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Rallying or Criticizing? Media Coverage of Authorities' Reaction to Terror Attacks Targeting Sporting Events

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The reaction of authorities to terror attacks or threats has the potential to attract both support and criticism. The current study aims to examine the international media's discourse surrounding authorities' reaction to sporting events that have suffered from terror attacks or terror threats. A comparison is made between events that are canceled and events that take place as planned despite the attack or threat. Our findings indicate no significant differences between the coverage of events that are canceled and those that continue as planned. The evidence actually exhibits greater levels of support rather than criticism of authorities in international media coverage.

Sport is often perceived as a unifying arena that promotes peace between people and nations.¹ On the other hand, it is not surprising that sporting events are favorable targets for terror attacks, since they often attract a lot of attention; therefore, attacking such events serves the terrorists' goals²—compatible with the notion of the “theater of terror.” By targeting sporting events, terrorists enhance their chances of receiving worldwide media coverage to their actions (as seen in the terror attack of the Munich Olympic Games in 1972) and publicizing their political objectives.³

The current study deals with terror attacks or threats⁴ targeting sport events, with a focus on the media's coverage of how authorities handled the situation. Taking into consideration the fact that terrorism has become a global threat in the last few decades, we aim to get a better understanding of the way the international media cover authorities' actions while dealing with terror attacks or threats. Does the media express support and rally around the country that is the target of the attack (as expressed in the form of

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supportive coverage of the authorities, regardless of the decision to cancel the sport event or continue with it as planned), or does the media tend to criticize authorities for the way they handle the situation? In order to gain a wider understanding of the way the media covers the authorities' reaction to the events, we examined two types of reactions. The first is sporting events that continued as planned despite the terror attack or threat, and the second is events that were canceled or postponed as a result of terrorism. The examination of terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events helps us understand the amount of support or criticism the authorities' actions receive in the media. Unlike terror attacks that target public places, specific occurrences such as well-planned sport events can give us insights into authorities' decision-making processes in terms of moving on with the event as planned or canceling it as a result of terrorism.

The theoretical logic leading to our research question stems from (a) the understanding that, in dealing with terror, the media tends to be supportive of the suffering country;⁵ and (b) the knowledge that either canceling an event (which can be perceived as surrendering to terrorism) or going on with it as planned (potentially endangering civilian lives) contradicts the narrative of states dealing with terrorism.⁶ The study examines whether the international media is more supportive or critical of the authorities' actions, and whether there are differences in the coverage trends between events that were canceled and those that continued as planned. Before examining those differences, we present the topic of terror and the media.

Terrorism and the Media

Although a lot has been written about terrorism, there is a great deal of variation among the definitions used,⁷ even within academia. In a study conducted in 1988, Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman examined more than 100 different definitions of terror, identifying four components that appear much more frequently than others.⁸ Those components help us define terror in the current study as follows:⁹ *Terror* is a type of violent struggle that purposely utilizes or threatens to utilize violence against civilians in order to create fear and anxiety for the sake of *political goals*. It is important to note that one of the main goals of terrorists is to cause fear (the source of the term "terror" is the Latin verb *terrere*, which means to cause fear). According to our definition above, a threat to use violence is considered to be an act of terrorism. Compatible with that understanding, we examine terror attacks and terror threats targeting sporting events.

One important goal for most terrorists is to attract attention for their cause.¹⁰ Several terror events that attracted enormous international media coverage in the 1970s and 1980s led researchers to investigate the relationship between media and terror.¹¹ Brian Jenkins¹² and Gabriel Weimann¹³ referred to "the theatre of terror" to emphasize the use of drama in an almost theatrical and well-planned production, the aim of which is not the immediate casualties but the exposure on the world stage—while using the media. The battle over the media is an integral element of contemporary terror; together with the military, the legal and the diplomatic fronts, it is one of the arenas in which asymmetric conflicts (between states and non-state actors) take place.¹⁴

Most terrorists are interested in media coverage and their activities are designed to promote their existence and their goals. Many terror organizations understand the crucial role of the media and take media considerations into account when planning their activities. For example, the decision to conduct their attacks in events that usually receive wide international media coverage, such as sporting events, help the terrorists attract more attention to their actions and political objectives. Some terror organizations also use

sophisticated public relations systems to disseminate material to the media, conduct negotiations via the media, and even survey their appearances in the media.¹⁵ Like countries, non-state actors, including terror organizations, make wide use of the Internet to distribute their positions to the public. The information revolution has created a situation in which terror organizations, like other network forms of organizations, can gain an advantage over states and other hierarchical political actors by transmitting information via the Internet. Transmitting ideology over the Internet is convenient because, unlike other media sources, the information is not supervised, filtered, or censored.¹⁶

Terror has become a global threat for many states around the world, which has elevated the media value of stories on the topic. Information pertaining to terror organizations and terror attacks has become internationally newsworthy, as those types of events tend to fit journalistic norms.¹⁷ Terror events usually meet the criteria of news value used by mainstream media, as found in Johan Galtung and Mary Ruge's seminal study from 1965 dealing with criteria for predicting the news value of events as foreign news, and its 2001 follow-up study by Tony Harcup and Deirdre O'Neill.¹⁸ The events are unexpected, negative, and newsworthy because they are dramatic and often result in casualties. In many cases, terrorism meets the criteria of continuity, cultural relevance, and proximity. The media's intensive involvement with drama is expressed in its deepest impact on all concerned when reporting terror events and conflicts.¹⁹ Accordingly, terrorism receives extensive coverage in both local and foreign media.²⁰

Support Versus Criticism in Media Coverage

One of the topics that the news media covers while reporting on terror attacks is related to the way the situation was handled or, more specifically, the authorities' reaction to the attacks or threats. The media's coverage of the authorities can be supportive of their actions, informative (without expressing support or criticism), or critical. Hegemony theories, including Lance Bennett's "Index theory," claim that, in most cases, media coverage tends to reflect the authorities' position on the issue at hand, thereby expressing support for their actions.²¹ This is especially true for situations of crisis, such as conflicts or terror attacks, in which the local media tends to "rally round the flag" and cover the events while expressing extensive support for the authorities and their actions.²² Considering that terror has become a global threat in the last few decades, and many nations are taking part in the "global war against terrorism," we can expect that the rally effect would have an influence on media coverage of foreign news outlets as well. Compatible with that understanding, previous studies have found that the coverage of terror attacks by the foreign news is usually framed in a way that promotes the messages of the victimized country (the country that suffers from the terrorism).²³ On the other hand, the media is not always supportive of the authorities and their actions, who often receive a lot of criticism in the media's coverage. Theories of political cynicism, including Joseph Cappella and Kathleen Jamieson's "spiral of cynicism," claim that the media has tended to cover the authorities and political life in recent decades with a primary focus on their negative aspects, and being critical in doing so.²⁴ If so, we can expect the coverage dealing with the authorities' handling of terror attacks or threats to express criticism.

With regard to terror attacks or threats that target public events such as sporting events, authorities appear to have two frequent reactions. In some cases, the authorities choose to cancel (or postpone) the events to ensure the safety of their citizens. In other cases they decide to move on with the events as planned, claiming that they should not "surrender" to terrorism. To some extent, both types of reaction contradict the narrative

promoted by states facing terror attacks. Studying the narratives and frames promoted by political actors while dealing with terrorism (including nations suffering from terror attacks), Moran Yarchi found that maintaining values and way of life and not surrendering to terrorism is a prominent message promoted by countries facing terrorism. Another salient message has to do with the countries' need to do everything in their power to protect the lives of their citizens.²⁵ Studies in the field of public diplomacy that deal with political actors ability to successfully promote their preferred frames through the foreign media have claimed that political actors are less successful in situations in which there is a contradiction between their statements and behavior.²⁶ That understanding, together with the countries' narratives while facing terrorism, provide further support for the possibility that the media's coverage will criticize the authorities' reaction to terrorism, whether they cancel an event or continue with it as planned.

According to the contradiction presented above—the expectation of the media to rally around the country dealing with terrorism and express support for the way the authorities had handled the situation on one hand, and the understanding that the media often passes judgment and criticizes authorities for the reaction—the following research questions are presented:

RQ1: Will the international media's coverage express support or criticism toward the authorities' reaction while dealing with terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events?

RQ2: Are there differences in the amount and nature of support or criticism expressed in the media's coverage, between sporting events that were canceled (or postponed) as a result of a terror attack or terror threat and those that continued as planned despite the attack or threat?

Differences Between the Various Countries in which the Media Operates

The current study examines how the media in three selected countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia—covers the authorities' reaction to terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events. In order to better examine the coverage in those countries, we need to understand the cultural context in which the media operates for each country. Culture can be defined by the shared interpretations of its members and their actual behavior.²⁷ Geert Hofstede referred to culture as “collective programming of the mind” that is developed in the minds of the different members of the society throughout their lives. We begin the learning process about our culture in the family in early childhood and this knowledge is reinforced in schools and other organizations of our society. These mental programs contain a component of national culture and are expressed in the values that predominate among people from different cultures.²⁸ Therefore, values can be seen as the basis for conceptualizing culture.²⁹ Scholars who wish to learn about the cultures of different societies usually focus on examining their cultural values.³⁰

Geert Hofstede studied the cultural values of different societies and he defined the five following value dimensions that can predict the way in which individuals and institutions in a given society think, feel, and act:³¹

- *Power distance* is the degree of inequality that members of the society consider to be normal. Low values indicate a relative equality among people, while high values indicate a situation of extreme inequality.

- *Uncertainty avoidance* is the degree to which the members of a society prefer structured situations over unstructured situations. People in societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance tend to be stressed, while those in societies with low levels are calmer and more flexible.
- *Individualism* is the degree to which members of a society prefer to act as individuals rather than as part of a group. In collective societies, the members learn to respect their society and are expected to show their loyalty. In individual societies, on the other hand, the members learn to see themselves as individuals and are expected to act independently.
- *Masculinity/femininity* is the degree to which values that are associated in most societies as being the male role (such as assertiveness, performance, and competition) prevail over values that are more associated with female roles (such as warm personal relationships and caring for the weak).
- *Long-term orientation* relates to society's search for virtue. Societies with a short-term orientation are normative in their thinking and generally have a strong concern for establishing the "absolute truth." They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. People in societies with a long-term orientation believe that truth depends on situation, context, and time. These people demonstrate an ability to adapt traditions to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results (Figure 1).

Hofstede's findings do not exhibit great differences between the cultural values of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia.³² Those three countries are English-speaking Western democracies, which are similar in many ways, including their cultural values. If this is indeed the case, the cultural values of those countries would be similar

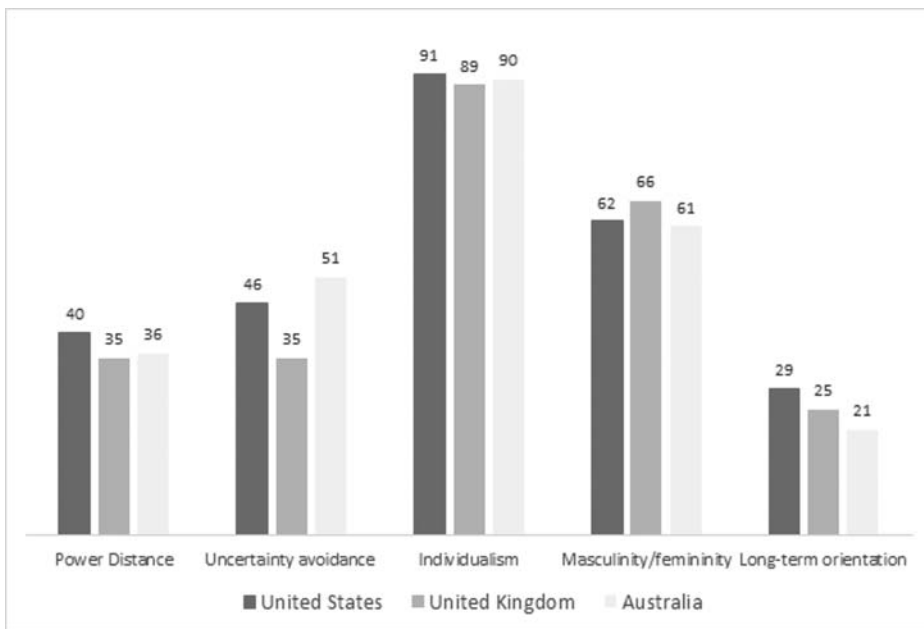


Figure 1. Hofstede's cultural values of the countries examined in the study.

and we should not expect differences in their news coverage regarding the authorities' handling of terror attacks or threat while targeting sport events. The following hypothesis is presented, in accordance with Hofstede's cultural values findings:

H1: No differences will be found in the supportive and criticizing coverage of the authorities' handling of terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events between the American, British, and Australian media.

Method

We analyzed four sporting events that were the targets of terror attacks or threats. In two of these cases, the event continued as planned. These were (1) the terror attack at the Olympic park at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, and (2) the car bomb explosion next to Madrid's main stadium a few hours before the Champions League semi-final football game between Real Madrid and Barcelona in 2002. We also measured two events in which the sporting event was canceled or postponed: (1) the Grand National horse race in 1997, which was postponed due to a bomb threat, and (2) the Paris–Dakar motor rally in 2008, which was canceled due to a terror threat. Table 1 includes a description of the events studied and information regarding the examined articles that dealt with each event.

In line with the study's goal and strategy, we conducted a content analysis of the coverage of the events studied in six international newspapers. The analysis included both qualitative and quantitative measurements, with the aim of achieving a broader understanding of the media's discourse surrounding the events. We measured the coverage from the day of each event and for a week thereafter. In total, we analyzed 239 articles in six newspapers; 113 articles from American newspapers (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*), 77 from British newspapers (*The Times* and *The Guardian*), and 49 from Australian newspapers (*The Daily Telegraph* and *The Herald Sun*). The articles were analyzed by two coders who underwent appropriate training. A reliability test based on a sample of 15 percent of the messages showed high levels of agreement between the coders (reliability between the coders, for each category, did not drop below 90 percent agreement).

The analysis focuses on the supporting and critical coverage of the authorities' reaction to terror events or threats. In each article, expressions of support and criticism were measured, as was the number of supporting and critical figures being quoted in the article. In addition to the quantitative measurements, we conducted a qualitative content analysis in order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the coverage. While analyzing the news articles, we attempted to identify patterns in the coverage in terms of how the media relates to the authorities' reaction to terror attacks or threats; specifically, which topics are covered while the authorities receive support for their actions, and which issues are emphasized while the press is criticizing their actions?

The analysis also examines whether there are differences in the amount of support and criticism toward the authorities' reaction to the terror attacks or threats, expressed in the coverage between the American, British, and Australian media.

Results and Discussion

In keeping with the study's research questions, this section deals with the support and criticism for authorities' reactions, starting with the analysis of the supportive statements followed by the critical ones. We will also make a distinction between events that were

Table 1
Descriptions of the events studied

Event description	Canceled or went on as planned	Number of articles examined
<p>The 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta</p> <p>On 27 July 1996, while the Olympic Games were taking place, a bomb was discovered in the Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, Georgia. A security guard discovered the bomb before it detonated and cleared most of the spectators out of the park. One person was killed and 111 injured.</p>	Went on	172
<p>The 1997 Grand National horse race</p> <p>The 1997 Grand National held at Aintree near Liverpool, England, was scheduled for 5 April, but was postponed as a result of an Irish Republican Army bomb threat. The race took place two days later, on 7 April.</p>	Postponed	52
<p>The 2002 Champions League semi-final football game</p> <p>On 1 May 2002, a few hours before the Champions League semi-final football game between Real Madrid and Barcelona, a car bomb exploded next to Madrid's main stadium. The attack was conducted by the Basque separatist group Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna.</p>	Went on	12
<p>The 2008 Paris–Dakar motor rally</p> <p>The rally was supposed to start in Lisbon, Portugal on 5 January 2008, running through Europe and finishing in Dakar, Senegal on 20 January. The rally was canceled a day before the intended start date due to concerns over a possible terrorist attack aimed at the competitors.</p>	Canceled	3

canceled due to terror attack or threat, and events that continued despite the attack or threat.

Supporting the Authorities

Support for the authorities' actions was expressed in 43.9 percent of the articles examined. The analysis revealed greater support for cases in which the events were not canceled; 46.4 percent of the articles expressed support in such cases, compared to only 37 percent in articles dealing with events that were canceled, although those differences were not found to be significant ($t_{88,33} = 1.207$; *N.S.*). In terms of the topics presented when support is being expressed, we found similarities between the two types of events studied.

The most salient topic in the coverage is the way the authorities had handled the situation (a topic that had received both support and criticism, as presented below). Many of the articles congratulate the security forces for handling the situation and preventing a greater disaster. For example:

“Mr. Clinton praised the security arrangements at the Games in general, and congratulated security officers who he said had detected the bomb before it went off” (*New York Times*, 28 July 1996); “AT&T security guard, had helped to clear 75 to 100 people out of the area when the bomb exploded, blowing him through the air” (*New York Times*, 28 July 1996); “Police were dealing with one of Britain’s biggest peacetime evacuations last night as they struggled to cope with the aftermath of the IRA bid . . . police implemented an emergency plan and mobilised bus companies to run special services and local councils to supply bedding.” (*Times*, 6 April 1997)

In some of the articles, the satisfaction from the forces' conduct was expressed in statements presenting a sense of security despite the attacks or threats. For example: “. . . confident in the security in Atlanta” (*New York Times*, 28 July 1996).

Another issue that had received a supportive coverage is antiterrorism legislation. For example:

“President Clinton and Congressional leaders agreed today to work quickly to pass additional measures to combat terrorism” (*New York Times*, 30 July 1996); “. . . appealed to Congress to approve expanded wiretapping authority and other counterterrorism measures.” (*New York Times*, 2 August 1996)

An additional topic that is covered and presents a supportive sentiment toward the authorities is the international struggle against terrorism, which is compatible with the reality in which many nations face terror attacks and threats.

“The world’s leading powers issued a “declaration of war”” (*Times*, 31 July 1996); “Leaders of the big powers yesterday promised to co-operate in an international crackdown on terrorism; Foreign and interior ministers of the Group of Seven countries, plus Russia, agreed in Paris to 25 measures to fight terrorism; Other measures agreed yesterday include a call to the G7 countries and others to use national legislation to limit the use of the Internet by terrorists. They agreed the need for a new United Nations convention preventing

asylum for anyone planning or funding terrorism.” (*The Guardian*, 31 July 1996)

In addition to the aforementioned findings that coverage tends to be more supportive in events that were not canceled than in those that were (although the differences were not significant), the fact that the authorities decided to continue as planned is one of the issues that had received supportive coverage. In some of the articles, the coverage emphasizes the fact that they are not surrendering to terror.

“Francois Carrard, the deputy general of the International Olympic Committee, proclaimed that ‘the Games will go on. I repeat, the Games will go on . . . the Games will go on’” (*New York Times*, 28 July 1996); “It’s a terrible thing, but the police will do their job and find whoever is responsible and we’ve got to get on with the job of being athletes at the Olympic Games.” (*Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1996)

On the other hand, when an event is canceled due to an attack or threat, the coverage emphasizes the importance of keeping everybody safe: “As long as everybody is safe, that is the main thing” (*Times*, 6 April 1997).

Criticizing the Authorities

Criticism is less frequent than support in the international coverage of terror attacks or threats of sport events. Criticism appeared in only 13 percent of the articles studied, but is more frequent in events that were not canceled due to the attacks or threats (14 percent of the articles contained criticism) compared to events that were canceled (only 9.3 percent of the articles had presented criticism). While examining those differences, similar to the trends of the support expressed in the coverage, the differences in the amount of criticizing articles between events canceled and those that went on as planned were not significant ($t_{236} = 0.933$; *N.S.*). In terms of the topic being covered, the most salient topic in the coverage is again the way the authorities had handled the situation; more specifically, the fact that they did not prevent the attacks.

“A lot of security measures they’re putting in now should have been in for Day One” (*Washington Post*, 28 July 1996); “Even with tight security, someone slipped through” (*New York Times*, 28 July 1996); “In a disturbing lack of communication, details of the warning call were not passed on to officers at the park” (*Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1996); “There was also trouble during the match and police fired rubber bullets at trouble-makers outside the stadium.” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2002)

Another topic that is unique to sporting events that were canceled due to the terror attack or threat has to do with the cancellation. In some cases the fact that the events were canceled is criticized, claiming that the authorities should have done more in order to let the event go on as planned.

“Racers, sponsors, teams and vehicle manufacturers expressed disappointment. . . ‘While cancelling is obviously the right thing to do for safety and security reasons, there’s no reason why we couldn’t have raced a few

stages in Morocco or Portugal where there wasn't the same risk,' Robby Gordon, the NASCAR driver who was planning to compete, said in a statement.” (New York Times, 5 January 2008)

Another measurement used to examine the supportive and critical coverage was the number of supporting and critical figures being quoted in each article. As Table 2 shows, no significant differences were found in the number of supporting and critical figures being quoted between events canceled and those that went on as planned. However, the differences between the numbers of supportive and criticizing figures being quoted in each article (Table 2) show that the number of quotes from supportive figures is higher than the number of critical quotes presented in the coverage. Here too, the evidence suggests greater support than criticism in the coverage.

The first research question was: Will the international media's coverage express support or criticism toward the authorities' reaction while dealing with terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events? Our findings indicate that the media tends to present more support than criticism while dealing with the way in which the authorities had handled terror attacks or threats that targeted sporting events. Evidence suggests that the “rally round the flag” effect³³ applies to the international media as well, not just the local media, while dealing with international challenges such as terrorism.

The second research question is: Are there differences in the amount and nature of support or criticism expressed in the media's coverage between sport events that were canceled (or postponed) as a result of a terror attack or terror threat and those that continued as planned despite it. We found no such differences. Since both reactions are reasonable and also contradict the official messages of states confronting terrorism,³⁴ it is not surprising that the media tends to cover them in a similar manner. The rally effect, in which the media support the authorities' actions in times of crisis,³⁵ appears to work regardless of the way the authorities choose to handle the situation.

Our examination of the amount of support and criticism toward the authorities' reaction to the terror attacks or threats, expressed in the coverage between the American,

Table 2
Differences in number of supportive and criticizing figures presented in the media coverage

Variables	Country	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>
Number of supportive figures quoted	Events canceled	54	.426	-.365
	Events going on as planned	184	.467	
Number of critical figures quoted	Events canceled	54	.056	-1.437
	Events going on as planned	184	.114	
Figures presented in each article	Number of supportive figures	239	.456	7.001*
	Number of criticizing figures	239	.100	

P < .05; *P* < .01; **P* < .001.

The differences were measured using *T* tests (an independent sample *T* test for measuring differences between sporting events that were canceled and those that went on as planned, and a paired samples *T* test to measure differences between the number of supporting figures and critical figures presented in each article).

Table 3
Differences in support and criticism expressed in the coverage between the countries studied

Variables	Country	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Support in coverage	United States	113	.451	2.765
	United Kingdom	77	.350	
	Australia	49	.562	
Criticism in coverage	United States	113	.115	2.038
	United Kingdom	77	.181	
	Australia	49	.062	
Number of supportive figures quoted	United States	113	.442	2.268
	United Kingdom	77	.364	
	Australia	49	.646	
Number of critical figures quoted	United States	113	.097	.632
	United Kingdom	77	.130	
	Australia	49	.063	

$P < .05$; $P < .01$; $P < .001$.

The differences were measured using a one-way ANOVA (including Scheffe post hoc analysis).

British, and Australian media reveals, in accordance with the study's first hypothesis, that no significant differences were found in the coverage of the various countries studied. As presented in Table 3, there were no significant differences between the countries in terms of the amount of support or criticism expressed in the coverage or in the number of supportive and critical figures cited in the coverage. As expected (H1), the media operating in countries that hold similar cultural values³⁶ tends to cover events in a similar manner.

Conclusions

The goal of the study was to widen our understanding of the media's coverage of how authorities handle terror attacks or threats targeting sporting events, in terms of the support and criticism presented in the coverage. The study compared events canceled as a result of the terror attack or threat with events that went on as planned despite the attack or threat. Our findings indicate that the international media tends to be more supportive than critical of authorities' reactions to terror attacks or threats. The evidence suggests that the foreign media acts in a similar way to national media in times of crisis, greatly supporting countries dealing with terrorism (in accordance with the "rally round the flag" phenomena),³⁷ as expressed in their support toward the authorities and the way they had handled the terror attacks or threats. The qualitative content analysis reveals that the most salient topic, both in the supportive and critical coverage, deals with the way the authorities had handled the situation (their activities on the ground). In addition, the supportive discourse in the media's coverage presents antiterrorism legislation and the international struggle against terrorism.

With regard to differences in the coverage of canceled events from those that continued, we found no differences in the supportive or critical coverage. Both of those reactions contradict, to some extent, the official narrative expressed by a country facing terrorism,³⁸ if the event was canceled, it can be perceived as if the nation is surrendering

to terror—in contradiction to their statements of not letting terror change their way of life and values. If, on the other hand, the authorities decide to go on with the event as planned, they are endangering their civilians—an action that can be seen as contradicting their claims about doing all in their power to defend their citizens' lives. Regardless of those contradictions between words and actions, the findings show that in those two types of authorities' reactions (cancelation or going on with the event as planned), the media tends to present greater levels of support than criticism.

Since the study examined the coverage in three different countries, differences in the amount of support and criticism toward the authorities' reaction in the American, British, and Australian media were measured as well. No significant differences were found in the coverage between those three states. This finding correlates with the idea that a nation's media and its coverage reflect the cultural values of the society in which the media operates.³⁹ The cultural values of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia are similar,⁴⁰ so the way they cover the authorities' reaction to terrorism tends to be similar as well.

The coverage of how the authorities handle terror attacks or threats is a less studied aspect in the widely studied topic of the media coverage of terrorism. The focus on terrorism that targets sporting events serves as an opportunity to study this topic. This is because, while sporting events usually receive a lot of media coverage and serve as a comfortable target for terror organizations seeking for worldwide media coverage,⁴¹ they are also well-planned events. This makes it possible to obtain insights into authorities' decision-making process in terms of continuing with the event or canceling it as a result of terrorism. This contrasts with terror attacks that target public places (rather than specific occurrences) and the way the media covers those attacks.

Terrorism in the twenty-first century is an international challenge that many nations have to deal with.⁴² This fact appears to have had an impact on how the international media covers terrorism, not just in terms of the amount of coverage it receives,⁴³ but also in the framing of the actors.⁴⁴ The findings of the current study widen our understanding of the international coverage of terror attacks or threat. The evidence suggests that, when facing an international challenge, the international media tends to express support toward the nation facing the challenge and its authorities' actions (regardless of their reaction), in accordance to the "rally round the flag" effect on the national level. In this global age, the media serves as a unifying arena regarding the problems and challenges that nations share, and tends to rally around the political actors facing those challenges.

Notes

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2. Michael Atkinson and Kevin Young, "Shadowed by the Corpse of War: Sport Spectacles and the Spirit of Terrorism," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 47(3) (2012), pp. 286–306.

3. Yair Galily, Ilan Tamir, and Moran Yarchi, "From Munich to Boston and From Theatre to Social Media: The Evolutionary Landscape of World Sporting Terror," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (forthcoming); Gabriel Weimann, and Conrad Winn, *The Theater of Terror: Mass Media and International Terrorism* (New York: Longman, 1994).

4. Terror threats are part of the definition of terrorism, as presented below, since they serve the terrorists' goal of causing fear.

5. Moran Yarchi, Gadi Wolfsfeld, Tamir Sheafer, and Shaul R. Shenhav. "Promoting Stories about Terrorism to the International News Media: A Study of Public Diplomacy," *Media, War & Conflict*, 6(3) (2013), pp. 263–278.
6. Moran Yarchi, "'Badtime' Stories: The Frames of Terror Promoted by Political Actors," *Democracy & Security* 10(1) (2014), pp. 22–51.
7. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
8. Alex P. Schmid, and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1988).
9. In 2004, Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler examined more than 70 different terror definitions in three leading journals that focus on terrorism; their findings were similar to those of Schmid and Jongman. Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, "The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16(4) (2004), pp. 777–794.
10. Schmid and Jongman found that the notion of publicity appeared frequently in many of the definitions of terrorism they had examined.
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