we made comparisons between the two groups of mass-media channels depending on the categories referring to the type of content described in the news. Even more, in order to analyze the type of content mostly used by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels, we evaluated the frequency of specific categories of words, without taking into account the neutral words, because such words were mostly represented by linking words, and we considered that they do not have significant importance in revealing the difference between the two groups of news analyzed.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

Referring to the type of content used by Romanian news channels, the category of words with the highest frequency was represented by words with aggressive content, (7%), followed by words with cultural-geographical and institutional content (5%), and by words with religious content (3%) (Table 4). In the case of foreign news channels, the category of words with the highest frequency was represented by words with cultural-geographic and institutional content (6%), followed by words with aggressive content (4%) and religious content (4%) (Table 5). Even more, foreign news has in general, more content aimed at revealing information about terrorist groups and their activity (M = 725.06), (Table 5), than Romanian news (M = 312.28), (Table 4).

Table 4. Analysis of the content of Romanian news.

|	Mean	Standard Deviation	% Total of Words
Words with religious content	M = 9.78	sd = 5.72	0.03
Words with aggressive content	M = 21.94	sd = 14.02	0.07
Words with negative content	M = 11.11	sd = 10.44	0.03
Words with positive content	M = 1.72	sd = 2.27	0.005
Words with neutral content	M = 244.98	sd = 146.85	0.78
Words with cultural-geographic and institutional content	M = 22.78	sd = 15.34	0.05
Total of words	M = 312.28	sd = 175.751	-
Total of punctuation marks	M = 42.33	sd = 26.97	-

Table 5. Analysis of the content of foreign news.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	% Total of Words
Words with religious content	M = 30.22	sd = 26.86	0.04
Words with aggressive content	M = 29.28	sd = 29.16	0.04
Words with negative content	M = 25.89	sd = 15.91	0.03
Words with positive content	M = 9.28	sd = 7.78	0.01
Words with neutral content	M = 585.67	sd = 342.05	0.80
Words with cultural-geographic and institutional content	M = 46.33	sd = 27.61	0.06
Total of words	M = 725.06	sd = 417.586	-
Total of punctuation marks	M = 109.06	sd = 63.24	-

The comparative analysis (Figure 1), reveals that Romanian and foreign news has the same amount of negative emotional load (M = 0.03). With regard to words with religious content, they are used by Romanian mass-media channels (M = 0.04) and foreign mass-media channels (0.03), almost with the same amount. With regard to words with aggressive content, contrary to our expectations, they are used more in Romanian news (M = 0.07) than in foreign news (M = 0.04), and implicitly, words with positive content are fewer in Romanian news (0.005) than in foreign news (0.01). Moreover, in Romanian news words

with neutral content (M = 0.78) are used almost in the same amount as they are used in foreign news (M = 0.80).
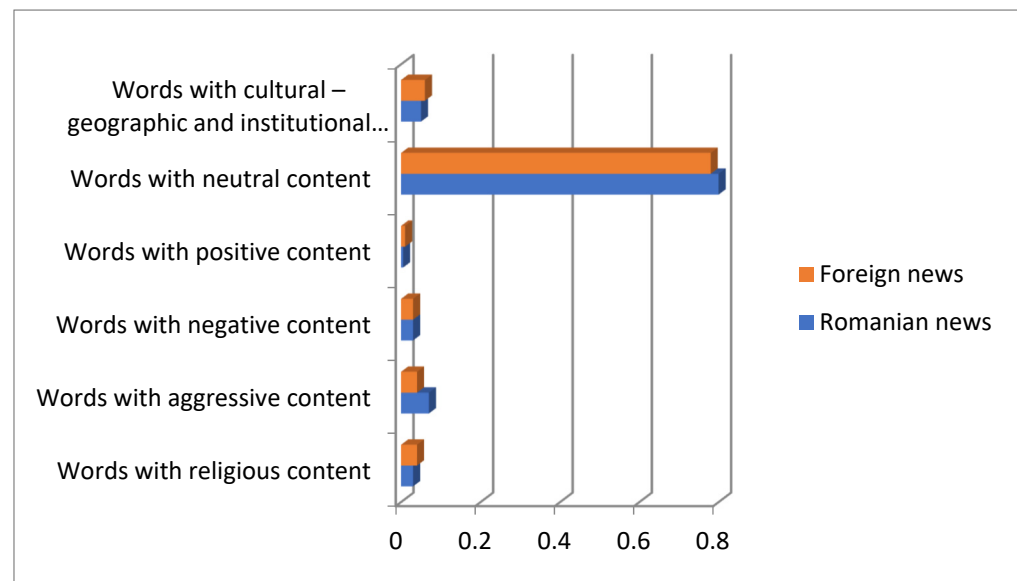
Figure 1. Proportions of the word categories from the total number of words.

With regard to the cultural-geographic and institutional content, the messages sent by foreign mass-media channels about the Islamic terrorist groups have a more cultural-geographic and institutional content (M = 0.06), than the messages sent by Romanian mass-media channels (M = 0.05). Thus, the 6th hypothesis of our research was confirmed and the other 5 hypotheses were not confirmed. Regarding the procedure of calculating the proportions, firstly, the text of the 36 news extracted from Romanian and foreign mass–media channels were inserted in Microsoft Word and the number of words was calculated using the option Word Count provided by the Microsoft Word program. The news was read by all the authors and each word was assigned to one of the seven categories established: words with religious content, words with aggressive content, words with negative content, words with positive content, words with neutral content, words with cultural-geographic and institutional content. For each news selected, the number of words corresponding to each category was entered in a table in the Microsoft Excel program. The proportions illustrated in Figure 1 were obtained using the percentage formula from the Microsoft Excel program, "% Percentage". The percentages were obtained by calculating the ratio between the number of specific categories of words and the total number of words of each analyzed news. Next, the percentages obtained for the categories were introduced in a new Microsoft Excel tab, and they were separated into two groups: foreign sources and Romanian sources, in order to highlight the comparison between the two groups of sources. Next, we used the Chart tools-3D Bar Option in order to graphically illustrate the percentages and visually highlight the differences between Romanian and foreign media sources.

In this regard, our research revealed that while the content of the two groups of news analyzed has the same negative emotional load and promotes religious content almost in the same amount, Romanian mass-media channels present terrorist attacks more aggressively than foreign mass-media channels, and their messages have less cultural and geographic content than the messages sent by foreign mass-media channels.

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

From a qualitative point of view, the results of our research reveal that Islamic terrorist groups and their activities are described differently by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels. Hence, in the case of Romanian news, the words most used to present terrorist attacks fall into the category of aggressive words (11 news out of 18 contain words

with aggressive content). For example, in Romanian news words such as: "terror", "terrorist", "kidnapping", "killings", or "bomb", are frequently used in order to portray terrorist behavior.

However, foreign mass-media channels, registered more words with religious content (9 out of 18 news). Hence, foreign news often emphasizes the religion of the people carrying out the terrorist attacks, and words such as "Muslims", or "Islamists" are frequently used. Even more, the research also revealed that foreign mass media uses more words with cultural-geographic and institutional content (4 out of 18 news). In this regard, it can be inferred that foreign channels use a higher percentage of words with cultural-geographical-institutional content in order for their news to be perceived more as objective or credible.

Another dimension compared in our research was the frequency of punctuation marks. In the two groups of news analyzed, the comma has the highest frequency of appearance (13 out of 18 Romanian news, and 11 out of 18 foreign news). However, the dot has a higher frequency of occurrence in foreign news.

Furthermore, it was also found that most Romanian news refers to the original source of the news presented, which is generally taken from an external mass-media channel. Some of the news are taken from sources such as CNN, The Guardian, Siberian Times. Unlike Romanian channels, foreign channels focus on presenting information that was collected and processed by their reference to the collection and processing of information by their editorial team. Hence, this difference can be explained by the fact that in Romania, there are fewer terrorist attacks than in other countries and in this regard, mass-media channels present information that was previously presented by the channels from the country where the terrorist attacks took place.

5. Discussion

According to the results of the research, there are differences but also similarities in the way Islamic terrorist groups and their activities are presented by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels. From the perspective of similarities, the research showed that both groups of news have the same amount of negative emotional load, but words with positive valences appear more in foreign news. Even more, taking into account aggressive content, similar to previous studies [64], our research also reveals that mass media tends to describe terrorist acts and the people involved in them by using aggressive words, such as "terrorist".

From the perspective of differences, one interesting result refers to the fact that, even though both groups of news include words with aggressive content, Romanian news present terrorist attacks more aggressively than foreign news. In other words, contrary to the findings of a previous study, which revealed that the United States media presented Chinese Muslims more negatively than the media from China due to system restrictions [71], our study revealed that the representations of Muslims and Arabs in Romanian mass-media were more negative than the representation of Muslims and Arabs in the foreign media channels- channels from The United States of America, The United Kingdom, and Australia. The importance of this result is emphasized when we take into consideration that in Romania, terrorist attacks do not take place as frequently as they take place in other countries. Hence, even if the Romanian channels do not report acts that took place on Romanian territory, they are even harsher in describing such actions, than the channels that directly report the actions which took place in their country. We argue that, by not having actual facts to which to refer to, Romanian news reporters might have a more radical view on the terrorist acts which occur in other countries, and implicitly a more subjective perspective.

While Romanian mass media tend to focus on aggressive content, the results of the research revealed a tendency of foreign mass media to focus on words with religious content, but also on words with cultural-geographic and institutional content, giving a greater degree of objectivity to the facts presented. These differences suggest that the information provided by the Romanian media appeals more to the emotions of the target

audience, and the foreign media has a point of view more anchored in reality, for it appeals more to concrete information and words which describe geographical areas, institutions, or factual data. A potential explanation in this regard may be the social impact that previous experiences with such terrorist groups have on the reader. From the geopolitical context, Romania does not present significant social problems with Islamic terrorism, while the U.S.A. (where New York Times, Washington Post, and CBS activate) and Europe and France, where Euro news is headquartered, and the United Kingdom, where the BBC (The British Broadcasting Corporation) is headquartered, including Australia, which owns ABC News, have a history of terrorist attacks.

When it comes to religious content, our research is in line with a previous study [45], which shows that religion is one of the most popular themes used in terrorist propaganda, and also with a study which reveals that one important element of propaganda is represented by the action of sacrificing personal needs in the name of a divine force [29].

In this regard, both groups of news use words with religious content in describing the activities of an Islamic terrorist, these words being used more frequently by foreign mass-media channels. The proportional difference of words with religious content can be explained by cultural-geographical and social aspects. All the analyzed texts come from sources of some secular states (both Romania and the USA, Europe: France, the United Kingdom, and Australia), and the percentages of people declared as atheists and those declared as having a religious denomination differ within these states. It can be inferred that the impact of information about religion or religious aspects can be valued more, regardless of the level of religiosity of one state or another, as the information targets a social and religious minority, which had a direct impact on the territory of that state. In this regard, in Romania, where (89.45%) of the citizens declared themselves Orthodox people [72], information on the religious denomination of Islamic terrorists may be less relevant, as they are not a social problem in the current geopolitical context of Romania. However, due to mass media's power of influencing public opinion [59], and based on the findings of a previous study which showed that students exposed to mass-media content about terrorist attacks tended to feel more threatened by the occurrence of such attacks [63], we argue that, in the case of Romanian news, the way terrorist attacks are presented can negatively influence citizens' perception of people involved in terrorist attacks in general and of Islamic people or Muslims in particular.

Hence, in the context of terrorism and Muslims, one should take into account the distinction between terrorists and authentic Muslims. In this regard, we support the idea that terrorist acts should not be implicitly associated with Muslims and we argue that mass media plays a major role in influencing the perception of the public about Muslims and their activities.

Given the frequency and severity of the actions of terrorist groups, according to our research, foreign media is more temperate in presenting information compared to the Romanian media, which has not faced such social problems, probably out of a desire to mitigate the effect that violent and aggressive manifestations have on the target audience. In the context of the real confrontation with terrorist acts, the results of our research show that mass media tends to treat the subjects and present the information more objectively, with a reduced emotional impact, which could strengthen the power position of these groups over their victims.

However, by portraying terrorist attacks while using aggressive words, by constantly presenting the actions of terrorist groups and some of the main themes of terrorist propaganda such as religion, kidnap, or even assassination, our research reveals that Romanian and foreign mass-media channels end up promoting terrorist propaganda, and thus, our study supports a previous study which approached and discussed this matter [60]. Hence, one explanation for the fact that mainstream mass media, although unintentionally, can contribute to the promotion of terrorist propaganda, can be given by the idea that terrorists have a certain degree of social and emotional intelligence, often called Machiavellianism, which can help them influence, people, officials, and even mass-media [48]. In this regard,

since terrorism involves violence and violent acts, the matter of mass media promoting terrorist propaganda can be discussed in the context of the Goals for Sustainable Development [73]. Thus, according to our research, when presenting terrorist attacks, mass–media often uses, negative and aggressive words, and it mostly describes the violent behavior of terrorists. By reporting the events which occurred in this manner, we argue that mass media incites violence, it encourages people to commit violent acts or to discriminate against people who are part of the Arab community.

However, in the context of the sustainable goal which refers to the reduction of all forms of violence, there are some methods through which mass media could be used positively, in order to help with the decrease of violent or discriminatory acts. Hence, media should no longer promote shocking images which depict terrorist attacks or acts of violence that negatively affect the dignity of the victims. Also, the events should be described objectively and accurately and special attention should be given to the words used and their emotional load [74]. Even more, mass media could also focus on presenting the positive activities carried out by Muslims or Islamic people, and in this way, it could contribute to the dismantling of stereotypes about these people, and implicitly contribute to the reduction of discrimination against these people.

In this regard, while we support the idea that the role of mass media is not to present events and situations positively, but objectively, we argue that in the case of Muslims or Islamic people, mass media could contribute to the improvement of the general perception about Muslims in the context of terrorism, by reflecting and portraying the actions and point of view of the civil society and those involved in diplomatic missions. Furthermore, significant differences in the size of the texts (Romanian news: M = 312.28 words per text, foreign news: M = 725.06 words per text) also reflect how poorly Romanian media gathers information about terrorist attacks, and it also reflects a low level of documentation on the social issue raised. This difference might also be given by the fact that, Romanian news often refers to the original source of the news, and by the fact that most of the text is translated from the language in which it was initially written.

Besides focusing on the type of content used to describe terrorism by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels on their official websites, our research also focused on analyzing the punctuation marks used in the text. In this regard, both groups of news mostly use the comma, aspect which denotes the need for clarification and also an emphasis on enumerations. However, foreign news has a higher frequency of dots in the text, which reflects a larger number of sentences, denoting a higher degree of conciseness in the presentation of information.

With regards to the connection of our results with the concept of social and emotional intelligence, taking into account the Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis [17] according to which the individual exploits the most profitable relationships for himself, socio-emotional intelligence has a major role in propaganda and manipulation. Considering our results, news about terrorism presented by Romanian mass-media channels register more aggressive content and less cultural-geographical content, and thus they can generate a higher emotional impact on the public. In the context of social and emotional intelligence, the media reporter has the ability to anticipate people's responses after reading the news, responses such as: paying more attention to other news, developing a desire to read more news. Regardless of the subjective benefit of the reporter or the objective benefit of the media—that of registering a higher audience rating because of the presentation of the subject in a manner that takes into account the expectancies of the public, expectancies that the media itself created,—even though this type of practice is not common in Romania, it can be observed that such type of communication benefits the sender, the media, not the public. From this point of view, it can be inferred that socio-emotional intelligence is a necessary ability in the context of sending messages which have the potential to manipulate, such as the messages about terrorism. The profitability described by the hypothesis of Machiavellian intelligence can be observed in this case in the interaction between the sender–the reporter, the media channel, and its audience.

6. Conclusions

Terrorist propaganda is a serious matter and through the way mass media chooses to portray the activities of terrorist groups it can promote propaganda, it can influence the opinion and behavior of people. Usually, terrorists are regarded as socio-emotional intelligent people, and due to this type of intelligence, such people have the power to convince and manipulate not only the opinion of the public, but also mass media and the way mass-media representatives present terrorist acts.

The purpose of our paper was to assess the way Romanian and foreign online mass-media channels present information about Islamic terrorist groups and the activities developed by them, in order to raise awareness about the matter of propaganda and the role of mass media in promoting it. In this regard, our results revealed a series of similarities and differences between the information sent by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels. When it comes to similarities, taking into account the type of content most frequently used, the research shows that both groups of mass-media channels generally perceive such acts as being negative, thus, the news reported by them registering the same amount of negative emotional load. However, one significant difference between the two groups of news is given by the aggressive content, which, contrary to our expectations, is more frequently met in the text of the news reported by Romanian mass-media channels. Another difference is given by the fact that foreign mass-media channels focus more on words with cultural-geographic and institutional content, and words referring to religious content. Hence, our research reveals that in the case of describing Islamic terrorist attacks, the social reality can cause differences in the way information and messages are being sent. In other words, our research supports the idea that, in social contexts where Islamic terrorist attacks occur more frequently, mass media tends to present those attacks more objectively, by offering more factual data. However, in the context where Islamic terrorist attacks are not that frequent, mass-media representatives tend to be more subjective and more radical in describing such events.

Thus, the counterintuitive conclusion in the case of Romanian news is that, although the country does not experience Islamist terrorist attacks, it still presents them more aggressively than the foreign media. Hence, a tendency towards media terrorism is highlighted. Usually, terrorists carry out attacks in order to receive attention from the media, and since the media is always looking for sensational and dramatic events in order to please the public, terrorist attacks are the type of subject that can spark people's interest, and this may be one of the reasons why mass –media focuses on presenting and promoting the activities of terrorist groups [75]. In this regard, it can be inferred that the act of managing to determine mass media to promote terrorist acts, denotes a certain level of social and emotional intelligence, as terrorists exploit people's emotions and mass media's need to promote spectacular content with emotional impact.

Taking into account the results of the research, some theoretical and practical implications of the paper can be emphasized. From a theoretical point of view, the paper contributes to the literature on terrorist propaganda by offering a perspective on the way, due to the terrorists' socio-emotional intelligence and the media's desire to present sensational and dramatic information, mass –media and its representatives end up promoting terrorism and cultivating stereotypes about the community of which people involved in terrorist acts belong.

As practical implications, this research has a social impact. It is very important for people who receive such messages and spend time on online platforms, websites of mass-media channels, and groups that address the topic of terrorism, to be informed with respect to the main messages and themes approached by terrorists, to adhere to critical thinking in the analysis of the message and its interpretation and adopt coherent, pro-socially oriented decisions. In other words, the paper can offer a more clear view on the way Romanian and foreign mass-media present, through news published on their official websites, the activity of terrorist groups, and can help raise awareness regarding the role of the media in cultivating terrorist propaganda.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While it offers relevant and important information about the way terrorism is presented by Romanian and foreign mass-media channels on their official websites, our paper also has some limitations. One limitation is represented by the number of news analyzed. In this regard, future research could extend the analysis and include news reported by other mass-media channels. Thus, it would be interesting to analyze news from publications that are closer to the areas where terrorist attacks are more frequent, such as Al-Jazeera, a publication headquartered in the Middle East.

Another limitation of the research is represented by the fact that the news was only analyzed comparatively. Hence, in order to have a more comprehensive view on the way terrorism is represented by Romanian mass media, and in order to better understand why this phenomenon is presented aggressively although terrorist attacks are not frequent in Romania, future research should focus on analyzing more Romanian news, for a longer period of time.

Furthermore, future research could also include the analysis of the messages directly sent by terrorist groups on the communication channels they own, and it should focus on analyzing from a sociological point of view, the role of mass media in this ethical dilemma: is the media a victim of terrorist acts, which only tries to inform its citizens, or is the media an accomplice which through the way it selectively presents information serves the initial purposes of terrorist groups and reinforces their aggressive behaviors? Therefore, the relationship between mass media and Islamic terrorist propaganda remains a subject for investigation.

References

1. Singh, G.; Pandey, N. Role and Impact of Media on Society: A Sociological Approach with Respect to Demonetisation. *IMPACT Int. J. Res. Humanit. Arts Lit.* **2017**, *5*, 127–136.
2. Svetlana, R. Synergetics of Mass Media Culture and Trends of Postmodernism in the Modern Information Space of Russia. *Utopía Prax. Latinoam.* **2019**, *24*, 399–408.
3. Sanz, A.T. Communication, Ideology and Power: Notes on the Debate between Intentional Propaganda Theory and Spontaneous Reproduction of Propaganda Theory. *Comun. Soc.* **2018**, *32*, 191–209. [CrossRef]
4. Hoffman, M.H. The Legal Status and Responsibilities of Private Internet Users Under the Law of Armed Conflict: A Primer for the Unwary on the Shape of Law to Come. *Wash. U. Glob. Stud. Rev.* **2003**, *2*, 415–426.
5. Ellul, J. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*; Vintage Books: New York, NY, USA, 1973; ISBN 978-0-394-71874-3.
6. Walton, D. What Is Propaganda, and What Exactly Is Wrong with It. *Public Aff. Q.* **1997**, *11*, 383–413.
7. Rapoport, D.C. The four waves of modern terror: International dimensions and consequences. In *An International History of Terrorism*; Hanhimäki, J.M., Blumenau, B., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2013; ISBN 978-0-203-09346-7.
8. Radil, S.M.; Pinos, J.C. Reexamining the Four Waves of Modern Terrorism: A Territorial Interpretation. *Stud. Confl. Terror.* **2019**, 1–20. [CrossRef]
9. Sadik-Zada, E.R. An Ode to ODA against All Odds? A Novel Game-Theoretical and Empirical Reappraisal of the Terrorism-Aid Nexus. *Atl. Econ. J.* **2021**, *49*, 221–240. [CrossRef]
10. Borum, R. *Psychology of Terrorism*; University of South Florida: Tampa, FL, USA, 2004.
11. Tyng, C.M.; Amin, H.U.; Saad, M.N.; Malik, A.S. The Influences of Emotion on Learning and Memory. *Front. Psychol.* **2017**, *8*, 1454. [CrossRef]

12. Jasko, K.; Kruglanski, A.; Bin Hassan, A.S.R.; Gunaratna, R. ISIS: Its History, Ideology, and Psychology. In *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*; Woodward, M., Lukens-Bull, R., Eds.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2018; pp. 1–25, ISBN 978-3-319-73653-2.
13. Lieberman, A.V. Terrorism, the Internet, and Propaganda: A Deadly Combination. *J. Natl. Sec. Pol.* **2017**, *9*, 95–124.
14. Thorndike, E.L. Intelligence and its use. *Harper's Mag.* **1920**, *140*, 127–135. Available online: https://harpers.org/archive/1920/01/intelligence-and-its-uses/ (accessed on 14 July 2021).
15. Sadiku, M.N.O.; Alam, S.; Musa, S.M. Social Intelligence: A Primer. *Int. J. Res.-GRANTHAALAYAH* **2019**, *7*, 213–217. [CrossRef]
16. Byrne, R.W. Machiavellian Intelligence. *Evol. Anthropol. Issues News Rev.* **1996**, *5*, 172–180. [CrossRef]
17. Byrne, R.W.; Whiten, A. Machiavellian intelligence. In *Machiavellian Intelligence II: Extensions and Evaluations*; Whiten, A., Byrne, R.W., Eds.; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1997; pp. 1–23, ISBN 978-0-521-55087-1.
18. Jones, D.N.; Paulhus, D.L. Machiavellianism. In *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior*; Leary, M.R., Hoyle, R.H., Eds.; The Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 2009; pp. 93–108, ISBN 978-1-59385-647-2.
19. Bereczkei, T. Machiavellian Intelligence Hypothesis Revisited: What Evolved Cognitive and Social Skills May Underlie Human Manipulation. *Evol. Behav. Sci.* **2018**, *12*, 32–51. [CrossRef]
20. Pavlović, T.; Storm, I. Machiavellianism, Islamism, and Deprivations as Predictors of Support for Daesh among Muslims. *Int. Rev. Soc. Psychol.* **2020**, *33*, 14. [CrossRef]
21. Payne, W. A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence, Self-Integration, Relating to Fear, Pain and Desire. Ph.D. Thesis, UMI, Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 1986.
22. Salovey, P.; Mayer, J.D. Emotional Intelligence. *Imagin. Cogn. Personal.* **1990**, *9*, 185–211. [CrossRef]
23. Serrat, O. *Knowledge Solutions: Tools, Methods, and Approaches to Drive Organizational Performance*; Springer: Singapore, 2017; ISBN 978-981-10-0982-2.
24. Salovey, P.; Grewal, D. The Science of Emotional Intelligence. *Curr. Dir. Psychol. Sci.* **2005**, *14*, 281–285. [CrossRef]
25. Marín, A.G.; Pan, L.P.; Guirao, I.d.J.A. Emotional Intelligence and Work Performance in the Air Force: An Empirical Study. *Rev. Pensam. Estratég. Segur. CISDE* **2019**, *4*, 67–89.
26. Bayer, J.; Bitiukova, N.; Bard, P.; Szakács, J.; Alemanno, A.; Uszkiewicz, E. Disinformation and Propaganda—Impact on the Functioning of the Rule of Law in the EU and Its Member States. European Parliament: Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. 2019. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/608864/IPOL_STU(2019)608864_EN.pdf (accessed on 16 July 2021).
27. Pellerin, C. Communicating Terror: An Analysis of ISIS Communication Strategy. *Sci. Po Kuwait Program* **2019**, 1–18. Available online: https://www.sciencespo.fr/kuwait-program/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/KSP_Paper_Award_Spring_2016_PELLERIN_Clara.pdf (accessed on 16 July 2021).
28. Parsons, T. Propaganda and Social Control. *Psychiatry* **1942**, *5*, 551–572. [CrossRef]
29. Laskin, A.V. Defining Propaganda: A Psychoanalytic Perspective. *Commun. Public* **2019**, *4*, 305–314. [CrossRef]
30. Jowett, G.S.; O'Donnell, V. *Propaganda & Persuasion*; SAGE Publications: New York, NY, USA, 2018; ISBN 978-1-5063-7135-1.
31. Rusu, M.-L.; Herman, R. The Implications of Propaganda as a Social Influence Strategy. *Sci. Bull.-Nicolae Balcescu Land Forces Acad.* **2018**, *23*, 118–125.
32. Ford, P. Combatting Terrorist Propaganda. *J. Polic. Intell. Count. Terror.* **2020**, *15*, 175–186. [CrossRef]
33. Wright, J. *Terrorist Propaganda: The Red Army Faction and the Provisional IRA*; Palgrave Macmillan: London, UK, 1991; pp. 1968–1986, ISBN 978-1-349-11714-7.
34. Beever, J. Symbolic Violence as Subtle Virulence: The Philosophy of Terrorism. In *Re-Visioning Terrorism: A Humanistic Perspective*; Coda, E., Lawton, B., Eds.; Purdue University Press: West Lafayette, Indiana, 2016; pp. 57–67, ISBN 978-1-55753-733-1.
35. Bardall, G. Symbolic Violence as a Form of Violence Against Women in Politics: A Critical Examination. *Rev. Mex. Cienc. Políticas Soc.* **2019**, *65*, 379–389. [CrossRef]
36. Tuman, J. The Struggle to Define Terrorism. In *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*; SAGE Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2010; pp. 1–30.
37. Lizardo, O. Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach. *J. World-Syst. Res.* **2008**, *14*, 91–118. [CrossRef]
38. Enomoto, C.; Douglas, K. Do Internet Searches for Islamist Propaganda Precede or Follow Islamist Terrorist Attacks? *Econ. Sociol.* **2019**, *12*, 233–247. [CrossRef]
39. Delcea, C.; Bădulescu, A. *Terorismul: Studii Și Cercetări Asupra Fenomenului Terorist [Terrorism: Studies on the Phenomenon of Terrorism]*; Risoprint: Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2008; ISBN 978-973-751-895-8.
40. Teague, D.C. Mass Casualties in the Oklahoma City Bombing. *Clin. Orthop. Relat. Res.* **2004**, *422*, 77–81. [CrossRef]
41. Aly, A.; Macdonald, S.; Jarvis, L.; Chen, T.M. Introduction to the Special Issue: Terrorist Online Propaganda and Radicalization. *Stud. Confl. Terror.* **2017**, *40*, 1–9. [CrossRef]
42. Abrahms, M.; Beauchamp, N.; Mroszczyk, J. What Terrorist Leaders Want: A Content Analysis of Terrorist Propaganda Videos. *Stud. Confl. Terror.* **2017**, *40*, 899–916. [CrossRef]
43. Ingram, H.J. Learning from ISIS's Virtual Propaganda War for Western Muslims: A Comparison of Inspire and Dabiq. In *Terrorists' Use of the Internet: Assessment and Response*; Conway, M., Jarvis, L., Lehane, O., Eds.; IOS Press: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2017; ISBN 978-1-61499-765-8.

44. Fernandez, A.M. Here to Stay and Growing: Combating ISIS Propaganda Networks. The Brookings Project on US Relations with the Islamic World, Washington, Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings. Available online: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/IS-Propaganda_Web_English_v2-1.pdf (accessed on 18 July 2021).

45. Torres, M.R.; Jordán, J.; Horsburgh, N. Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda. *Terror. Polit. Violence* **2006**, *18*, 399–421. [CrossRef]

46. Kruglova, A. "I Will Tell You a Story about Jihad": ISIS's Propaganda and Narrative Advertising. *Stud. Confl. Terror.* **2021**, *44*, 115–137. [CrossRef]

47. Pokalova, E. Online Terrorist Propaganda: Strategic Messaging Employed by Al Qaeda and ISIS. In *Online Terrorist Propaganda, Recruitment, and Radicalization*; Vacca, J.R., Ed.; CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, USA, 2019; pp. 267–290, ISBN 978-1-315-17025-1.

48. Oots, K.L.; Wiegele, T.C. Terrorist and Victim: Psychiatric and Physiological Approaches from a Social Science Perspective. *Terrorism* **1986**, *8*, 1–32. [CrossRef]

49. Silke, A. Becoming a Terrorist. In *Terrorists, Victims and Society*; Silke, A., Ed.; John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2003; pp. 29–53, ISBN 978-0-470-71360-0.

50. Glausch, M. Infographics and Their Role in the IS Propaganda Machine. *Contemp. Voices St Andrews J. Int. Relat.* **2019**, *1*, 32–50. [CrossRef]

51. Milton, D. Fatal Attraction: Explaining Variation in the Attractiveness of Islamic State Propaganda. *Confl. Manag. Peace Sci.* **2020**, *37*, 430–450. [CrossRef]

52. Bass, B.M.; Avolio, B.J. Developing Transformational Leadership: 1992 and Beyond. *J. Eur. Ind. Train.* **1990**, *14*, 21–27. [CrossRef]

53. Barling, J.; Slater, F.; Kelloway, K. Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence: An Exploratory Study. *Leadersh. Organ. Dev. J.* **2000**, *21*, 157–161. [CrossRef]

54. Tornow, W.W. Perceptions or Reality: Is Multi-Perspective Measurement a Means or an End? *Hum. Resour. Manag.* **1993**, *32*, 221–229. [CrossRef]

55. George, J.M. Emotions and Leadership: The Role of Emotional Intelligence. *Hum. Relat.* **2000**, *53*, 1027–1055. [CrossRef]

56. Marlowe, H.A. Social Intelligence: Evidence for Multidimensionality and Construct Independence. *J. Educ. Psychol.* **1986**, *78*, 52–58. [CrossRef]

57. Bandura, A.; Barbaranelli, C.; Caprara, G.V.; Pastorelli, C. Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **1996**, *71*, 364–374. [CrossRef]

58. Alsawalqa, R.O. Is The Sociopath Socially Intelligent? A New Framework For Understanding Sociopathy. *Utopía Prax. Latinoam.* **2019**, *24*, 298–306.

59. Huesmann, L.R.; Taylor, L.D. The Role of Media Violence in Violent Behavior. *Annu. Rev. Public Health* **2006**, *27*, 393–415. [CrossRef]

60. Ibrahim, D.J.A.; Shi, Y. The Media in the Service of ISIS Propaganda War. *J. Pengaj. Media Malays.* **2018**, *20*, 13–22.

61. Weimann, G.; Von Knop, K. Applying the Notion of Noise to Countering Online Terrorism. *Stud. Confl. Terror.* **2008**, *31*, 883–902. [CrossRef]

62. Biernatzki, W.E. Terrorism and Mass Media. *Commun. Res. Trends* **2001**, *21*, 3–27.

63. Rubaltelli, E.; Scrimin, S.; Moscardino, U.; Priolo, G.; Buodo, G. Media Exposure to Terrorism and People's Risk Perception: The Role of Environmental Sensitivity and Psychophysiological Response to Stress. *Br. J. Psychol.* **2018**, *109*, 656–673. [CrossRef]

64. Simmons, B.K.; Lowry, D.N. Terrorists in the News, as Reflected in Three News Magazines, 1980–1988. *J. Q.* **1990**, *67*, 692–696. [CrossRef]

65. Bowe, B.J.; Fahmy, S.; Wanta, W. Missing Religion: Second Level Agenda Setting and Islam in American Newspapers. *Int. Commun. Gaz.* **2013**, *75*, 636–652. [CrossRef]

66. Roman, N.; Alkazemi, M.F.; Stewart, M.C. Tweeting about Terror: A World Systems Theory Approach to Comparing International Newspaper Coverage Online. *Int. Commun. Gaz.* **2020**, *82*, 507–525. [CrossRef]

67. Fahmy, S.S. The Age of Terrorism Media: The Visual Narratives of the Islamic State Group's *Dabiq* Magazine. *Int. Commun. Gaz.* **2020**, *82*, 260–288. [CrossRef]

68. Vultee, F. "Fatwa on the Bunny": News Language and the Creation of Meaning About the Middle East. *J. Commun. Inq.* **2006**, *30*, 319–336. [CrossRef]

69. Vultee, F. A paleontology of style: The Evolution of the Middle East in the AP Stylebook 1977–2010. *J. Pract.* **2012**, *6*, 450–464. [CrossRef]

70. De Vel, O.; Anderson, A.; Corney, M.; Mohay, G. Mining E-Mail Content for Author Identification Forensics. *ACM Sigmod Rec.* **2001**, *30*, 55–64. [CrossRef]

71. Alkazemi, M.; Wei, H.; Wanta, W. Terrorists or Pilgrims: A Comparison of Attributes of Chinese Muslims in the World Press. *J. Media Relig.* **2019**, *18*, 13–26. [CrossRef]

72. National Insitute of Statistics. Rezultatele Definitive ale Recensământului Populației și al Locuințelor din 2011 [Final Results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census]. 2011. Available online: http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/REZULTATE-DEFINITIVE-RPL_2011.pdf (accessed on 21 July 2021).

73. United Nations. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available online: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf (accessed on 22 July 2021).

74. Bless, R. Countering Terrorism while Protecting Freedom of the Media: A Crucial Balance for Governments. In *OSCE Yearbook 2010*; Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG: Baden, Germany, 2011; pp. 283–291, ISBN 978-3-8329-6399-6.

75. Camphuijsen, M.; Vissers, E. Terrorism and the Mass Media: A Symbiotic Relationship? *Soc. Cosm.* **2012**, *3*, 14–24.