Framing digital citizen-spurred social movements.

The case of the #MeToo social movement.

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Abstract

On October 15th 2017, actress Alyssa Milano posted a tweet urging men and women to publicly share their sexual harassment and assault stories using the hashtag #MeToo. Within days, extensive media coverage from both traditional and digital media as well as national and international news corporations were talking about what we now refer to as the #MeToo movement. This research investigates how Dutch and American newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo. Prior research referencing international news cultures was used to gain a better understanding of Dutch and American news reporting. This research included an analysis of journalistic practices, such as journalistic professionalization. Furthermore, research referencing social movement theory and the protest paradigm were acknowledged in order to define the existing news framing devices which were used in this research project. Using forty Dutch and American newspaper articles, and eight existing news framing devices a cross-comparative analyses was conducted to conclude if similarities and differences exist between Dutch and American news reporting of the #MeToo movement.

The results show that differences exist in the Dutch and American news reporting of the #MeToo movement. These differences include that the Dutch news reporting is more likely to implicitly marginalize the movement in comparison to their American counterpart. Furthermore, American journalists are more open to expressing their approval of the #MeToo movement in their news coverage. Despite this, the majority of the media framing of the #MeToo movement between Dutch and American news cultures is the same.

Key words: Collective action, social movements, news framing, #MeToo, digitalization

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1. Introduction

On October 15th, 2017, American actress Alyssa Milano posted a tweet urging men and women to use the hashtag #MeToo if they ever experienced sexual harassment or assault. This was in light of a news story published by *The New York Times* that claimed the now infamous media mogul Harvey Weinstein paid off sexual harassment accusers for over two decades. Milano claimed that her aim was to show the magnitude of the sexual harassment of vulnerable men and women. Within days, extensive media coverage from both traditional and digital media as well as national and international news corporations were talking about what we now refer to as the #MeToo movement. Suddenly, countless brave men and women were sharing their sexual harassment and assault stories online, exposing the misconduct of well-respected men in society. Many media outlets have gone as far as to call this sudden shift a new era. Examples of headlines referencing to this era include, "How men are adjusting to the #MeToo era", "Justice in the #MeToo era is not nearly as swift for federal employees", and "What the Bill Cosby verdict means in the #MeToo era". Although, it is too early to tell whether the #MeToo movement will be effective in provoking a cultural shift, it did succeed in initiating a public discussion regarding sexual harassment and assault. While the magnitude of the #MeToo movement is arguably unique, this type of internet activism has been proven successful before in initiating public debate. In 2011 more than one million tweets were posted regarding the Occupy Movement, and in 2012 nearly five million tweets and a hundred million YouTube views were recorded regarding the Kony campaign. While these digital discussions raise awareness of the problem at hand, one should consider how this online activity translates to traditional media platforms, and how these media representations influence the outcomes of such movements.

However, before evaluating the media coverage of digital social movements in traditional media platforms it is worth reviewing the history of social movement theory. These theories are studied by collective action researchers, who state that social movements are one of the many social processes that can be considered a form of collective action. According to Bimber et al. (2005) the term collective action can be applied to a multitude of processes in society, including voting behavior, memberships in interest groups, the operation of various alliances, bidding behaviors on eBay, and social movements (Bimber et al., 2005). Olsen (2009) adds that collective action is a group of individuals with collective interests, who share a common purpose, and are able to benefit from each other by acting out as an

entity to achieve a goal. However, the problem with this interpretation is that people cannot be expected to act successfully as a group just because they happen to have a common problem or goal (Olsen, 2009). More insight on what makes collective action possibly successful comes from the literature on social movements. Social movements are a form of collective action, defined by Diani and Porta (2009) as a social process where its actors express a conflict of interest in some aspect of society, where the opponent(s) are clearly identified, and the social actors are linked by an informal network, and a shared collective identity (Diani & Porta,2009). Benford and Hunt (1992) add that a social movement strives solely on the existence of a difference in opinion regarding some aspect of reality. The central concern of a social movement lies with the notion of change and the recognition of the lingering effects caused by some form of inequality in society (Benford & Hunt, 1992). In the case of #MeToo the focus lies on the power relations between men and woman in the workplace. For decades women in the entertainment industry, politics, academia, and business have been subjected to sexual harassment and assault. The movement sheds light on the relationship women have with power in general, but also the relationship they have with to that of powerful men. According to Benford and Hunt (1992) the main arguments of contemporary social movements often seek to answer questions about who holds the power, who doesn't, and who should. And while social actors aim to answer and bring awareness to these questions, those who are against the movement seek to protect their current ideological position. The setback, here however, is the fact that the concept of power is subject to various interpretations. In some cases, activists use power as tool to reach a desired outcome, while for others the goal itself is power. (Benford & Hunt, 1992). In the case of the #MeToo movement, the power belongs to elitists men who have been able to silence their sexual harassment and abuse victims through their dominant position in society. Consequently, the aim of the #MeToo movement is to publish this type of sexual misconduct, and to show the magnitude of the problem surrounding sexual misconduct and assault. However, many of the elitists men have strong social ties to the media industry and may attempt to influence and type of news reporting on #MeToo. Indeed, media can impact how a social movement is perceived and can shape public opinion, based on how any given event is defined (De Vreese, 2005). This raises the question how the media will frame this movement, and whether or not external pressures will influence the media coverage of #MeToo?

Today, the landscape of collective action is apparently changed by the possibilities opened up by social media. Bennett and Sergerberg (2012) have reinterpreted the logic

behind collective action by introducing a more contemporary notion, which they refer to as connective action. Where collective action puts emphasis of the role of an organization in stimulating collective action, the connective action model strives solely on the individuals organizing themselves via, social media. Here, participation "becomes self-motivating as personally expressive content is shared with, and recognized by, others who, in turn, repeat these networked sharing activities" (Bennet & Sergerberg, 2012, p.16). The authors conclude that collective action based on strongly tied networks still play an integral role in the political landscape, however connective action formations in which digital media play an integral part, are becoming increasingly more influential. The authors argue that ideal examples of connective action formations are social movements such as The Arab Spring and The Occupy Movement (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Both these movements will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter two.

While social media platforms are becoming increasingly more important in facilitating the success of online social movements, it is equally important to acknowledge how traditional media platforms help facilitate movement outcomes. According to Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) traditional media platforms like newspapers have the ability to pick and choose fragments of the social movement that are most desirable for newspaper reporting. This includes, who is in a leading position, what strategies and tactics are and should be pursued, and how the main message of the movement is represented. (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Van Zoonen (1992) recognized a similar pattern in her study on the media representation of the Dutch women's social movement. The author concludes that the news reporting of the women's movement by traditional media outlets influenced the movements failure. She adds that "the emphasis was on events rather than on analysis or background; events were presented as isolated incidents without any common denominator or mutual coherence; there was a preference for people over issues; and there was a preference for simple issues with identifiable pros and cons" (van Zoonen, 1992, p. 462). Moreover, the media landscape as a whole was incoherent and chaotic, where newspapers approached the movement with different preferences and emphasis (van Zoonen, 1992). Similarly, Ashley and Oslon (1998) conducted a study in the United States concluding that women's social movements were barely covered in the press, and in the rare occasion that it was, they treated it as being humorous. The media landscape as a whole approached the movement in a comparable way, where feminists were delegitimized, and the anti-feminists legitimized (Ashley & Oslon, 1998). While van Zoonen (1992) concluded that Dutch newspapers

reported on the women's movement using different points of emphasis, Ashley and Oslon (1998) state that American news reporting of the women's movement was comparable. These varying results on the media framing of women's movements could be explained by the fact that these studies were conducted in two very different media landscapes.

Halin and Mancini (2004) proposed a framework for comparing media systems in Western European countries and North America. They assumed that differences in media systems stem from contrasting political systems and fluctuating speeds of modernization. They presented three different media systems, the polarized pluralist model, the democratic corporatist model, and the liberal model. Each media system is differentiated from the others using four key characteristics. (1) the strength or weakness of a mass circulation press. (2) the degree and nature of the media and their link to political parties, more specifically the extent to which the media landscape reflects the political division in society. (3) the level of journalistic professionalism. (4) the degree to which the state intervenes in the media landscape. The authors stated that the Dutch media system can be characterized as the democratic corporatist model, and the American media system as the liberal model. (Halin & Machini, 2004). This literature will inform to what extent two countries belonging in different media systems differentiate in the news framing of a contemporary social movement. In the case of this research these countries include The Netherlands and The United States.

In light of this comparative orientation, it is also worth evaluating the attitudes towards sexual harassment and assault in both Dutch and American societies. Luthar and Luthar (2011) state that "men wishing to engage in sexual exploitation will do so only when social norms allow for such behavior. The sexual exploitation cannot occur without the existence and support of local norms" Luthar & Luthar, 2011, p. 273). Therefore, it is important to consider the attitudes towards sexual harassment in Dutch and American societies. Sigal and Jacobsen (1999) conducted ground-breaking cross-cultural research on attitudes towards sexual harassment. After a group of students had been presented with a sexual harassment scenario it was concluded that Dutch University students were far more likely to identify the accused of being guilty of sexual harassment in comparison to American student (Luthar & Luthar, 2011). These results supported prior studies that claim that "American undergraduates hold more traditional sex-role attitudes than students in The Netherlands, so Dutch participants would be expected to be less tolerant of sexual harassment

than their American counterparts" (Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999, p.770). Having said this, American students did recommend a distinctly harsher punishment than the Dutch. This reconfirms prior research that states that the Dutch are more concerned with the rehabilitation of the harasser, where Americans generally support more extreme forms of punishment, i.e. the death penalty (Sigal & Jacobsen, 1999). Furthermore, according to Luthar and Luthar (2001) The Netherlands had lower tolerance of sexual inequality than the United States (Luthar & Luthar, 2001).

The fact that Dutch and American news reporting cultures belong to different media systems, and that attitudes and approaches towards sexual harassment are different, raises the question to what degree this is reflected on the media framing of the #MeToo movement. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze;

How do American and Dutch newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo?

1.1 Social relevance

Framing research has been concerned with the capabilities of the elites to manipulate the public, and arguably democracy itself. Empirical evidence suggests that public opinion is vulnerable to framing effects (Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano, 2009). De Vreese (2005) states that social movements in particular are greatly influenced by framing effects because the media has the ability to manipulate public opinion, based on how any given movement is defined (De Vreese, 2005). This research asks whether and how the traditional media landscape run by powerful elites can hinder social movements. When ideologies expressed by the social movement do not benefit powerful elites, how are traditional media portraying them? Furthermore, in a landscape where social movements are increasingly digitized, to what extent are traditional media taking these digital movements seriously? How are they portraying them? It is crucial to understand how digital citizen-spurred participation is framed in traditional media platforms such as newspapers, in order to begin to understand how these media frames may influence the success of the movement, and the shaping of public opinions.

1.2 Scientific relevance

While there is an extensive body of work on media framing and social movements, there is significantly less research on the media framing of digitized social movements. Having said this, Dumitrica and Bakardjieva (2017) focus on the portrayal of civic engagement mobilized on social media in Canadian newspapers, whilst DeLuca and Sun (2012) attempt to analyze the possibilities for activism on social media. Additionally, Zhou and Moy (2007) attempted to understand the interplay between online public discourse and traditional media coverage. They define the relationship between the two as follows: online public opinion serves as a news item for traditional media, which then subsequently provokes more online discussion (Zhou & Moy, 2007). This suggests that traditional media coverage plays a significant role in the construction of digital social movements. Although these studies play an integral part in understanding media framing in regard to digital citizen-spurred social movements, what they have not pursued is how media framing of digital citizen-spurred social movements may vary across different media systems. Therefore, the aim of this research is to add to this existing body of knowledge by analyzing whether the media frames of the #MeToo movement vary in two distinctly different media systems.

2. Theoretical framework

The following chapter will introduce the theoretical frameworks that help us approach the research question: *How do American and Dutch newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo?* The first section will introduce theories on collective action, as well as justify why the #MeToo social movement can be characterized as a social movement. Using the works of Melucci (1996), Olsen (1965) and Bennet & Sergerberg (2012) the differences between the traditional paradigm and a more contemporary perspective on collective action will be explained. Furthermore, the influences of digital technologies on collective action processes will be examined. Prior literature by Rodriquez (2012) and Carty (2013) will be used to provide a brief framework between techno-optimistic and techno-pessimistic views on this phenomenon. The second section of this chapter will discuss framing theory and news cultures. This allows us to conceptualize media coverage of social movements. First, noteworthy framing theories will be outlined. Second, the similarities and differences between the Dutch and American news cultures will be considered. This includes analyzing journalistic professionalization, the representation of gender in social movements, and diversity in newsrooms.

This chapter will argue that the #MeToo movement can be characterized a social movement; that digital technology enhances citizen-spurred social movements; and that the newspaper framing of a social movement can influence its outcome. Furthermore, we find that American and Dutch news cultures vary significantly, and that this may influence their coverage of the #MeToo movement.

2.1 Collective action paradigm

The term collective action defines a vast array of phenomena including voting behaviors, memberships in interest groups, intergovernmental alliances, and social movements. According to Melucci (1996) the relationship between collective action and social movements is that "a social movement refers to just one specific form of collective action among many others that combine orientations and fields of different kinds" (Melucci, 1996, p.30). Therefore, the #MeToo movement is both a collective action process and a social movement. More on why #MeToo is considered a social movement will be discussed in section 2.3 of this chapter. However, prior to this it is worth briefly evaluating the history of

collective action theory, and social movement research. This includes defining both collective action, and social movements, as well as analyzing the paradigm shifts that occurred in both these research fields.

Collective action

Collective action research is long-established and imperative to the social sciences. Many researchers credit Mancur Olsen for creating what is known as the collective action paradigm. According to Udehn (1993) Olsen argued that there were three key dimensions to collective action. 1. Olsen's primary focus was on studying size dynamics, stating that larger collective action groups are less likely to succeed because the contribution and relative importance of each individual member decreases. 2. Olsen theorized that collective action requires a leader to explain the emergence of the interest group or movement. 3. Olsen claimed that while self-interested individuals will not influence smaller or privileged collective action groups it will influence intermediate and larger groups or movements (Udehn, 1993).

According to Bimber et al. (2005) one flaw in Olsen's paradigm is that was created prior to the popularization of digital information and communication technologies. These digital technologies play a central role in twenty-first century collective action processes. Therefore, it is worth considering to what degree Olsen's long-established research is appropriate for explaining contemporary phenomena. While his theories are not wrong, they are limited to certain conditions. For example, Olsen's theories state that formal organization is crucial for collective action processes, and while this may be true in cases where the cost of information and organization are high, such conditions no longer constitute all situations (Bimber et al., 2005). Melucci's (1996) theory of collective action brings a different perspective and readdresses this flaw. His defines collective action as

> A set of social practices (i) involving simultaneously a number of individuals or groups, (ii) exhibiting similar morphological characteristics in contiguity of time and space, (iii) implying a social field of relationships and (iv) the capacity of the people involved of making sense of what they are doing (p.20).

Melucci (1996) recognizes a shift in the collective action paradigm, stating that it no longer revolves around organizational structures as described by Olson, but instead revolves around a group of social actors, who are not confined by space, with a collective identity. He states, "the social space of movements has become a distinct area of the system and no longer coincides either with traditional forms of organization of solidarity or with the conversational channels of political representation" (Melucci, 1996, p. 3). Unlike Olsen, Melucci's definition can be used to identify digital spurred social movements that do not require traditional organizational structures. An example of such a movement is #MeToo. This movement is run, not by a professional organization, but instead by a group of social actors with a collective identity and aim. Therefore, it was decided to use Melucci's definition of collective identity for this research project.

Social movements

As previously mentioned the relationship between collective action processes and social movements, is that collective action defines a variety of processes, one of which is social movements. Melucci (1996) redefines this relationship stating a social movement is the result of collective action rather than a starting point. "Collective action is a multipolar system of action which combines different orientations, involves multiple actors, and encompasses as system of opportunities and constraints which shapes the actors' relationships" (Melluci, 1996). After establishing this relationship Melluci (1996) defines a social movement by highlighting three key dimensions. 1. Social movements is the mobilization of a group of people who share a common purpose. 2. Social movements are engaged in a conflict with one or more opponent(s), where both groups desire to control some aspect of society. 3. The intent of a social movement is to challenge the status quo. While this is still true for contemporary social movements, the author does state that the focus of social movements has shifted from focusing on more traditional political issues towards cultural conflicts. "The crucial dimensions of daily life (time, space, interpersonal relations, individual and group identity) have been involved in these conflicts, and new actors have laid claim to their autonomy in making sense of their lives" (Melucci, 1995, p.42). Porta and Diani (2006) recognize the same trend by stating that individuals involved in a social movement are committed to making a cultural or societal change through the identification of a problem and opponent(s) (Porta & Diani, 2006). Benford and Hunt (1992) add that the very existence of social movements suggests that differences in some aspect of reality exists. The

core of these differences lies with the notion of power. Where social movement actors are either trying to gain power for themselves or limited the power of their opponent. The authors state that both social movement researchers and social movement actors define power differently and is therefore an ambiguous concept (Benford & Hunt, 1992). Melucci (1996) adds that conflict surrounding social movements always depends the structure of any given society and its relationship with the environment. (Melucci, 1996).

At this point the relationship between collective action and social movements has been defined. However, it has yet to be established how social movements differentiate from other collective action processes. According to Porta and Diani (2006) social movements are distinctly different because groups of social movement actors are linked through an informal network. A social movement cannot be controlled by a single organization or individual, nor can a single organization or individual represent the movement as a whole. This is because social movements are defined by a collective identity. Social movements do not explicitly revolve around protest events and initiatives, the movement as a whole is aimed at developing a collective identity by promoting certain cultural, political, or societal issues (Porta & Diani, 2006). Melucci (1980) adds that a distinct characteristic of new social movements is the objective of solidarity (1980). Holland et al. (2005) state that this is particularly important for social movements because collective identity serves as a footing for collective action including the organization of a social movement, the strategies, tactics, and targets (Holland et al., 2005).

While the traditional collective paradigm is imperative for understanding collective action because it acted as the groundwork for most research projects, it is crucial to include contemporary literature that discusses collective action from a twenty-first century perspective. Literature with a strong focus on technology and social movements is especially important because the primary aim of this research is to identify media frames used in newspapers about the digital social movement #MeToo.

2.2 Digital technology and social movements

In 2011, *Time* magazine named 'The Protester' as person of the year. The cover story honored the heroic actions of a Tunisian fruit vendor who had unrightfully been fined and allegedly slapped by a local police officer. Prior to these events the fruit vendor endured

years of unlawful treatment from Tunisian officials. The 26-year-old wound up the courage to file an official complaint, but when he received no response, he lit himself on fire in front of the capital building as a form of protest. People were outraged, and the story went global, initiating a wave of social media protests that would ultimately change the world (Andersen, 2011). This string of protests would later be referred to as Arab Spring. The magnitude of online engagement and public debate of this digital movement was ground-breaking and arguably the initiator for many more contemporary social movements including The Occupy Movement, Indignados, and, I will argue, #MeToo.

Over the past three decades, the increase in and accessibility of technology has significantly changed the collective action landscape. Digital tools such as social media platforms have helped facilitate with the communication and mobilization of collective action processes, as well as amplify key messages to unimaginable magnitudes. According to Carty (2013)

> The internet has fueled a new source of political energy that posits a new relationship between information communication technologies, political struggle, and public life. Electronic social movement organizations and online activists are redefining political struggle across the dimensions of contentious politics in terms of recruitment, mobilizing, strategizing, fundraising, and protest activities. The explosion of e-movements, e-protest, and e-activism highlights the importance of the Internet as an organizational tool to the dissemination of information wired activism, and shows it has become a significant, if not essential, repertoire for social movement actors (p. 1).

The internet has become a crucial tool for provoking contemporary social movements. The digital dynamics have provided social actors with organizational opportunities that redefine social movement processes. Bennet and Sergerberg (2012) recognize a similar trend and introduce the concept of connective action. The concept refers to a new formation of collective action where digital media play an integral part in the organization of collective action. While traditional collective action relies primarily on professional organization, digitally networked action does not (Bennet & Sergerberg, 2012). Bimber et al. (2005) state that the transition to the digital world significantly increased citizen spurred participation. Digital applications such as weblogs, bulletin board systems, chat rooms, and social media provide the opportunity to host large-scale audiences and create meaningful group participation (Bimber et al.,2005, p. 375). Gerbaudo (2012) uses the phrase "tweets and the

streets" to define the contemporary protest experience, stating that it is fusion between mediated communication and physical gatherings (Gerbaudo, 2012, p.2).

Social media are increasingly playing a crucial role in social movements. Social media can be defined as platforms using web 2.0 functionalities, which according to Rodriguez (2013) "facilitate the social sharing, commenting, diffusion, adaptation, and recreation of user-generated content" namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, Wikipedia, Tumblr, etc. (p. 1053).

As previously mentioned the Arab Spring movement was ground-breaking for collective action theory because it was the first social movement that successfully implemented social media platforms. Howard et Al. (2011) state that even though the physical gatherings of the Arab Spring movement occurred primarily in North Africa and the Middle East, the Western world was actively involved with the protests on social media. He claims that online social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter became crucial components to ultimately achieving the freedom that that fruit vendor was fighting for. The authors state that social media served three essential purposes.

First, social media played a central role in shaping political debates in the Arab Spring. Second, a spike in online revolutionary conversations often preceded major events on the ground. Third, social media helped spread democratic ideas across international borders (p.23).

Bearing this in mind, the authors conclude that while social media had a significant impact on the success of the Arab Spring social movement, the key mechanisms of a social movement were not redefined. In social movement theory, social movements are typically defined as collective challenges that are based on shared purposes and organized interactions with opponents. Social media platforms have not changed the goals of social movements only facilitated the process. (Howard et al., 2011).

While it has been proven in previous collective action case studies that digital platforms can play a crucial role, there is still sharp debate among researchers to what degree the internet positively or negatively contributes to this phenomenon. According to Rodriquez (2013) a techno-optimist perspective is the belief that technology will speed up exchanges of

information, reduce the cost of these exchanges, and break national and international barriers ultimately creating a more effective collective action platform (Rodriquez, 2013). Carty (2013) adds that online networks destabilize bureaucratic structures, break boundaries, encourage collaborative decision-making, and strengthen collective identity and community. The author also states that the internet has the ability to create the spillover effect, which is the transition from online activity to offline engagement (Carty, 2013). This effect is similar to Gerbaudo's (2012) "tweets and the streets" theory which was previously mentioned. The author adds the success of the Arab Spring movement prompted a media revolution which was widely celebrated. Hillary Clinton's senior adviser, referred to the internet as the "Che Guevara of the twenty-first century" adding that digital technologies challenge the hierarchical system in societies, putting usually powerful enlists individuals in unconformable positions (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 6).

Despite this celebration, Rodriquez (2013) states that a pessimistic view, is the belief that a constant and readily available flow of information is hard to verify and is easily monitored by those who aim to repress the movement. Additionally, and most importantly from this perspective researchers argue that using social media as a platform to run a social movement provides a false sense of participation (Rodriquez, 2013). According to Christensen (2011) slacktivism refers to political or cultural activities that have no real-life impact on society. It provides a feel-good factor and increases awareness of a cultural crisis but is unable to achieve any political goal (Christensen, 2011). Carty (2013) adds that "social relations in cyberspace are not a substitute for traditional and face-to-face forms of community, protest, and collective identity, and these may in fact weaken forms of political engagement" (p.2).

Although digital media play a significant role in social movements, traditional media also continue to play an important role in this context. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) evaluated the relationship between traditional media platforms and social movements. The authors view social movements and traditional media environments as systems influencing each other. However, social movements depend more on traditional media than the other way around. In fact, social movements need news media for three key reasons (1) mobilization, (2) validation, and (3) scope enlargement. These key reasons play an integral role in making the conflict highlighted by a social movement more public, ultimately influencing its chances of success (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Lipsky (1968) concludes that protests will not be

successful unless it is covered by mass communications platforms. Stating "like the tree falling unheard in the forest, there is no protest unless protest is perceived and projected" (Lipsky, 1968, p. 1151).

The body of knowledge in its entirety describes a shift in the organization of collective action. This shift includes the integration of digital media, who play an integral part in the organization, mobilization, and validation of contemporary collective action. Opinions vary in regard to how this influences the success of collective action, with pessimists claiming that the digitalization negatively impacts the outcome, and optimists citing the opposite. Either way, the digitalization of collective action is inevitable, and must therefore be considered in all future prospects. It is therefore imperative to analyze how traditional media platforms are adjusting to this shift by interpreting how they frame digital social movements.

2.3 The new social movement: #MeToo

Social movements have been part of collective action research since the 20th century, however Langman (2012) argues that a new wave of social movements has occurred which can no longer be identified using 20th century literature. Instead the author presents a new social movement theory (NSM) where social movements are defined as a movement "of the excluded, if the indignant, as contestations over cultural meanings and recognition of new lifestyles and identities seek cultural transformations of identity-informed by participatory, democratic dialogues and with vision of alternative possibilities of subjectivity for the society" (Langman, 2012, p. 158). This new wave of social movements can be identified using five central elements. (1) a political, economic, and or cultural crisis that redefines social-order leaving space for people to reinterpret their understanding of some aspect of reality. (2) identity, which are the distinct norms, social practices, lifestyles, or values by which the movement choses to identify itself. (3) emotion, this is often anger driven by the notion of some form of cultural inequality. (4) morality, where the aim is change the unequal concentration of power and wealth. (5) vision, where shared interpretations of events play an integral role in the overall objective of the movement and the strategies to obtain that objective (Langman, 2012, p. 158-162).

Based on Langman's five central elements, the following can be said about the #MeToo movement. (1) the #MeToo movement is established by highlighting a cultural crisis, around what constitutes harassment and relations between men and women in professional environments. (2) the movement identifies itself as seeking gender equality in the workplace, and harassment free work environments. Additionally, it strives for female empowerment. (3) the movement feeds from the expression of anger towards the sexual misconduct that has gone unnoticed for years. (4) the movement highlights that the unequal power distribution that has caused countless victims not to speak up about sexual misconduct. (5) the movement strives to draw attention to the many forms of sexual harassment in the workplace-and beyond-and as such proposes a new vision of relations between men and women.

Social movements revolve around the identification of a problem and an opponent based on the disagreement of some aspect of society. Contemporary social movements are for the most part organized through informal digital networks such as social media platforms. These platforms play a prominent role in the mobilization and organization of contemporary collective actions. However, if the problem identification of a social movement is portrayed differently in traditional media outlets as originally intended, chances are that it will influence the movements success. This raises the question to what degree the intended messages of digital social movements translate to traditional media platforms such as newspapers. Journalistic processes such as framing will play a significant role in answering this question.

2.4 What is media framing?

In the past three decades framing theory has become a common research approach used primarily by communication scholars. Yet, operationalization is inconsistent among researchers (Tankard, 2011), which in part can be justified by the varying interpretations of the words frame and framing (Van Gorp, 2007).

Benford (1997) states that there are two ways of defining a frame: a structure in which meaning is created based on the relationships of any given text, or a boundary that highlights certain perspectives while suppressing others (Benford, 1997). A frame can thus be defined as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of

events, weaving a connection among them" (Gamson and Modigiliani quoted in De Vreese, 2005, p.53). According to Entman (2009) framing can provide meaning to a series of events, however it can also be seen as a process that defines problems, makes moral judgements, and supports solutions (Entman, 2009). Framing emerges from the network of professional communication practitioners who select or exclude aspects of reality in their texts in order to promote a particular perspective (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009). For example, according to Xu (2013) in a story on protests, journalists could trivialize a protest group by solely focusing on their appearances and or demographics rather than their pleas (Xu, 2013). The consequence of this, is that it conveys a certain perspective to the audience, whom are basing their opinions off of a fragment of the entirety of the protest. Which in turn was the aim of the journalist framing the protest.

2.5 The media framing of collective action, protests, or social movements

There is a plethora of existing research on the media framing of collective action, protests, and social movements. The construction of meaning making in social movements or other instances does not occur naturally and is rooted in interpretive processes mediated by communication texts. Snow (2013) states that

> Framing within the context of social movements, refers to the signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by movement adherents and other actors relevant to the interests of movements and the challenges they mount in pursuit of those interests (p. 1).

There are three core mechanisms that contribute to this process: 1. frames focus attention to a particular aspect of reality; 2. frames articulate mechanisms so that one meaning is conveyed instead of another; and, 3. framing performs a transformative function by explicitly defining how objects of attention should be understood and how they are related to other actors (Snow, 2013). Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano (2009) state that the exposure to a given media frame over time increases the probability of a desired response, and diminishes the probability contemplating alternative interpretations (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009). The consequence of this, according to De Vreese (2005), is that framing may contribute to shaping society in regard to political socialization, decision-making, and collective action (De Vreese, 2005). Druckman and Nelson (2003) refer to this as the framing

effect, which "occurs when in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions" (p.730)

Gitlin (1980) was one of the first sociologists to examine the news framing of protests movements. He conducted a research on a U.S antiwar movement in the United States in order to attempt to understand journalistic practices, and produce predictable patterns (Gitlin, 1980). The protest paradigm, according to Boyle et al. (2012) revolves around the notion that while journalists should report objectively about protest movements, they do not. Research suggests that structural biases exist surrounding the news coverage of protests movements, producing predictable journalistic patterns. These patterns are referred to as the protest paradigm (Boyle et al, 2012). Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2014) added that the patterns as described by the protest paradigm are the "result of the underlying conditions, and constraints that characterize both journalism and media systems more generally" (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2014, p. 411).

There are also several external factors that influence the process of media framing. One important factors is the influence of powerful actors. Entman and Rojecki (1993) analyzed the media framing of the U.S Anti-Nuclear Movement, concluding that *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine inhibited the success of the movement even though the majority of the public and some elites supported the movement's objective. The news coverage of the movement supported the unpopular opinion on the United States president. This suggest that powerful politicians can influence how social movements are framed (Entman & Rolecki, 1993). Zhou and Moy (2007) attempted to understand the interplay between online public discourse and traditional media coverage. They explained that online public opinion serves as a news item for traditional media, which then subsequently provokes more online discussion. Referring to a particular crime case, the authors concluded that while a vivid online discussion occurred, which was worth covering in the news, external pressures from government officials outweighed journalistic integrity in regard to shaping news frames to reflect public opinion (Zhou & Moy, 2007).

Another factor has to do with the popularity of certain ways of thinking at a given time. Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) analyzed to what extent media framing on women's movements in American influenced public opinion. The authors discovered five unique

media frames: political and economic rights, feminism, anti-feminism, and gender roles. Each media frame formed different public opinions and attitudes, however feminism and economic rights accounted for 75 percent of the media coverage, both of which exuded negative attitudes towards women's movements. As a matter of fact, only the political rights frame employed positive attitudes, but this frame rarely occurred in the media coverage. The authors conclude that "political movements or interest groups who wish to mobilize broad electoral support would do well to package their issues to appeal the most commonly held societal values and avoid appeals to economic rights or group-specific legislation" (Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997, p. 893).

Similarly, Xu (2013) conducted a content analysis in order to conclude how *The New York Times* and *USA Today* framed the Occupy Wall Street social movement. Xu states that the amount of negative news coverage on the social movement outweighed the neutral/positive news coverage. The study advices protesters to avoid dramaturgical shows and disruptive behavior, while these approaches may initially be effective for gaining media attention, the coverage of such events may lead to public disapproval. The author concludes that there is a need for educating citizens on how to approach the misrepresentation of events by the media in order to form educated decisions and challenge the media industry. Bearing this in mind, studies do exist in the current body of knowledge that reveal more optimistic results. Dumitrica and Bakardjieva (2017) sought to analyze the media framing of civic engagement mediated by social media in Canadian Newspapers. The authors concluded that the Canadian news stories promoted an individualized form of civic engagement mediated by social media. The newspaper articles expressed enthusiasm and empowered individual participation in grassroots movements, labelling social media as a crucial mobilizing tool. It was revealed that in line with this research a new news discourse emerged: the personalization of civic engagement (Dumitrica & Bakardjieva, 2017). Furthermore, DeLuca, Lawson, and Sun (2012) explored how social media create new opportunities for collective participation. Concluding, that social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube transformed and multiplied the possibilities of activism that do not and cannot exist in the world of traditional mass media landscapes (Deluca, Lawson, & Sun, 2012).

This literature proves that news framing plays a significant role in the relationship between the digital dynamics of citizen-spurred social movements and traditional media outlets. Influential factors of traditional media framing include societal elites and journalistic

constraints. A variety of news framing devices were discovered which ultimately informed the framing analysis tool for this research project. For example, like Xu (2013) the researcher will focus on the amount of negative, neutral, and positive news coverage of the #MeToo movement.

2.6 Comparing news cultures

Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest that the development of journalistic professionalization is an important aspect that leads to differences among media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). This matters', because these differences may influence the media framing of a social movement. The differences highlighted below, will be taken into consideration when analyzing the news reporting of the #MeToo movement in the Dutch and American media systems.

Journalists have ample autonomy to carry out their work. They are more concerned with serving the public than economic gain, and have received the proper professional training, and media organizations and institutions promote journalistic values, norms, and symbols (Beam, Weaver, & Brownlee, 2009). With that said, journalistic professionalization is still an ambiguous research topic. Soloski (1989) states that journalistic professionalization is used as a tool by media corporations to influence and control the behavior of reporters and editors. A consequence of this type of behavioral control is that journalists subconsciously report the news in ways that support the existing social and economic systems. It also legitimizes the current social and economic systems "making it appear to be a naturally occurring state of affairs" (Soloski, 1989, p. 225). Hallin and Mancini (2004) take a radically different approach to defining journalistic professionalization stating that the concept can be defined using three distinguishable dimensions, including autonomy, distinct professional norms, and public service orientation. If these dimensions are deemed as high, it can be concluded that the respective media model has a strong level of journalistic professionalization. This is meaningful because "a high degree of professionalization of journalism means that journalism is differentiated as an institution and form of practice from other institutions and forms of practice, including politics" (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 38). The authors state that the differentiation of journalism from other institutions and practices is crucial because social functions that were initially merged are separated.

In contemporary societies, where journalism is considered as an individual institution the main function of the media is to draw attention to public opinion and simplify social complexities (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). This function is especially important for the mobilization of social movements. Hallin and Mancini (2004) conclude that both the Dutch and American media models have strong levels of professionalization, where autonomy, distinct professional norms, and public service orientation are high. Furthermore, the primary function of journalism in both countries is prioritizing the public over economic benefits. However, in both systems there are some external stakeholders that could influence media content. Hallin and Mancini (2004) state that instrumentalization is the degree to which outside actors control the media landscape and therefore also media content. These actors could include but are not limited to politicians, social groups, social movements, and economic actors. The authors make a point to distinguish advertisers from this list, stating that it could be but is not always considered as a form of instrumentalization. In some cases, advertisers demand an influence on editorial content in which case it can be considered as instrumentalization. This is especially important in the American media model due to its early development of commercial mass-circulation press. In the Netherlands, the authors noted that there is a shift towards a more neutral commercial press (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

Hallin and Mancini distinguished the Dutch media system as belonging to the Democratic Corporatist model. The American media system belongs to the Liberal model. While these models are relatively different, journalistic professionalization is relatively similar. Both media landscapes have strikingly similar functions in their respective societies and prioritize journalistic integrity and public value over economic benefits. This may be reflected as so in the news coverage of the #MeToo movement. While the inherent nature of the movement is not acknowledging the sexual misconduct of elitists man, countless celebrity women have done so. Based on the literature it is unlikely that American and Dutch journalists will attempt to protect societies elites from sexual harassment allegations and public disgrace.

2.7 Gender and journalism

For the purpose of this research, the concept of gender and journalism will be defined from two distinctly different perspectives. Firstly, prior research will be acknowledged in order to

gain a better understanding of how gender has previously been framed in the news reporting of social movements. And secondly, data from the American Society of News Editors and various Dutch data bases will be evaluated to highlight the gender diversity, or lack thereof, in Dutch and American newsrooms.

According to Mendes (2011) newspapers play a particularly crucial role in the construction of a women's social movements. Newspapers with their daily publication and wide circulation have the ability to shape public opinion with constructed messages. Newspapers can facilitate social movements by provoking noteworthy discussions surrounding the issue at hand or shed a negative light on the movement through delegitimization. The author conducted a news framing analysis of women's movements in the United States and the United Kingdom and was surprised to find that 50 percent of the sample used supportive frames (Mendes, 2011). The authors surprised reaction stems from previous research which contradict these findings. Earlier research by Ashley and Oslon (1998) and van Zoonen (1992) was referenced. These researches concluded that in both the Dutch and American media landscapes women's movements failed due to the delegitimization of traditional media outlets. Furthermore, Barakso and Schaffner (2006) concluded that a disconnect exists between the issues of women's movements as portrayed by traditional news outlets and the issues of the movement. The consequences of this is that "the public's sense that the movement is out of touch may have as much to do with what the news media choose to cover as it does with the priorities of the women's movements itself" (Barakso & Schaffner, 2006, p.41). The general consensus of the news framing of women's movements is that they are generally delegitimized, however Mendes' (2011) work signified a shift, where traditional media outlets are becoming more supportive in the framing of social movements surrounding women's issues.

News room diversity was first addressed in the 1950's. According to Steiner (2009) up until this point women were not considered a valuable asset to the field of journalism. The problem surrounding gender in the newsroom become more disputed when among other things, a shift in newspaper audiences, and norms of professionalism changed (Steiner, 2009). From this point newsroom diversity began to increase, however according to Everbach and Flournoy (2007) gender inequality still exists in contemporary newsrooms. The authors state women often leave full-time journalism jobs due to lack of opportunity, inadequate mentors, inflexible work hours, and low salary (Everbach & Flournoy, 2007). Steiner (2009)

adds that gender influences the topic that is assignment to a journalist. Where war reporting is far more likely to be conducted by a male reporter than a female reporter. This is because research proves that women write with sensitivity and sympathy and are concerned with their audience whereas man report news solely with objectivity (Steiner, 2009). Finally, Craft and Wanta (2004) conducted a study with the aim to analyze the differences in news coverage between male and female dominated newsrooms. Concluding that newspapers with a high percentage of female employees typically covered the news in a positive light. The reason for this is that male-dominated newsrooms are more likely to adhere to traditional news values where the primary focus is on conflict (Craft & Wanta, 2004).

The American Society of News Editors (2017) conducts an annual survey including a total of 598 American newspapers to record newsroom diversity. In 2017, it was concluded that among daily newspapers, 39.1 percent of newsroom employees were female. The survey also records the newsroom diversity of each individual American Newspaper ranking them from most to least diverse. In 2017 *The Washington Post* was ranked the most diverse newsroom with a 50/50 gender breakdown. This notably equal gender breakdown could be attributed to the fact that in 1956 Katherine Graham became the first female publisher of a major American Newspaper. She led *The Washington Post* for nearly two decades and oversaw the newspapers' most famous period, which is now referred to as the Watergate coverage. This historical connection to having a female in a leadership position may mean that *The Washington Post* has higher standards in regard to gender diversity. On the contrary to this, *The New York Times* was notably less diverse, where the gender breakdown of newsroom leaders was 44 percent female and 56 percent male. While similar statistics are not available in Dutch databases Hermans et al. (2011) conclude that 35,5 percent of Dutch journalists are female, and 64.3 percent are male. They state that this number increased significantly over the past few decades indicating that in the 1960's only 5 percent of Dutch journalists were female. Furthermore, the authors point out that there is a significant relationship between the age and gender of journalists. In the age category 35-44 over half of journalists are female (51.7%). This number significantly decreases to 39.1 percent for journalists between 45-54 years old (Hermans et al., 2011).

Female journalism has come a long way in the past few decades, but the numbers prove that female journalists are still underrepresented in contemporary newsrooms. Women are outnumbered and are far less likely to hold a leadership position in both American and

Dutch newsrooms. The literature also proves that male and female news reporting styles are significantly different. Suggesting that male and female dominated news rooms would produce very different perspectives on similar news stories. While the #MeToo movement does not inherently distinguish gender, sexual harassment is arguably a gender sensitive issue. With the exception of *The Washington Post* contemporary newsrooms are still dominated by male journalists, which may have considerable effects on the media framing of the #MeToo movement.

3. Methodology

3.1 The #MeToo media coverage

The #MeToo movement was initiated by Hollywood actress Alyssa Milano on October 15th, 2017. The actress started the movement in light of a *New York Times* article that claimed powerful media mogul Harvey Weinstein paid off sexual harassment accusers for decades. Milano urged her followers to tweet #MeToo and share their personal experiences with sexual harassment or assault to highlight the magnitude of the problem. The online movement went viral: within days of Milano's initial tweet, 1.7 million tweets spanning over 85 countries used the hashtag (Park, 2017). Traditional media platforms responded accordingly: the online movement dominated the news for months, with several moments of escalation. On December 6th, 2017 *Time Magazine* announced that their person of the year would the 'The Silence Breakers' who spoke out against sexual harassment and assault. On January 7th, nearly all the celebrities attending the Golden Globes wore black to show support for the movement. On January 9th, French Actress Catherine Deneuve and one hundred other women initiated a countermovement referring to #MeToo as a 'witch-hunt'. On January 25th, the movement took over the news again when it was announced that Larry Nasser, a highly acclaimed Olympic doctor sexually assaulted over 160 gymnasts. Finally, in April 2018 the infamous Bill Cosby became the subject of the media in consideration of his upcoming sexual assault trial. These, and countless other stories have been analyzed in order to conclude how Dutch and American newspapers are framing the digital social movement #MeToo.

3.2 A framing approach to #MeToo

In this research, I adopt an interpretivist approach as my interest is in understanding how American and Dutch newspapers frame a digital citizen-spurred participation movement. According to Bryman (2012), interpretivists aim to understand the social world through the interpretation and examination of texts rather than numerical values. Applying the interpretivist model means I am interested in understanding how the meaning of this movement is created via its news coverage. This requires interpreting the meaning of a text, rather than capturing world frequencies or an article's tone.

In this research, I rely upon framing theory in order to approach the creation of meaning through news stories. Framing theory – outlined in sections 2.4 and 2.5– focuses on how journalists make sense of the world around us through their stories. News "distorts as much as it attempts to make sense of our world" (Linström & Marais, 2012, p. 33). News frame analysis raises important questions in regard to the processes of the distortion of the news media. Some of these questions include: how do news frames influence public debate and how do news frames influence outcomes of social movements? Since this research seeks to uncover how traditional media depict digital citizen-spurred participation movements, framing analysis works well as a methodological approach, as it allows the researcher to identify the way a news story constructs a certain understanding of the movement by "analyzing the selection, placement and structure of specific words and sentences in a text" (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009, p.180). De Vreese (2005) adds that other key elements of qualitative news framing analysis can include headlines, source selections, and quotes selections (De Vreese, 2005).

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) state that there are two ways to approach the data analysis of news frames. An inductive approach involves analyzing a news story without predefined frames and relies primarily on the exploration of news frames while the data is being analyzed. A deductive approach, on the other hand, involves using predefined frames that are based on prior literature (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

De Vreese (2005) further discusses two ways in which frames can be classified: generic frames, which are frames that are deeply-rooted to the traditions of conventional journalism, and issue-specific frames, which are frames commonly used to define specific issues or events. The disadvantage of the latter is that these frames are "difficult to generalize, compare, and use as empirical evidence building" (De Vreese, 2005, p.55).

This study will apply a deductive approach, by using generic frames for the data analysis. However, it should be acknowledged that there are some limitations of applying a deductive approach to qualitative news framing research. According to Matthes and Kohring (2008) a deductive approach demands a clear understanding of the types of frames that are likely to be encountered in the topic currently under investigation (Matthes and Kohring, 2008). Building on the existing body of knowledge on media framing devices and social

movement framing devices outlined in chapter 2, this project will rely upon a combination of frames outlined below in section 3.4.

Advantages & limitations of framing research

According to Connolly-Ahern and Broadway (2008) the key advantages of qualitative framing analysis include (1) that it examines key elements of a text including words, metaphors, and narratives, (2) determines what was and was not included in the news frame, and (3) acknowledges that the most commonly used words in a text are not necessarily the most essential words in a text (Connolly-Ahern and Broadway, 2008).

While the availability and empirical evidence of predefined news frames is extensive, the field of news framing analysis faces two major limitations: reliability and validity (Linström & Marais, 2012). Reliability refers to the extent studies can be successfully replicated by other researchers, where "internal reliability refers to the degree to which other researchers, given a set of previously generated constructs, would match them with data in the same way as did the original researcher" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32). Validity refers to the extent to which the research findings represent human life, where external validity is the degree to which conclusions are similar across multiple groups (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

These two concepts have arguably been the most common points of critique for media framing analysis. Matthes and Kohring (2008) state that a frame is an abstract concept that is difficult to identify and code. This threatens the reliability of the research project because the abstractness of the frame may cause various researchers to identify frames differently (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). While securing absolute reliability and validity is impossible, there are a few steps researchers can take to enhance the reliablity of the project (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) suggest answering this question prior to creating a research design "Is there a theory detailed enough to guide the design of a coding scheme and strong enough to set a standard of coding results to use in comparing coders' judgment patterns (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p.282)? If the answer to this question is yes, then the research design was built using a substantial framework, which is more likely to result in a valid and standardized coding scheme that will produce patterned content (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). This is one of the primary reasons for applying a deductive approach to this research, because it allows the utilization of predefined coding

devices. This type of standardization improves the reliability and validity of the research design.

3.3 Data collection

The unit of analysis for this research project was American and Dutch newspaper articles. Two daily newspapers from each country were chosen based on accessibility and readership. Initially, the aim was to incorporate both sensationalist and intellectual newspapers, in order to acknowledge the differences in news coverage and writing styles. However, after a brief analysis of the available articles, sensationalist newspaper articles in both American and Dutch newspapers appeared to be rather short and lacking in an in-depth analysis of the #MeToo movement. Therefore, two American intellectual newspapers and two Dutch intellectual newspapers were chosen for the data collection and analysis of this project. *The New York Times* was purposefully chosen, due to its association with the social movement. The remainder of the newspapers were chosen based on readership and accessibility. *The Washington Post, de Volkskrant,* and, *NRC Handelsblad* were chosen for the for the data collection and analysis processes of this research (see Table 1).

Using Lexis Nexis, a database for full text documents, ten articles from each newspaper were collected. The quantity of collected newspapers was based on the methodological guidelines. The guidelines stated to code between forty and sixty articles. Due to the fact that the newspaper articles were long and were therefore more likely to be rich in meaning, a total of forty newspaper articles was collected.

These articles had to include the following criteria to be applicable for the analysis of this research project.

- Contain a minimum of 300 words;
- Mention of #MeToo with special regard to the concept of social movements;
- Content published online only and letters to the editor were excluded from this research project, as they do not go through the same media framing processes.
- Content published between October 15th, 2017, and April 2018.

In order to capture the differences in the coverage of the movement throughout time, the ten articles collected for each newspaper had to vary significantly in date of publication.

While the process of retrieving American newspaper, articles went according to plan, the collection of Dutch newspaper articles required some deviation from the intended process. Lexis Nexis had a very limited selection of recent and relevant Dutch newspaper articles. While *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* each had 439 hits or more, the Dutch newspapers had a maximum of 33 hits each. Therefore, half of the articles were retrieved from the respective newspaper websites. Both websites explicitly stated which articles appeared in the actual newspaper and which were published exclusively online.

Newspaper	Country	Readership	Number of available articles [1]
The New York Times	American	10.2 million	439 articles
The Washington Post	American	2.2 million	887 articles
de Volkskrant	Dutch	250.812	33 articles
NRC	Dutch	455.927	31 articles

Table 1: Newspaper statistics

3.4 Data analysis

Based on previous research, a total of eight news framing devices were used in this project.

    1. *Problem identification* is how the problem/issue at the heart of the movement is described by the article. This framing device is based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) conflict frame, which is the emphasis on a conflict between individuals, groups, intuitions, or governments (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

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[1] A preliminary search was conducted on LexisNexis using #MeToo as a key search term. The number of articles in the table represents the number of articles available on the data base from October 15th, 2017 to April 22nd, 2018.

2. *Ascription of responsibility and or blame* is the identification of an individual, group, society, or government who contributed to or is responsible for the identified problem of #MeToo. This framing device was based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) attribution of responsibility frame, which identifies issues or problems caused by an individual, group, institution, or government (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

3. *Plan of action* is a proposed strategy to minimize or solve the proposed problem of the #MeToo movement. This framing device was based on Benford and Snow's (2000) prognostic frame, which highlights a proposed solution or at least a plan and or strategy leading to a certain goal (Benford & Snow, 2000).

4. *Call to arms* is a statement that aims to mobilize supporters of the #MeToo movement to complete a given action. This framing device is based on Benford and Snow's (2000) action mobilization frame, which is a frame that provokes a call for help, mobilizing the notion of collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000).

5. *Marginalization* is the implication that an individual, group, race, or gender is insignificant to the #MeToo movement (Gitlin, 2003).

6. *Trivialization* is placing the emphasis on conflict rather than the issue at stake or is placing the emphasis on the appearance and or demographics of the individuals involved in the #MeToo movement (Gitlin, 2003).

7. *Victimization* is the identification of an individual, group, race, or gender who used the #MeToo movement to share their personal experiences or struggles with sexual harassment or assault. This framing device was based on Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) human-interest frame which they state is the presentation of an individual involved in an issue or problem (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and on Benford and Snow's (2000) diagnostic frame which focuses specifically on the victims of a social movement, including who they are and how they are being victimized (Benford & Snow, 2000).

8. *Digitalization* is a reference to the digitalization of the #MeToo movement. This final framing device has not been used in prior research, however after having coded

three articles it was decided that a media framing device regarding digitalization was required for answering the research question.

The data analysis process was conducted in two phases. Phase one analyzed the individual framing devices, and phase two cross-compared the results of all four newspapers from various perspectives. Each article was coded using the framing analysis tool (See appendix A). Headlines, individual sentences, and/or paragraphs were assessed using one of the above-mentioning framing devices. Irrelevant components of the text, including possible advertisements, or contact information were excluded from the coding process. Considering the fact that the majority of the articles used external sources a distinction was made between the claims of the sources and the claims of the articles.

In practice the coding process went as follows: each individual article was read in its entirety without the motive to actively code its content. The next step was to reread the article except this time the aim was to identify the various coding frames. This was done using eight different colored highlighters. Each color represented a frame, making it easy for the researcher to identify the frames in hindsight. Simultaneously, the researcher would make notes regarding the writing style of the article, the overall message of the article, the gender of the journalist, and type of sources used in the news reporting of the #MeToo movement. Once all the articles were coded, a short quantitative analysis was conducted in order to identify which media framing devices were used most frequently. These numbers provided a fundamental starting point to understanding how the digital social movement #MeToo was framed in American and Dutch newspapers.

To illustrate phase one of the analysis process, I will take the example of problem identification. Each individual article was read in order to identify the way the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement was described. For example, in an article written by *The New York Times* gender inequality was identified as the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. MacKinnon (2018) stated "His value outweighed her sexualized worthlessness. His career reputation, mental and emotional serenity and assets counted. Hers didn't. In some ways, it was even worse to be believed and not have what he did matter. It meant she didn't matter" (MacKinnon, 2018, p.1). These comparative phrases clearly indicate the attributed value between men and women. Words such has "mattered" and "Hers didn't" indicate the

inequality surrounding gender. Therefore, in this particular case the problem surrounding the #MeToo movement was identified as gender inequality.

Upon going through this process for each of the 40 articles, I identified several similarities and differences. For example, gender inequality was a common theme in the identification of the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. However, only a few newspaper articles suggested that the lack of policies and regulations surrounding sexual misconduct was the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. This process was repeated for each individual framing device. In this phase, it was also noted to what degree the framing of the articles put the social movement in a positive light or a negative light in order to conclude how this may ultimately influence the success of #MeToo.

In phase two of the data analysis process the primary focus was comparative analysis. A comparative analysis was conducted between *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* as well as between *de Volkskrant* and *NRC*. This was done in order to conclude the various similarities and differences between the newspapers in their respective countries. A second comparative analysis was conducted between American newspaper articles and Dutch newspaper articles, treating *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as one sample population and *de Volkskrant* and *NRC* as another.

The combination of the two phases of research analysis will conclude how American and Dutch newspaper frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo.

4. Results

A total of forty newspaper articles were coded and analyzed in order to answer the following research question: *How do American and Dutch newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo?* In this chapter, the eight framing devices that were previously mentioned will be thoroughly analyzed. These framing devices include: problem identification, ascription of responsibility and or blame, victimization, plan of action, call to arms, digitalization, marginalization, and trivialization. The chapter will open by analyzing the problem identification frame, which seeks to understand how the problem surrounding the heart of #MeToo movement is identified. Then, in the section titled 'The villain versus the victim' both the ascription of responsibility and the victimization media frames will be evaluated. After that, the focus will be to acknowledge how according to Dutch and American news coverage we can solve the identified problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement, using the data gathered from the plan of action, call to arms, and digitalization media frames. Finally, the marginalization and trivialization media framing devices will be analyzed. These devices will be interpreted using research surrounding the protest paradigm.

4.1 Overview of the articles

Before discussing these framing devices, there are a few general findings that are worth noting first. These findings include some of the similarities and differences between Dutch and American news coverage of the #MeToo movement.

In chapter three it was noted that while there were plenty of newspaper articles available about the #MeToo movement in American newspapers, the Dutch news coverage on the same subject was notably less extensive. During the coding process it was noted that the majority of Dutch newspapers articles were written and published between October 2017 and the January 2018, while American newspaper articles were written and published between October 2017 and May 2018. The longevity of news coverage of the #MeToo movement in American newspapers explains the significant difference in the availability of newspaper articles. A brief analysis was conducted in an attempt to understand why Dutch newspapers stopped actively reporting on the #MeToo movement. An argument could be made that by the end of January 2018, some of the major news stories surrounding the #MeToo movement had been released, and that the remaining news was more of the same.

However, this does not explain why American newspapers chose to continue to report on the #MeToo movement and Dutch newspapers did not. The orientation of the #MeToo movement and or varying cultural attitudes surrounding sexual harassment may be an influence here, however further analysis would have to be conducted in order to confirm this.

While there were more articles in the American than Dutch newspapers, their content was strikingly similar. Major events including Harvey Weinstein's public reprehension, the Bill Cosby case, and the counter movement set up by Catherine Deneuve, were heavily featured in both Dutch and American newspapers articles. Additionally, the mention of the downfall of public figures including Bill O'Reilly, Kevin Spacey, Dustin Hoffman, and Louis C.K were common in both Dutch and American news reporting. This is likely due to the fact, that using celebrities names is a common practice in journalism. It facilitates in sensationalizing the movement. Another similarity included the formatting of the article headlines. With the exception of two Dutch newspaper articles, all headlines included the hashtag #MeToo and were a good indicator of the overall tone of the article. This is interesting, because usually headlines are exaggerated to lure readers in. While some journalists claimed that the #MeToo movement was initiating a positive change in society, others claimed that all it was doing is provoking a witch hunt (this will be discussed in more detail next). Forty percent (16 articles) of the articles explicitly claimed that the #MeToo movement was encouraging positive change, twenty-two percent (9 articles) argued the opposite. The remaining thirty-eight percent (15 articles) of the articles were neutral and did not include definitive statements about the influence of the movement on society.

After carefully coding and analyzing each article, the researcher defined whether the newspaper used a descriptive writing style or an opinionated writing style. The descriptive articles simply described the current events regarding the #MeToo movement, whereas the opinionated articles were more likely to end in a concluding statement regarding the fate of the movement and its influence on society. For example, in *The New York Times,* journalist MacKinnon (2018) stated about the fate of the movement "But it is #MeToo, this uprising of the formerly disregarded, that has made untenable the assumption that the one who reports sexual abuse is a lying slut, and that is changing everything already. Sexual harassment law prepared the ground, but it is today's movement that is shifting gender hierarchy's tectonic plates" (MacKinnon, 2018, p.2). This opinion and others were based solely on the personal beliefs of the journalist writing the article. Exactly half of the articles that were coded were

characterized as descriptive, and the other half were characterized as being opinionated. Furthermore, there was a noteworthy difference between the diction of American and Dutch articles. While all the newspapers used in this research are characterized as intellectual, the Dutch newspaper articles required a considerable amount of prior knowledge. For example, a headline by *de Volkskrant* translates to "#MeToo characterizes itself as a humorless one-dimensional puritanism" (Hooghiemstra, 2017, p1). The author, does not explain the beliefs and principles belonging to puritanism, a consequence of which is that without any prior knowledge the reader loses a considerable amount of valuable information. This was not the case for American newspaper articles, which were noticeably more reader friendly.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the journalists who covered the #MeToo movement were primarily female in both Dutch and American newspapers. For example, in *The Washington Post* eighty percent (8 articles) of the articles were written by a female journalist, and for *de Volkskrant* seventy percent (7 articles. These statistics do not correspond with the previously mentioned research regarding gender in the newsroom. In section 2.7, it was mentioned that while the environment surrounding journalism is becoming more diverse both Dutch and American newsrooms are still male-dominated. However, Steiner (2009) states that gender influences the assignment of topics. Due to the fact that women are more likely to write with sensitivity and sympathy (Steiner, 2009), it is very much possible that topics such as sexual misconduct are assigned to women instead of men. This could explain why the majority of journalists covering the #MeToo movement are female.

These were some of the major findings that did not regard the media framing devices. The similarities and differences listed above between Dutch and American news reporting on the #MeToo movement provide an important framework for understanding the forthcoming results.

4.2 What is the problem?

The identified problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement underwent some serious changes as the movement progressed. In October 2017, actress Alyssa Milano urged men and women to share their sexual harassment and assault stories online by using the hashtag #MeToo. The identified problem at the time was that the magnitude of sexual harassment and assault victims was uncharted. However, this problem was instantly solved, when within twenty-four hours of

Milano's initial tweet, millions of victims publicly shared their sexual harassment and assault stories using the hashtag #MeToo. As the movement continued to progress, both Dutch and American newspaper journalists attributed the problem to various constructs including gender inequality and power imbalance.

Gender inequality

Gender inequality was a common theme used in the problem identification of the #MeToo movement. For this theme the problem at the heart of the #MeToo was identified as being some form of unequal treatment between men and women. Both American and Dutch journalists highlighted the different aspects of gender inequality, but one of the more prominent examples included the notion that women are insignificant. An anonyms *NRC Handelsblad* journalist claimed that when sexual misconduct is committed by a male the female is often considered an accessory to the crime, stating that they have often been told "that is what you get for being a woman" (NRC, 2017, p.2). Similarly, *The New York Times* reporter MacKinnon (2018) stated "his value outweighed her sexualized worthlessness. His career, reputation, mental and emotional serenity and assets counted. Hers didn't. In some ways, it was even worse to be believed and not have what he did matter. It meant she didn't matter" (MacKinnon, 2018, p.1). Finally, *NRC Handelsblad* journalist van Zwol (2018) took a slightly different approach and highlighted the fact that women are still getting paid significantly less than men in many work environments. "But the film lost its moral capital when actor Mark Wahlberg got paid 1.5 million dollars for overtime and actress Michelle Williams got paid a mere thousand" (Zwol, 2018, p.3).

Gender inequality played a huge role in the discussions surrounding the #MeToo movement, and therefore it is no surprise it was included in the problem identification of the movement. However, while all these examples illustrate that the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement is some form of gender inequality, is should be mentioned that this does not conclude that all these journalists are supporting #MeToo. This will be discussed in chapter five.

Power imbalance

Power imbalance was another common theme used to identify the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. While this theme is similar to the previously identified gender inequality, the difference was that the focus here lied solely on work related relationships between men and women. This specific form of gender inequality was so prominent in the news coverage of the movement, that it was decided to distinguish it from gender inequality. *The Washington Post* journalist McGregor (2017) spoke out about the power imbalances between men and women in work environments stating that "the power differential between men and women helps explain this harassment" (McGregor, 2017, p.1). Similarly, *NRC Handelsblad* journalist Hertzberger (2017) said "why is sexual assault different? The answer lies with the concept of power. In this society men are dominant in all fields: politics, finance, culture, religion, on the job market, in regard to health, sports, in the arts, at universities, in the media. Men are more powerful, physically stronger, and more criminal" (Hertzberger, 2017, p.1). In the same newspaper Roodnat (2017) simply stated "power + sex = violence. This is not erotic, this is aggression" (Roodnat, 2017, p.2). Moreover, *The Washington Post* journalist Kotler, who also identified herself as a sexual assault victim said "when she turned him down, saying she was married, she said he told her: "What's the connection? Don't you know how women advance in Hollywood?" (Kotler, 2018, p.1). Finally, one of the few male journalists who reported on the #MeToo movement took a different approach focusing primarily on the sports world. *The Washington Post* journalist Brewer (2017) said "can it get worse? Sadly, yes. Most of the sports world has operated in a bubble where men often have skewed perceptions of decency. That applies to athletes, coaches, staffers, team executives, league officials even media outlets. At every level, men greatly outnumber women. The environment makes the industry susceptible to chauvinism. At the very worst, it can foster a culture of misogyny and assault" (Brewer, 2017, p.1).

Power imbalance was a very prominent theme in the problem identification of the #MeToo movement. This is likely due to the fact that the majority of the sexual related crimes highlighted by the movement were work related incidents. For example, the majority of Harvey Weinstein victims claimed that they thought they were attending a work-related meeting, when Weinstein forced them to perform sexual acts. Cara Delevingne wrote on her Instagram about her encounter with the famous film producer "At that moment I felt very

powerless and scared but didn't want to act that way hoping that I was wrong about the situation. When I arrived, I was relieved to find another woman in his room and thought immediately I was safe. He asked us to kiss and she began some sort of advances upon his direction" (Delevinge, 2017). These and many other celebrity experiences where shared through the hashtag #MeToo. It is also worth noting, that power imbalance corresponds with results from previous studies. According to Illies et al. (2003) in the United States 24 percent of women have reported experiencing some form of sexual assault or intimidation in the workplace (Illies et al., 2003). While this number was strikingly different in The Netherlands, 13.1 percent of women still claimed to have faced sexual assault of intimidation at work (TNO, 2016). According to Luthar and Luthar (2011) American and Dutch social norms and values are very similar, where tolerance for sexual inequality and harassment is low (Luthar & Luthar, 2011). The prominent presence of power imbalance as an identified problem in both Dutch and American news coverage confirms this statement.

Finally, while gender inequality and power imbalance were significant identifiers of the problem at the heart of #MeToo, another shift occurred in the problem identification frame when Catherine Deneuve and one-hundred other French women wrote a letter for a French newspaper showing support for a countermovement. The French females argued that what many self-proclaimed victims considered sexual harassment, was in their opinion a case of harmless flirting. They felt that it was absurd that men were being reprimanded to the extent that their names were publicly disgraced. While sexual assault crimes such as rape and child pornography should not be taken lightly, they considered the current #MeToo environment a pre-historic witch-hunt. While the opinion of these women was misguided according to the majority of the news coverage surrounding #MeToo, it did provoke an insightful public discussion. This discussion informed the final problem identified at the heart of the #MeToo movement.

Famous actor Aziz Ansari become one of the few public figures whose sexual accusations against him were taken less seriously. A female who he had gone on a date with once, claimed that Ansari had requested a one-night stand and felt pressured to appeal to his desires. Due to Ansari's favorable reputation, the public began to wonder whether this could be defined as sexual harassment or assault. *de Volkskrant* journalist Persson (2018) said "The fact that there are people who defended Ansari proves that the discussion has entered a new phase. As of yet, wrong was wrong. Now people argue that some defenders who have crossed

a line are sometimes just clumsy, and that women should play a more active role in defining this line" (Persson, 2018, p.1). However, there are social movement actors who argue that the discussion surrounding the definition of sexual harassment and assault shouldn't be held at all. Claiming that any form of sexual intimidation is morally wrong. In response to a claim made by Actress Minnie Driver about there being no such thing as a hierarchy of abuse *The New York Times* journalist Stephens (2017) stated "A murderer is worse than a thief. A drug dealer is worse than a user. And so on. Gillibrand, Driver and others want to blur such distinctions, on the theory that we need a zero-tolerance approach. That may sound admirable, but it's legally unworkable and, in many cases, simply unjust" (Stephens, 2017, p.1). The remainder of this discussion, included various opinions on how we as a society should go about defining harmless flirting and sexual harassment or assault, and whether the discussion should be held at all. *de Volkskrant* journalist Hooghiemstra (2017) stated "Sex is not fair. So, called 'prior arrangements' cannot be mad. That is exactly what makes sex exiting. Where there is lust, and the feeling of invincibility, there is also misunderstanding, frustration, and humiliation" (Hooghiemstra, 2017, p3).

4.3 The villain versus the victim

In the previous section it was established how the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement was identified. However, it has yet to be confirmed who according to the news coverage is responsible for causing these issues. The second framing device is the ascription of responsibility and or blame. This framing device was defined as: the identification of the individual, group, society, or government who contributed to or is responsible for the identified problem of the #MeToo movement. This framing device was particularly insightful. Both Dutch and American journalists were very vocal about who was responsible for the problems surrounding the #MeToo movement. The most common ascriptions of responsibility and or blame included powerful men, society, policies and regulations, and the naming and blaming of public figures.

Powerful men

#MeToo was initiated after *The New York Times* revealed that now infamous media mogul Harvey Weinstein paid of sexual assault accusers for decades. Therefore, it is not surprising that both Dutch and American news coverage mention Harvey Weinstein and other

public figures as individuals who are responsible for the identified problem of the #MeToo movement. A total 72 percent (29 articles) of the articles specifically mention Harvey Weinstein, however, only 22 percent (9 articles) identified him as an individual who contributed to or is responsible for the identified problem. Bearing this in mind, a more common theme for the ascription of responsibility or blame frame was powerful men in general. For example, *The New York Times* journalist Renkl (2017) stated that the number of women who identify as being sexually abused by powerful men in society continues to increase daily. She added that while our world faces a long list of urgent dangers, the majority can be directly attributed to men who abused their position in society (Renkl, 2017). Similarly, *NRC Handelsblad* journalist Roodnat (2017) stated that up until the moment the article about Harvey Weinstein was released, powerful men like Bill Clinton, Clarence Brown, and Bill Cosby, where getting away with decades of sexual assault, because they knew how to manipulate their accusers (Roodnat, 2017). Furthermore, many articles blamed men in general for the problem at hand. Hertzberger (2017) stated that "testosterone is responsible for ninety percent of anguish in this world" (Hertzberger, 2017, p.2). Finally, on the contrary to this, a small minority of the articles blamed women for being responsible for the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. In an article by *de Volkskrant* journalist Hooghiemstra (2017) said that while men are abusing their power in the work place and should be held accountable for this, the stories described by #MeToo could have easily been prevented, and therefore women shouldn't go around acting like victims (Hooghiemstra, 2017). In total 35 percent (14 articles) of the articles ascribed responsibility or blame to powerful men, 10 percent (4 articles) to men in general, 10 percent (4 articles) to specific men and 5 percent (2 articles) to women. In this case no significant differences were found between Dutch and American news coverage.

Society

Society as a whole was also frequently blamed for the problems surrounding #MeToo. According to Melucci (1996) "conflict always depends on the way the society is structed and its relationships with the environment" (Melucci, 1996, p.48). Journalists claim that the current societal structures set in place are either provoking, or lack in preventing sexual harassment and or assault. Some of these structures include inadequate public conversations surrounding sexual harassment and assault, and the way we raise our children. For example, a few journalists argued that while the #MeToo movement is a good starting point for raising

awareness, it does not provoke comprehensive conversations about the problem at hand. *The New York Times* journalist Merkin (2018) wrote "for many weeks now, the conversation that has been going on in private about this reckoning is radically different from the public one. This is not a good sign, suggesting the sort of social intimidation that is the underside of a culture of political correctness, such as we are increasingly living in" (Merkin, 2018, p.1). Similarly, *The Washington Post* journalist Rosenberg (2017) stated "And as daunting as these challenges are, they don't even get to the deeper questions: How does someone such as Weinstein convince himself that this is normal, that this is fine, that "I'm used to that" and therefore it must be all right? At what point do people decide that they can just take what they want? And how can we stop them before they get there?" (Rosenberg, 2017, p.2).

Furthermore, the way we raise our children, was another societal structure which was identified as being responsible for the problems surrounding #MeToo. The following examples illustrate that from a very young age certain ideologies are instilled in girls through the teachings of their parents, and while these teachings aim to protect females from getting sexually harassed or assaulted, they do not aim to prevent men from doing so. *de Volkskrant* journalist Reijmer (2017) stated that "I remembered the conversations I had with my mother when I was a teenager. They were always about her hitchhiking adventures with her friend. She would tell me how at one point they barely managed to escape, and that I was never to go hitchhiking. But the conversations were never about the men, they were never about a world where we wouldn't have to worry about getting in a car with a strange man. Because that is simply how we can expect men behave" (Reijmer, 2017, p.1). Similarly, *NRC Handelsblad* journalist Moerland (2017) stated that "because of #MeToo van Leuven started to rethink how she was raising her children. She realized that like many other young girls she was taught to dress appropriately. That she shouldn't wear clothing that are too revealing or draws too much attention. "Now I think to myself, darn, people always instilled in us how to behave properly, but no one ever told men to keep their hands to themselves"" (Moerland, 2017, p.2). Finally, *The New York Times* journalist Renkl (2017) spoke out about the problems she faced raising children in the current environment "what I had not taught them, it suddenly dawned on me, was how it feels to go through the world as a woman, the mental calculations involved in parking a car downtown or riding an elevator at night or taking a walk in the woods. It's dangerous for a woman to camp alone, I finally said at the table that night. There are women who do it, but I'm not that brave" (Renkl, 2017, p.1).

Policies and regulations

American news journalists identified policies and regulations or lack thereof, as an ascription of responsibility or blame. This is likely due to the fact that at the time when the news coverage of the #MeToo movement was most prominent both Harvey Weinstein and Bill Cosby were on trial for sexual misconduct. These trials brought to light that the current legal system in the United States is set up to protect the accused and not the accuser. It also highlighted that the system failed to protect the countless women who claimed to have been sexually assaulted by both Weinstein and Cosby, but also other powerful men in society. *The New York Times* journalist Browley (2018) said "Though more than 50 women have accused Mr. Cosby, once among America's most beloved entertainers, of drugging and sexually assaulting them, only two were permitted to tell their stories in a Pennsylvania court in the first trial, which ended last summer with a hung jury" (Bowley, 2018, p.1). Similarly, *The Washington Post* journalist Viles (2017) who identified herself as a victim stated "even if he faced consequences for what he did, we would both graduate before they took effect: more important I could barely admit what happened to myself. Forget defending my story before a disciplinary committee or shouting it in the public square" (Viles, 2017, p1). In the same newspaper Powers (2017) said about a repeat offender of sexual misconduct on public transportation "but he continued to use the system because Metro officials don't have the ability to permanently suspend or ban a rider from the entire system" (Powers, 2017, p.2). Finally, *The Washington Post* journalist Gibson (2017) discussed the likelihood that the #MeToo movement will change any regulations stating that "since we're right in the middle of [the movement], it is hard to predict", she says. "I think that the issue and the conversation aren't going to be stuffed back in a box. But in terms of whether there will be lasting policy and institutional changes in organizations that affect not just people at the very top – it's just really hard to say" (Gibson, 2017, p.2).

The overall message that is portrayed here is the frustration that women aren't being heard and men aren't being reprimanded for their actions. The excessive focus on policies and regulations in American newspapers is therefore likely to represent these frustrations. In chapter one it was brought to light that Dutch society is more concerned with the rehabilitation of the harasser, whereas Americans generally support harsher punishments (Sigal & Jacbobsen, 1999). This could explain why this ascription of responsibility or blame

of a legal system was only found in American newspapers. Additionally, it is worth noting that in The Netherlands, only a small selection of men has been affected by the #MeToo movement, none of which have been legally served. Therefore, this specific ascription may not be relevant in Dutch news reporting.

Naming and blaming

The final ascription of responsibility and blame is a trend provoked by the #MeToo movement. Men and women were inspired to name and blame their sexual perpetrators after a long list of public figures identified their harasser online. This trend is referred to in both the Dutch and American news coverage of the movement as naming and blaming. There were three primary perspectives that were covered in the newspaper articles, (1) the naming and blaming of public figures acts as a huge distraction from the problem at hand, (2) the #MeToo movement is victimizing women and suppressing sexuality, (3) the #MeToo movement is a 'witch-hunt', simply looking for someone to blame. *NRC Handelsblad* journalist Abrahamns (2017) said "they rightfully pointed out the dangers of a hysterical witch-hunt for eerie men" (Abrahamns, 2017, p.1). In the same newspaper, an anonymous journalist stated "because of #MeToo every form of sexual tension is considered violent" (NRC Handelsblad, 2017, p.). Additionally, in a more descriptive article on the countermovement *The New York Times* journalist Safronova (2018) says "One of the arguments the writers make is that instead of empowering women, the #MeToo movement and #Balance-TonPorc movements instead sere the interest of "the enemies of sexual freedom, of religious extremists, of the worst reactionaries", and those who believe that women are "separate beings, children with the appearance of adults, demanding to be protected"" (Safronova, 2018).

For this theme on the contrary to policies/regulations, the Dutch newspapers were a lot more vocal. This is likely due to the fact that French and Dutch morals surrounding sex are relatively similar, as opposed to American society. Therefore, Dutch journalist may be more likely to contemplate the pleas supported by the countermovement.

The victim

On the contrary to identifying an individual, group, society, or government who is to blame for the problem which lies at the heart of the #MeToo movement, the victimization media framing device is defined as: the identification of an individual, group, race, or gender who used the #MeToo movement to share their personal experiences or struggles with sexual harassment or assault. This media framing device identifies who the journalist believes is the victim of the story. In regard to the news coverage of the #MeToo movement, the majority of journalists agree that women in general are the victims. For example, de Jong (2017) identified various female celebrities who are victims of sexual harassment or assault (de Jong, 2017), Powers (2017) stated that countless women fall victim to being sexually harassed on public transportation (Powers, 2017), and *The New York Times* journalists Breeden and Peltier (2018) quoted a novelist who stated "I am not a victim, but millions of women are. That is a fact and not a moral judgement" (Breeden & Peltier, 2018, p.1). Finally, many journalists either identified themselves as victims or shared the stories of women they knew that were victims of sexual assault or harassment. While this occurred in both the Dutch and American news coverage, this was more common in the latter. These and countless other examples, make up the most common form of victimization for #MeToo.

However, an interesting take in regard to identifying the victims of the #MeToo movement, is that the perpetrators are the victims, and the victims are the perpetrators. Dutch journalist de Rek (2017) stated "I shouldn't be saying this, but aren't the perpetrators of #MeToo also the victims? Not because their reputations have been scorned forever, but because just like the victims they are a product of their time and rapidly changing environment. And are victims also simultaneously perpetrators? Not because they provoked sexual intimidation, but because they allowed it to happen, and kept quiet about it for years, especially in cases where it benefitted them?" (de Rek, 2017, p.1). While this particular opinion was a solidary voice, it does reflect on the idea that men who have been publicly accused of sexual harassment or assault are actually the victims of the #MeToo movement. A small minority of articles claimed that men are the real victims of the #MeToo movement. According to Safronova (2018) "This expedited justice already has its victims, men prevented from practicing their profession as punishment, forced to resign, etc., while the only thing they did wrong was touching a knee, trying to steal a kiss, or speaking about 'intimate' things at a work dinner, or sending messages with sexual connotations to a woman whose feelings

were not mutual" (Safronova, 2018, p1). This thought was based on the ideologies expressed by the French countermovement. It exemplifies the opinion that the current #MeToo environment is unhealthy, and undeserving towards men. In total 37.5 percent (15 articles) of the articles stated that women were the victims of #MeToo, and 12,5 percent (5 articles) claimed that it was the men. There was no significant different found between the Dutch and Americans news coverage of the victimization frame.

4.4 How to solve the problem?

There are two frames that revolve around finding solutions for the problem identified at the heart of the #MeToo movement. These media framing devices include: plan of action and call to arms. The plan of action framing device according to the framing analysis tool is defined as: a proposed strategy to minimize or solve the identified problem of the #MeToo movement. Furthermore, the call to arms frame is defined as: a statement that aims to mobilize supporters of #MeToo to complete a given action.

The call to arms frame was the least popular framing device in the news reporting of #MeToo. While this frame was on used occasion, journalists were not likely to mobilize #MeToo supporters in any way, nor did they make personal suggestions of how to solve the problem at hand. Only 12.5 percent (5 articles) of the articles used the call to arms framing device in their news reporting. *NRC Handelsblad* journalist Hertzberger (2017) was very vocal about what men should do in in the #MeToo era.

> There are things men could consider doing: when walking behind a woman in a dark street, try to keep your distance. You could consider talking to your drunk friends who are showing Weinstein type behavior. You could pay attention to how you address your female colleagues. This is not absurd, this is matter of courteous behavior. And if you are annoyed with the more exaggerated accusations of #MeToo, or you even feel that you have been unjustly accused of sexual misconduct, then swallow your pride. Compare it to a collusion between a bicycle and a car. If there is a cyclist with severe injuries on the ground, you are not going to complain about a scratch in the door (p.2-3).

Similarly, in an article by *The New York Times,* MacKinnon (2018) makes several suggestions about how to address the problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. In this particular case, the problem was identified as a lack of policies and regulations surrounding sexual misconduct. The journalist stated

> Institutional or statutory changes could include prohibitions or limits on various forms of secrecy and non-transparency that hide the extent of sexual abuse and enforce survivor isolation, such as forced arbitration, silencing settlements… The only legal change that matches the scale of this moment is an Equal Rights Amendment, expanding the congressional power to legislate against sexual abuse and judicial interpretations of existing law, guaranteeing equality under the Constitution for all (p.2).

Lastly, in *The Washington Post* Powers (2017) suggested to make various changes to public transportation in order to prevent women from getting sexually harassed. Powers urged the public transportation companies to move bus stops to crowed places instead of desolate areas, provide countdown clocks, and create an environment where women are encouraged to report sexual harassment or assault (Powers, 2017).

On the contrary to call to arms, the plan of action media frame was used frequently in the news reporting of the #MeToo movement. This framing device revolved around journalists using sources to illustrate that someone or something is planning too or is already taking some form of action to attempt to minimize or solve the identified problem at the heart of the #MeToo movement. It is difficult to thematically interpret this news framing device, due to the diversity of the results. However, some examples include a statement made by an anonymous *NRC Handelsblad* (2017) journalist who stated that Netflix immediately fired Kevin Spacey from *House Of Cards* after several men accused him of sexual misconduct (*NRC Handelsblad,* 2017). Furthermore, *The New York Times* journalist Bowley (2018) quoted a former judge and prosecutor who said "this is the #MeToo moment of the Cosby trial. What the prosecutor is doing is saying all these people have come forward and the rules have changed" (Bowley, 2018, p.2). Finally, Austen and Porter (2018) stated "Over the past week, as the accusations piled up, Canadian politicians from all parties have been swift to demand change and, even more unusually, publicly applaud female victims for disclosing their stories of abuse or assault, even anonymously" (Austen & Porter, 2018, p.2). The plan

of action frame was slightly more common in the American news coverage of #MeToo. This is likely due to the fact that their use of sources was more diverse. More on this will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Digital dynamics

The digitalization frame, is the last frame on the framing analysis tool. As mentioned before, this framing device was designed for the purpose of this research, which is to understand how traditional media platforms respond to the digital dynamics of a social media run social movement. Due to the rapid speeds at which the #MeToo movement grew, it was expected that this frame would be frequently used in the media framing. However, this was not the case. While 50% (20 articles) of the articles mention the digitalization of the movement, only a small minority of these articles took the time to analyze the influences of social media on #MeToo. The majority of the articles simply mention social media, but do not make statements about its influence on the movement. However, a small sample of journalists claimed that social media helped facilitate the mobilization of female victims. For example, a *New York Times* journalist recognized the power female victims gained from the digital dynamics of the movement.

The aftermath of the fall of Weinstein rages through the social and other media. Women flock massively and surprisingly unanimously with testimonies under the hashtag #MeToo (500,000 pieces within the first 24 hours). Together they point out how shocking algae male abuse of power with sex is a weapon (p.1).

The lack of acknowledgement surrounding the magnitude of the #MeToo movement from a digital perspective is surprising. While many previous digital social movements have been wildly successful at creating awareness and receiving media attention, the magnitude of the #MeToo movement is extraordinary. Having said this, the amount of media attention may also be the reason for the lack of the digitalization frame. There was a great amount of conflict, surrounding this movement, from countless sexual harassment allegations of public figures to the countermovement. These conflicts from a journalistic perspective are more newsworthy and therefore more likely to be covered.

4.5 The protest paradigm

The protest paradigm, according to Boyle et al. (2012) revolves around the notion that while journalists should report objectively about protest movements, they do not. Research suggests that structural biases exist surrounding the news coverage of protests movements, producing predictable journalistic patterns. These patterns are referred to as the protest paradigm (Boyle et al, 2012). In section 2.5, it was mentioned that common media frames used in research regarding the protest paradigm are marginalization and trivialization. It should be acknowledged that the #MeToo movement cannot be identified as a protest movement, instead it is identified as a social movement. However, the two are both forms of collective action, and therefore it was decided to include marginalization and trivialization as framing devices in the framing analysis tool.

Marginalization: The marginalization framing device was identified as instances when the articles present an individual, group, race, or gender as insignificant to the #MeToo movement. There are two distinctly different forms of marginalization, these include, implicit marginalization, which is the neglect of a specific group of social actors in the news coverage of #MeToo. And explicit marginalization, which is an allegation that an individual group, race, or gender is insignificant to the #MeToo movement.

In the Dutch news coverage of #MeToo, implicit marginalization occurred several times. The most notable result was the lack of diversity in the types of sources used in the news reporting. The majority of the sources used in the news reporting stem from a conversation that was broadcasted on a national talk show. *Pauw* a popular late-night talk show, invited a famous Dutch author and an *NRC Handelsblad* journalist to discuss the #MeToo movement. Three days later, a *Volkskrant* journalist was invited to a different Dutch talk show, to do the same. These conversations highlighted the pros and cons of the #MeToo movement, but more importantly reflected on Dutch morals surround sex, and sexual assault. These conversations became the primary source for Dutch journalists to reference in the reporting of #MeToo. It prompted many articles to focus on sexual morals in Dutch society. A noteworthy finding was that Dutch journalists also gravitated towards using news reporters from other newspapers as news sources. For example, Reijmer (2017) a journalist at *de Volkskrant* criticized a fellow colleague for an article that had been written a few weeks earlier. While this is interesting, because it confirms that Dutch editors-in-chief are willing to

publish articles using multiple perspectives on the same social movement. It also illustrates the lack in diversity of sources. In the Dutch news reporting of #MeToo the voices of everyday women were rarely heard, and the opinions of sexual support group leaders were rarely evaluated. This group of unheard voices serves as an example of implicit marginalization. In the Dutch news reporting the majority of the opinions which were referenced in the newspaper articles came from societal elites.

In the American news coverage, the diversity of sources was broader. 65 percent (13 articles) of American newspaper articles utilized external sources to facilitate the discussion of the #MeToo movement. These news sources ranged from comedians, feminists, industry experts, politicians, and spokes men and women for a variety of organizations. In this case the sources were primarily used to describe a situation surrounding the #MeToo movement or to strengthen a particular argument. Additionally, in American news reporting journalists were more likely to identify themselves as victims of sexual misconduct or allowed other known and unknown women to share their 'survival stories'. However, this is not to say that in the American news reporting there were no occurrences of implicit marginalization. As a matter of fact, in both media landscapes, the voices of the perpetrators were unaccounted for. While initially many accused men like Harvey Weinstein and Kevin Spacey denied the allegations made against them, they ultimately ended up publicly apologizing for their misbehavior. This however, was not included in both the Dutch and American news coverage of #MeToo. The lack of news coverage on this group serves as another example of implicit marginalization. Another group which was ignored in both Dutch and American news coverage were the male victims of sexual harassment and assault. In the American news coverage female victims were used as source material, some of these women were public figures and others were not. However, male victims were never referenced, not in the Dutch nor the American news coverage. This however, is likely due to the fact that the primary focus of #MeToo are female victims of sexual harassment or assault. Therefore, this serves as an example where the movement as a whole is marginalizing a group of social actors.

Furthermore, explicit marginalization occurred in newspaper articles that made it abundantly clear that the journalist was against the #MeToo movement. This occurred in 22 percent of the entire sample. With 10 percent belonging to Dutch news coverage, and 12 to American news coverage. In *The New York Times* journalist Stephens (2017) stated

Listening is always essential. But one-way conversations go down about as well with most men as they do with most women, and #MeToo isn't going to succeed in the long run if the underlying message is #STFU. Movements that hector and punish rather than educate and reform have a way of inviting derision and reaction (p.2).

This example corresponds with the naming and blaming problem identification mentioned earlier. The remaining journalists who marginalized the movement, all claimed that the naming and blaming culture was unhealthy and would not help the movement achieve its goals. Merkin (2017) stated in *The Washington Post,*

These are scary times, for women as well as men. There is an inquisitorial whiff in the air, and my particular fear is that in true American fashion, all subtlety and reflection is being lost. Next we'll be torching people for the content of their fantasies (p.2).

What is interesting about these and the remaining opinions of the journalists who used this type of marginalization in their media framing, is that they all occurred in the first few months of #MeToo. While it is difficult the quantify #MeToo supporters, one could justify that the considerable amount of online activity acts as an indication of the magnitude of the movement. Therefore, explicit marginalization as shown above may be a controversial and unfavorable journalistic choice. While this cannot be confirmed at this time, if a large portion of society has explicitly stated that they support #MeToo, newspapers may be more careful about marginalizing the movement as a whole. This could explain the lack of explicit marginalization in the news reporting of #MeToo.

Trivialization: The second frame commonly used in protest paradigm research is trivialization. In the framing analysis tool this framing device was defined as: 1. Placing the emphasis on conflict rather than the issue at stake, 2. Placing the emphasis on the appearance and or demographics of the individuals involved in the #MeToo movement. While this frame was frequently used in the news reporting of #MeToo the focus on appearances and or demographics was minimal. From the eternity of the sample only 10 percent of the articles placed the emphasis on the appearance of the social actors. In these articles the focus was predominantly on The Golden Globes Award ceremony and the Academy Award ceremony. In an article titled "After #MeToo, a fade to black?" *The Washington Post journalist* Givhan

(2018) adopted a critical stance to the celebrities' decisions to wear black to the Golden Globe Awards as a form of protest. The article focused on why this does not support the movement, and what color should have been chosen instead to represent the movement (Givhan, 2018). *NRC Handelsblad* journalist van Zwol (2018) made strikingly similar observations focusing primarily on the films and nominees as well as the black attire surrounding the Academy Awards (van Zwol, 2018). According to Xu (2013) the intent of the trivialization framing device is to oversimply the aims of the protest or movement. Stating that news reports focus on the appearances and demographics of the protesters instead of the main issues and or goals of the movement (Xu, 2013). This was the case of the articles listed above. The journalists were solely focused on what Hollywood celebrities were wearing to the protest rather than identify what they were actually protesting. Having said this, the minimal emphasis on appearances is surprising especially considering the fact that the inclusion of celebrity culture in the #MeToo movement is relatively high. Furthermore, the focus on demographics only occurred once in the entirety of the sample. In this particular case the author trivialized religion. *de Volkskrant* journalist de Rek (2017) said:

> I shouldn't be saying this, but where are the testimonies from Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, and all other religions which declared women as lesser to men. We have those religions to thank for the #MeToo discussion, because they created a world in which half of mankind was systematically repressed, ignored, and scorned. And there are still parts of the world where this happens (p.2).

On the contrary to appearances and or demographics, the emphasis on conflict in the news reporting of the #MeToo movement was extensive. Firstly, *The New York Times* journalist Stephens (2017) wrote about a conversation between Hollywood actor Matt Damon and his ex-girlfriend Minnie Driver. According to Stephens, in an Interview with *ABC News* Matt Damon claimed that while all sexual misconduct should be eradicated, there is a significant difference between unwanted touching and rape or child molestation. However, actress Minnie Driver responded by claiming that it is unfair to tell a woman that one act of sexual misconduct is better or worse than another (Stephens, 2017). This same conversation was brought to light in various other newspaper articles, and while this discussion introduces some very interesting and key points regarding the #MeToo movement, the focus on the personal history between Matt and Minnie acted as a barrier from addressing the problem at hand. Secondly, the 1977 Roman Polanski case was reevaluated in many Dutch newspaper

articles. And while this case was an ideal example to illustrate the magnitude of the problem surrounding sexual misconduct, the newspaper articles focused primarily on a controversial statement made by Ms. Deneuve. *The New York Times* journalist Safronova (2018) said "in March Ms. Deneuve defended Roman Polanski, the director who pleaded guilty in 1977 to having sex with a 13-hear-old girl and who was accused by two other women of forcing himself on them when they were under age" (Safronova, 2018, p.2). These and other conflictual topics were commonly used in the news reporting of the #MeToo movement.

The trivialization frame was frequently used in both the Dutch and American news reporting of #MeToo. The difference was that the focus of conflict revolved around situations that were most relevant for the respective country. While in the Dutch coverage it was about Dutch directors who committed sexual misconduct, in the American news coverage the emphasis on conflict revolved around celebrities including Matt Damon, Harvey Weinstein, and Kevin Spacey. However, in both cases this frame was very prominent. This does not come as a surprise, because as previously mentioned the focus on conflict is high in most journalist cultures.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research project was to identify how Dutch and American newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo. This was done by examining the major similarities and differences between Dutch and American news cultures as well as analyzing the presence of existing news framing devices in the news coverage surrounding #MeToo. Prior research referencing international news cultures was used to gain a better understanding of Dutch and American news reporting. This research included an analysis of journalistic practices, such as journalistic professionalization. Furthermore, research referencing social movement theory and the protest paradigm were acknowledged in order to define the existing news framing devices which were used in this research project.

According to Melucci (1996) contemporary social movements have shifted from focusing on more traditional political issues towards cultural conflicts (Melucci, 1996). This is true for the #MeToo social movement, where both Dutch and American news reports frame the identified problem at the heart of #MeToo as a public debate surrounding the definition of sexual harassment and assault. As a matter of fact, a common opinion among both Dutch and American journalist was that the #MeToo movement provoked a cultural shift, that has and will continue to significantly influence society. Both Dutch and American journalist referred to this shift as the #MeToo era. In this so-called era, the notion of power between men and women has been challenged, and morals surrounding sexual misconduct have changed. This is not to say that both Dutch and American journalists supported this cultural shift. While the majority of American journalist were seemingly open to expressing their approval of the movement, Dutch journalists reported from a neutral perspective. Neutral meaning that the journalist did not explicitly state how he or she felt about the movement and its influence on society. This neutral perspective also corresponded with the fact that Dutch journalist were more likely to show compassion for both sides of the movement, those who were for and those who were against #MeToo. This compassion stems from research on attitudes towards sexual harassment. In chapter one, Sigal and Jacobson (1999) stated that while Americans are likely to recommend harsh punishments, the Dutch are more concerned with the rehabilitation of the harasser (Sigal & Jacobson, 1999). Therefore, it makes sense that Dutch journalists were willing to consider some of the statements made by the #MeToo countermovement. Whose primary concern was that men were being unrightfully punished.

Furthermore, the existing news framing devices which were set in place by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), Benford and Snow (2000), and Gitlin (2003) are still very relevant for understanding how newspapers frame contemporary social movements. The consolidation of these frames was ideal for understanding how Dutch and American journalists framed every aspect of #MeToo. The frames popularized by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) acknowledged how journalists *identified the problem* and *subject of responsibility* of #MeToo, while Benford and Snow's (2000) frames analyzed how journalists proposed to *solve the identified issues*. Finally, Gitlin's (2003) frames highlighted to what degree certain aspects of the movement were either *marginalized* or *trivialized*. The decision to use all three sets of framing devices strengthened the results because it facilitated the analysis of all components of a social movement, including the problem, the perpetrator, the victim, digital strategies, and more. Analyzing each of these news framing devices individually, to then compare and contrast the results, contributed insightful knowledge about the differences and similarities of the media framing of social movements in two different news cultures. For example, while the Dutch and American news coverage of the problem identification frame were very similar, the use of sources through the marginalization frame were notably different.

Furthermore, out of these eight media framing devices introduced by the above-mentioning researchers, the ascription of responsibility or blame frame was most frequently used in both the Dutch and American news coverage of #MeToo. While the ascription of responsibility or blame was notably diverse in the news coverage on #MeToo, the results between Dutch and American newspapers were strikingly similar. Journalists from both countries blamed powerful men for sexually harassing or assaulting women. This was particularly interesting, because in prior research surrounding the framing of social movements, elitists members of society were often protected. In section 2.6 Zhou and Moy (2006) concluded that external pressures from elitists members of society outweighed journalistic integrity and therefore elitists were not ascribed any blame (Zhou & Moy, 2006). The varying results between Zhou and Moy and this research can be explained by the notion of journalistic professionalization. In section 2.7, Soloski (1989) stated that journalistic professionalization is used as a tool by media corporations to influence and control the behavior of reporters and editors (Soloski, 1989). Hallin and Mancini (2004) state that when journalistic professionalization is high, journalists are less likely to protect societies' elites (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). It was predicted that because journalistic professionalization is

high in both the Dutch and American media system, journalists would not attempt to protect elitists figures such as Harvey Weinstein from sexual assault allegations and or public disgrace. The results surrounding the ascription of responsibility or blame for the #MeToo movement support this statement.

In the American news coverage journalists blamed the American legal system for the problems surrounding the #MeToo movement, while this frame was not present in the Dutch news coverage. This shows that while aspects of the news coverage between Dutch and American news cultures are similar in most cases. There are also distinct differences.

Furthermore, the framing surrounding the digitalization of the movement was primarily positive. Dutch and American journalists shared a techno-optimistic approach, which according to Rodriquez (2013) is the belief that technology will speed up exchanges of information, reduce the cost of these exchanges, and break national and international barriers (Rodriquez, 2013). This is not surprising, because like everyone else, journalists witnessed the benefits of using social media as a digital tool to mobilize social actors through the rapid pace at which #MeToo grew. Having said this, the digitalization frame was not used as frequently as anticipated. Due to the fact that #MeToo was started on Twitter and grew into a world-wide movement within days, an extensive focus on the digital dynamic was expected. This did not occur. This can be explained by journalistic practices. According to Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2014) the framing of social movements greatly depends on the underlying conditions and constraints of journalistic practices and media systems (Tenenmoin-Weinblatt, 2014). In journalism conflict makes for interesting storytelling, therefore media frames that revolve around conflict including problem identification, trivialization, or ascription of responsibility and or blame may be preferred over the digitalization frame.

Finally, prior research states that traditional media outlets have marginalized and or delegitimized social movements surrounding women's issues. Van Zoonen (1992) stated that the Dutch news reporting of women's social movements was inconsistent, with each news outlet approaching the movement with different preferences and emphasis (Van Zoonen, 1992). According to Ashley and Oslon (1998) in the American news culture it was rare for women's movements to receive any form of attention from traditional media outlets. However, in the case that the movement was covered it was framed in a humorous way (Ashley & Oslon, 1998) While the #MeToo movement does not distinguish itself as being a

women's movement, sexual harassment and assault is arguably a gender sensitive issue. The results from the media framing analysis of the news coverage of the #MeToo movement in both The Netherlands and The United States are not in line with prior research. There were no major inconsistencies in the news reporting of *de volkskrant* and *Het NRC Handelsblad.* In both cases, the majority of the journalists chose not to clarify on which side of the movement they stood, strikingly similar sources were used, and identical topics were discussed. Furthermore, on the contrary to Ashley and Oslon (1998), the American media culture actively participated in the discussions surrounding the #MeToo movement. As a matter of fact, while certain aspects of #MeToo were marginalized and or delegitimized both Dutch and American news reporting took the movement very seriously. The longevity of the news reporting on #MeToo proves that both Dutch and American news cultures consider the movement as newsworthy.

Overall, the media framing of the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo, in the Dutch and American news coverage had more in common than they had apart. The minor differences which were observed were attributed to the fact that the events which triggered the movement occurred in the United States. The fact of the matter is that both media systems are located in Western societies that share some of the same journalistic practices and attitudes towards sexual harassment or assault. These were undoubtedly factors that influenced the results of this research. Therefore, the results of this research cannot be generalized to all social movements. The framing of social movements surrounding gun violence issues, may be inherently different in Dutch and American news cultures. The results of this research are therefore exclusive to sexual oriented social movements.

These findings of this research project can act as a framework for future research referencing the media framing of contemporary social movements.

5.1 Limitations

A limitation of this research project was the quantity of articles used per newspaper to analyze the framing of the #MeToo movement. A total of ten articles, per newspaper were carefully coded and evaluated to conclude how American and Dutch newspapers frame the digital citizen-spurred social movement #MeToo. This meant that twenty newspaper articles from two newspapers represented Dutch and American news cultures. In an ideal scenario

this number would have been higher, in order to guarantee that data saturation was reached. Unfortunately, the scope and available time of this research did not allow for more than ten newspaper articles per newspaper to be coded. This was in part due to the length of each article, and the time it took to individually code them. Having said this, the limited number of Dutch newspaper articles also played a role in this constraint.

Furthermore, a second limitation was the translation of Dutch to English. In the results section quotes from the newspaper articles were used to exemplify certain findings. In the case that these quotes were retrieved from Dutch newspaper articles the researcher was required to translate them to English. During this process meaningful information was lost due to the fact that specific sayings and metaphors could not be translated directly.

5.2 Future research

The general consensus of this research is that there were more similarities between the Dutch and American media framing of the #MeToo movement then there were differences. This was likely due to the fact that even though the Dutch and American media systems are inherently different, important cultural aspects surrounding #MeToo were the same. For future research, I suggest cross-comparing the media framing of social movements of two countries with two inherently different media cultures and sets of social norms and values. Furthermore, in chapter two it was mentioned that social media platforms have a significant impact on social movements. However, Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993) pointed out that social movements need traditional news outlets for three key reasons (1) mobilization, (2) validation, (3) scope enlargement. According to the authors these three key reasons ultimately influence the social movement's chances of success (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Bearing this in mind, the #MeToo movement has reached greater magnitudes than any other social movement up to date. This includes millions of international social media users showing support for the movement by using the hashtag #MeToo on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The digital dynamics of this movement proved that contemporary social movements no longer depend on traditional media outlets to mobilize, validate, and enlarge the scope of the movement. It is therefore worth reevaluating what possible new roles of traditional media outlets may play in social movement theory.

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Appendix A: The framing analysis tool

Framing device	Frame definition	Framing literature
Framing analysis tool		
Framing device	Frame definition	Framing literature
Problem identification	How is the problem/issue at the heart of the movement described by the article?	Semetko and Valkenburg: Conflict frame
Ascription of responsibility and or blame	The identification of the individual, group, society, or government who contributed to or is responsible for the identified problem of #MeToo	Semetko and Valkenburg: Attribution of responsibility frame
Plan of action	A proposed strategy to minimize or solve the proposed problem of the #MeToo movement.	Benford and Snow: Prognostic frame
Call to arms	A statement that aims to mobilize supporters of #MeToo to complete a given action.	Benford and snow: Action mobilization frame
Marginalization	The implication that an individual, group, race, or gender is insignificant to the #MeToo movement.	Gitlin: Marginalization
Trivialization	1. Placing the emphasis on conflict rather than the issue at stake. 2. Placing the emphasis on the appearance and or demographics of the individuals involved in the #MeToo movement.	Gitlin: Trivialization
Victimization	The identification of an individual, group, race, or gender who used the #MeToo movement to share their personal experiences or struggles with sexual harassment or assault.	Semetko and Valkenburg: Human-interest frame Benford and Snow: Diagnostic frame
Digitalization	A reference to the digitalization of the #MeToo movement.	N/A

Appendix B: A reference list of the newspaper articles

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