

4. Constructing ‘dark’ celebrity: The case of Anders Breivik

ABSTRACT

This article finds that there were differences in selected Norwegian and international media coverage of Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik following the 22 July 2011 killings in Oslo and Utøya Island. The Norwegian media coverage resembles Nossek’s notion of news media assuming a national-patriotic coverage after a domestic terror attack, whereas the international media coverage more closely adhered to Galtung and Ruge’s news value of ‘unambiguity’ with the portrayal of Breivik being consonant with the pre-image of him as an antagonist. As the traditional notions of fame and celebrity are conflating with infamy and the ‘dark celebrity’, it is argued that the ‘demonising’ frame employed by US and UK media in particular in the findings of this article contribute in elevating Anders Behring Breivik to celebrity status.

Keywords: Anders Breivik, celebrity culture, dark celebrity, news values

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No one ever became famous by beating his wife to death in an alley; but virtually all our multiple murderers achieve true and lasting fame. They are the subjects of articles and books, radio and television shows—for the remainder of their lives—and they thus attain an immortality denied the unenterprising common man. (Leyton, 1989, as cited in Stratton, 1996).

A STRANGE twist in contemporary celebrity is the blurring of fame and infamy. In essence, the linking of celebrity to the widespread circulation of a name has dissociated notoriety from the deeds that were its prelude. In particular, commentators have noted the development of ‘dark’ celebrity or what Schmid (2006) referred to, punning on the film directed by Oliver Stone, *Natural Born Killers*, natural born celebrities—

forces of nature that force their way into public consciousness as examples of extreme and irrational acts of violence. A survey of the cover stories of *People Magazine* between 1974 and 1998 revealed a shift in emphasis from celebrities with positive moral qualities and behaviours towards the ‘accomplishments’ of rapists, child abusers, drug addicts and murderers. Commenting on this shift, the authors of the study note that emphasis on malefactors of various kinds might serve as negative role models for readers, but were inclined to conclude that the shift to dark celebrity promulgated a different message to potential offenders—that for some individuals, undertaking outrages would be a sure way to acquire media attention (Levin, Ford & Mazaik, 2005). Seeking attention can be driven by a variety of motives—simply for the glamour the spotlight brings, to enact revenge for real or actual wrongs done by others, and sometimes for explicit political purposes. In the case of serial killers, pathological motives drive the killings and the aim is less to attract attention, though a favourite theme in television shows like *CSI* is that serial killers are self-denying attention seekers. The case study that follows addresses an explicit act of murder as political propaganda, as propaganda of the deed as advocated by Bakunin (Bakunin, 1870).

There are similarities between Norway and New Zealand that are worth considering. With a population of just over five million, Norway is a small country, dominated by a white majority but with a sizeable immigrant population that the majority identify as a source of social problems. New Zealand, of course, does not have an example of mass murder, though the Aramoana massacre in 1990 provides a notorious example. Nor is New Zealand entirely clear of the attractions of ‘dark’ celebrity as shown by the recent conviction of New Zealand lawyer, Davina Murray, for smuggling an iPhone, cigarettes and a lighter into a prison for her intended fiancé, a convicted killer and rapist, Liam Reid. But more than these peripheral connections, the Breivik case is important for what it reveals about the interaction between news-making and the pursuit of publicity for shameful acts.

Theoretical framework

Galtung and Ruge’s seminal 1965 study on news factors has been widely cited and is still highly regarded today. Their study of three international crises in four Norwegian newspapers uncovered 12 news factors—namely, frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite

people, reference to persons and reference to something negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, 2001).

The author will not examine all of the news factors, but will elaborate on five that seem to be particularly relevant to this case study. The 'unambiguity' factor refers to how easy it is to understand an event. A mass killing may be seen as unambiguous because it is a dramatic and developing event, and thus easy and captivating for the viewer to follow. Also, this case study features a clear antagonist in Breivik. There is perhaps no clear protagonist; however, both then-Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and King Harald V were seen as uniting figures in a nation deep in mourning.

'Consonance' entails that the 'news selector' may predict—or, indeed—want—something to happen, thus forming a mental 'pre-image' of an event, which in turn increases its chances of becoming 'news' (Galtung & Ruge, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, p. 263). The news media quickly identified Breivik as the antagonist, and several of the follow-up articles on Breivik were framed as 'demonising'. The 'unexpectedness' factor refers to the practice of unexpected or rare events '—among those that are culturally familiar and/or consonant—will have the greatest chance of being selected as news' (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, p. 263). Nothing similar to these events had happened in Norwegian history. The events of 22 July 2011 were thus unparalleled. The year prior to the killings, 2010, had seen a total of 31 murders. In 2009, 29 murders were committed in Norway (Zondag, 2010). Hence 22 July 2011 witnessed more murders in one day than in the two preceding years combined.

The 'continuity' factor holds that once a news item has become headline news, it will stay there for some time. This factor can contribute to explaining why Breivik has become a celebrity. Acclaimed Norwegian novelist Jo Nesbø claims that the news media, by continuously putting news about Breivik in a prominent position, has given him the attention he wished for, and thus potentially elevated him to the celebrity status he desired.

Because of the media coverage, we have created an icon: a Norwegian monster. It's naïve to think it doesn't derive from our natural fascination with the monster. We are trying to get into the head of this one individual, who may or may not be very sick. [Breivik] represents himself and not many others. From a social or political point of view, this is not a very interesting event. (Kidd, 2012, para. 13)

In his closing statement to Oslo District Court on 22 June 2012, Breivik made it clear that being demonised as a right-wing extremist was preferable over being ignored. Without giving any further explanation about why, Breivik stated that 'being ignored is the worst that can happen' (Viddal, 2012, 27th minute). To what extent this conclusion is due to his political agenda or his narcissistic personality disorder (or perhaps both) is outside the scope of this case study. It does seem, however, that he has had a strong desire to attain media attention.

The 'reference to persons' factor refers to the practice that news often presents events as actions of individuals, rather than a result of social forces (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, 1965). In the case of Breivik there is no question that the actions are the result of one man's work. However, given the media's inclination to emphasise actions as a result of individuals rather than a more nuanced approach, this factor might amplify the media coverage Breivik receives.

The more news factors that can be identified in an event, the more likely it is that it will be reported on, according to Galtung and Ruge (1965, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, 2001). After nearly half a century, Galtung and Ruge's news factor study still remains relevant and repeatedly applied. However, Harcup and O'Neill (2001) argue that because the study only related to conflicts, one should update the news factors. In their revised news factor study, they include 'celebrity', stating that stories on people, who already are in focus, are more likely to receive attention. They also include 'magnitude' and 'follow-up' as two new news factors.

Methodology

The day 22 July 2011 marked the darkest day in the history of Norway after World War II. At 3.25pm, the 32-year-old lone wolf gunman Anders Behring Breivik set off a 950kg fertiliser bomb at the government headquarters in downtown Oslo, killing eight people. He then drove 38km to the island of Utøya where he shot and killed 69 participants at the Labour Party's annual youth camp. Several others were wounded by both the bomb blast and the subsequent shooting spree. Breivik was apprehended at approximately 6.34 pm at Utøya (22 July Commission, 2012), and sentenced to the maximum penalty of 21 years preventive detention in August 2012. The more than two years that have passed since the killings have seen massive media attention worldwide. Much of the focus has been on Breivik himself. This case study

investigates Norwegian and international news media coverage of Breivik. The author's research question was: 'Is there a difference between the Norwegian and the international news media's representation of Anders Behring Breivik?' Four articles and commentaries from Norwegian news media, as well as four articles and commentaries from the United States and United Kingdom news media, have been investigated. Galtung and Ruge's seminal news factors study (1965, as cited in Harcup and O'Neill, 2001) will be used to identify potential differences in the coverage.

The case study will firstly give an outline of Breivik's life, as well as the most important events related to actions after 22 July 2011. Secondly, the author will review three texts on how one can understand the media's fascination with mass murderers. Thirdly, this case study will present Galtung and Ruge's news factors, which serve as the theoretical framework for this case study. Fourthly, the author will present the findings, and suggest that the UK and US news media more readily employ a 'demonising' frame when portraying Breivik, something that in turn could lead to him more easily being elevated to celebrity status. It should be noted that this case study does not give an overall impression of how the media coverage of Breivik has been. The case study only addresses a small number of news articles about Breivik, and the conclusions that are drawn may not be applicable as a general pattern.

The life of Anders Behring Breivik

Breivik was born on 13 February 1979 in Oslo. His parents divorced when he was one year old. At age four, two psychiatric reports voiced concerns about his development and recommended he be removed from his home. This did not happen, and when he was assessed by the Norwegian child-care service a year later, he was regarded as a 'sympathetic, relaxed boy with a lovely smile' (Granly Meldalen, Hansen, Landsend & Sandli, 2012, para. 18). (This and subsequent excerpts from Norwegian news media have been translated from Norwegian to English by this author.) His only recorded offences prior to 22 July 2011 occurred in his teens when he made illegal graffiti. At 15 he was fined 3000 Norwegian kroner (NZ\$635), which he was forced to pay out of his own savings (Granly Meldalen, Aass Kristiansen, Brustad, Hansen & Krokfjord, 2012). He dropped out of his final year of high school, and has stated that he did not attempt higher education because he did not want to be a part of 'politically correct Norway' (Landsend, Bryne,

Hattrem, Kongsli Lundervold, Meland & Thorenfeldt, 2012). In 1999, he joined the Progress Party Youth, but withdrew in 2007. During and after his political engagement he was active on a range of right-wing internet discussion forums. According to him, he started planning the killings in 2002. He started up several businesses and opened several offshore bank accounts (Taylor, 2011). In the years leading up to his murders, he also compiled a manifesto, which described his right-wing agenda. In the manifesto he endorsed the Eurabia conspiracy theory in which Muslims step by step are taking control of Europe. Breivik therefore argued that all Muslims must be deported from Europe. The bombing and shooting spree on 22 July, 2011, were, according to Breivik (Lepperød, Berge & Mæland, 2012), meant to be 'fireworks' for the manifesto.

On 23 July, 2011, Breivik was indicted under the Norwegian terror law. On 29 November 2011, two court-appointed forensic psychiatrists who had observed and interviewed Breivik concluded he was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and was psychotic when committing the killings. He was hence considered to be criminally insane, and was sentenced to a psychiatric hospital and not to jail (Store Norske Leksikon, 2012a). This prompted a public outcry, and a second team of forensic psychiatrists was appointed in January 2012. Their conclusion was that Breivik was criminally sane and could be sentenced to jail. They diagnosed him as having a narcissistic personality disorder.

Breivik's trial started on 16 April and finished on 22 June, 2012. On 24 August, Breivik was sentenced to 21 years of preventive detention. The verdict was not appealed. Breivik stated at the start of the trial that he did not accept the court's legitimacy because it had received its mandate from political parties in favour of multiculturalism ('Breivik döms til förvaring i 21 år', 2012).

Breivik has featured sporadically in Norwegian media reports since the verdict. In May 2013, *VG Nett* reported he had applied to start up his own 'fascist party' called 'The Norwegian Fascist Party and the Nordic League' (Grøttum & Vikås, 2013). The party's aim was, according to Breivik's letter, to overthrow the government and establish a sovereign indigenous Nordic state in the south-eastern county of Østfold (Grøttum & Vikås, 2013). After correspondence with the Norwegian Entity Registry, his application was turned down.

In July 2013, Norwegian *TV2* reported that Breivik had applied to study political science at the University of Oslo (Hammeren & Nørve, 2013).

Although it was made clear that Breivik had to study from jail, the principal at the University of Oslo said the university could not refuse him entry into the programme (Hammeren & Nørve, 2013).

Literature review

In the following paragraphs three texts will be reviewed. Firstly, Schmid's (2006) essay *Idols of destruction: Celebrity and the serial killer*. Secondly, Haggerty's (2009) article *Modern serial killers*; and thirdly, Nossek's (2008) essay 'News media'—*events: Terrorist acts as media events*.

The conflation of meritorious and infamous fame is one of the central points of Schmid's (2006) essay. Whether one rose to fame or not used to be proportional to how talented an individual was. This seems to be less true today.

Although the idea that fame is the result of meritorious achievement still has some currency, there has also been a sharp decline in the importance of 'merit' as a defining factor in fame. Consequently, in the contemporary public sphere, to be famous and to be notorious are frequently the same thing. (Schmid, 2006, p. 297)

According to Braudy (1986, as cited by Schmid, 2006), not being famous is undesirable. Some people are therefore inclined to do horrific crimes in order to achieve fame, because one is guaranteed a certain level of recognition by being famous, even though it is for mass murder. In the case of Anders Breivik, this seems compatible with his narcissistic personality disorder, where it is argued that he may want to prove himself in any way possible. On the other hand, one should not discard his political motivations, which might not have been driven primarily by the search for fame.

Giles (2000, as cited in Schmid, 2006) differentiates between 'fame' and 'celebrity', the latter being a 'much more recent and debased category, usually because of its association with the mass media' (p. 298). Braudy (1986, as cited in Schmid, 2006), however, argues that the differences between these two terms have become blurred.

The media regularly over-report violent crime, thus having a serial killer to report on provides content the media seek. The combination of 'tabloidisation, the overrepresentation of violent interpersonal crime, and a preference for the grotesque in the construction of crime myths has led to the rise of [...] the 'faceless predator criminal'' (Surette, 1994, as cited in Schmid, 2006).

This creature represents an omnipresent threat, according to Surette. When the 'faceless predator criminal' is no longer faceless, but is known by both his appearance, name and how he speaks and behaves, then there is a foundation for even more attention.

For the serial killer to be a representative of the fame of today, he should not only be known for his actions, but also his personality—who he is. Action and identity are fused, according to Schmid (2006). In Breivik's case there have been several reports on his personality and who he might or might not be. This was fuelled by the conflicting psychiatric reports, but started as early as 2.18am July 23, when it was established in an online news article that he had been a member of the Freemasons (Klungtvedt, Ottosen, Pettersen & Thorenfeldt, 2011).

Haggerty (2009) defines a serial killer as 'someone who has killed three or more people who were previously unknown to him' (p. 169). He adds though that there needs to be a 'cooling off' period between each murder, something which may mean that Anders Behring Breivik perhaps more correctly would be defined as a 'mass murderer' and not a 'serial killer'. Breivik, as mentioned, killed 77 people in fewer than three hours in two separate acts of terror on 22 July 2011. Another diverging point between Breivik and the serial killer is the notion of serial killing predominantly being a media event (Gibson, 2006, as cited in Haggerty, 2009). This understanding holds that serial killers are actually encountered by very few people, thus the media coverage of this issue serves more as entertainment for the broader audience than providing useful information. Regarding Breivik, his actions shook an entire country because of this unexpectedness and extreme violence. Also, a great number knew somebody who had been directly affected by one of the two attacks. A point where Breivik and 'the serial killer' might overlap is on the view they have of their victims. The typical serial killer meticulously chooses his victim, something that is in contrast, according to Haggerty (2009), with the bulk of the media coverage of serial killers, which portrays their killings as random. Breivik's victims were specifically chosen in order to hurt the Norwegian Labour Party, and specifically, by targeting its youth camp, the up-and-coming generation. Among the 77 people who were killed, Breivik apologised for killing one of them, because he was passing by the government headquarters by chance at the time the bomb went off. As Breivik deemed the rest of the people killed to be connected to the Labour Party, he did not direct an apology to them (Brenna, Grøttum, Hopperstad, Ravndal & Vikås, 2012).

According to Haggerty (2009), media are in 'the celebrity-making business'. He asserts that fame has become democratised, as it is no longer reserved for an exclusive few who have accomplished highly regarded achievements. There are 'few quicker routes to celebrity than committing a sensational crime. Rather than being shamed by their actions, serial killers often revel in their celebrity and actively seek out media attention' (p. 174). One may argue that Breivik has become a celebrity. He had in July 2012 received more than 600 letters from right-wing supporters (Brenna, Grøttum & Utheim, 2012). He has also received several letters from women wanting to marry him (Andersen, Brenna, Hopperstad, Ravndal & Vikås, 2012). Breivik spends between eight and 10 hours every day writing. Part of the time is spent replying to fans, while other parts are not disclosed. It is known, however, that he is planning to write three books; one on the terror attacks, one on ideology and one on the future (Brenna et al., 2012a).

Nossek (2008) takes a slightly different viewpoint from Schmid and Haggerty. He does not look at the individual, but at all of the media and how they are influenced by such killings. Nossek argues that the media abandon their critical role at the time of a major event, and instead 'assume a national-patriotic coverage frame that seeks to reestablish normality and restore order' (Nossek, 2008, p. 313). He admits that the media risk 'giving in to' the perpetrators by forwarding their message, and thus possibly awarding them the celebrity status they have been seeking. However, by emphasising solidarity, partnership and unity, the media send the message to killers, as well as society as such, that there are certain values that the society holds dear and will not succumb to. This description seems to be a good match for the ensuing days and weeks after the 22 July, 2011 attacks. An estimated 200,000 people—a third of the population of Oslo—attended a memorial concert for the victims in downtown Oslo on 25 July, 2011. The event was televised on the two major Norwegian networks, and in addition to a number of acclaimed artists, also included speeches from Crown Prince Haakon Magnus and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg (Store Norske Leksikon, 2012b).

Nossek argues that in the aftermath of a domestic 'terrorist' act, journalists perform a ritual of 'news media-media event', where they assess whether what is happening constitutes a threat to society's existence. If so, the aim then becomes to defuse 'the threatening and alarming message of the terrorists, assuage society's anxiety and shock, facilitate returning to normality, bolster

the country's resilience in the face of terror, and confirm that conflicts can only be resolved through application of democratic values' (Nossek, 2008, p. 327). It is the author's viewpoint that the Norwegian media took the role Nossek describes. One may deduce though that the international media, more distant from the realities of what happened, may carry on with a more 'narrative' journalistic practice.

Findings and analysis

In the following paragraphs, four international and four Norwegian news articles and commentaries will be analysed using Galtung and Ruge's news factors. The findings will be paired up by what content they represent, and then examined in the light of the previously discussed theories. The articles were retrieved using the Google news search tool and accessing the news search engines of the websites in question. The author found that many international news articles simply reported what had happened neutrally and did not offer any particular opinions. The selection below is therefore restricted to British and American news media, where the author could select from a range of opinionated news articles and commentaries.

In the commentary 'Why Norway is satisfied with Breivik's sentence' by Mark Lewis (2012a) of the American news magazine *Time*, the journalist tries to view the issue from a Norwegian point of view. Lewis concludes that:

Norwegians feel proud that their society is fundamentally unchanged. [...] [A]s far as justice ever can be done for a crime this heinous, this is probably it. A plurality of Norwegians wanted Breivik punished for his crimes. But, more than that, in the end they just wanted him gone. (Lewis, 2012a, para. 12)

The commentary is primarily a summary of the events, and the author expresses opinions himself. The commentary raises the question whether Breivik's living conditions at the prison are too luxurious, by voicing the opinions of a lawyer representing the bereaved families. None of Breivik's attorneys are cited. As the issue is already established at the time the commentary was published, the reference to Breivik himself seems to be the dominant news factor. Breivik's name is mentioned 15 times in the commentary.

Two days prior to Lewis's commentary, the biggest Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* published the commentary 'Rettsstatens sterke oppgjør' [The legal

state's strong vindication] (Stanghelle, 2012), where commentator Harald Stanghelle praises the verdict, and contends that the judicial system of Norway has prevailed. Breivik is mentioned seven times in the commentary, which may indicate that the reference to Breivik as a person is of less significance for *Aftenposten* than it is for *Time*.

On 29 May 2012, the website of the UK newspaper *Daily Mail*, as well as the biggest Norwegian website *VG Nett*, published a story about a friend of Breivik testifying in court that he believed Breivik 'had become gay' (Brenna, Grøttum, Hopperstad, Peters, Ravndal & Vikås, 2012). In this instance, the news factor of meaningfulness, whereby a news selector chooses news that fits into its own cultural context, may be applied. In the *Daily Mail*, the headline was 'Revealed: How mass killer Breivik's friends believed he was gay ... and he wanted to be more like David Beckham' (Lewis, 2012b). Beckham is English, and the English newspaper *Daily Mail* used this to make the story more meaningful for its readers. Beckham was mentioned in the article by *VG Nett* as well, but did not emphasise it as much as the *Daily Mail*. The *VG Nett* article is more than double the length than that of the *Daily Mail*, and it may seem like the article by Brenna et al. (2012b) fulfils more of the news factors in a Norwegian context than Lewis's article (2012b) does in a British context. The latter therefore needs to compensate by highlighting certain aspects that can clearly be recognised as news factors in the UK context. The events in the courtroom are, for instance, more 'unambiguous' for *VG Nett* given its familiarity with Norwegian language. The news factor of 'continuity' is also more prevalent in the Norwegian context. The trial was extensively covered by Norwegian news media throughout the 10 weeks it lasted. The foreign media, however, focused their coverage on the very first and last week of the proceedings. This also ties into the news factor of 'threshold'. The threshold that events have to pass to be covered in Norwegian news media is lower than in foreign news media.

One of the earliest news reports identifying Anders Breivik as the perpetrator of the mass killings came from the online version of the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* at 2.18am on 23 July, nearly eight hours after the apprehension of Breivik. The headline simply read 'Anders Behring Breivik, 32, captured after the massacres' (Klungtveit, et al., 2011). The second sentence of the article states that 'he appears to be a right-wing radical, a free-mason, and owns multiple weapons' (Klungtveit, et al., 2011, para. 1). The

article also established that he had run a farm in the province of Hedmark in the period leading up to the attacks, and that he had started up several unsuccessful businesses over the last decade. The *Dagbladet* article does not mention Breivik's anti-Islamic ideology. A *VG Nett* article, published the same morning, states that he has been active on anti-Islamic websites and has been critical of 'multiculturalist policies' (Andersen, Brenna, Ege, Holli, Hopperstad, Ravndal, Ruud, Sæther, Tommelstad, Torgersen, Viken & Widerøe, 2011).

At 6.30pm British time on 23 July, *The Guardian* published the article 'Anders Behring Breivik: Profile of a mass murderer' (Beaumont, 2012). This article uses more descriptive language. Although this may be attributed to it being published at a later time, it describes Breivik, for instance, as having a 'grandiose sense of himself' and being a 'Christian fundamentalist with a deep hatred of multiculturalism'. Beaumont (2011) states that in 'the pictures that have so far emerged, Breivik appears well dressed, slender and clean shaven, a picture of the young entrepreneur he wanted to be' (para. 8).

The 'unexpectedness' factor is obvious in the *Dagbladet* article, as the events are still very recent. While the focus of the *Dagbladet* article is on hard news, the *Guardian* article focuses on the person who committed the attacks. An increased focus on the person may serve to elevate Breivik's celebrity status, whereas a focus on the bigger picture will likely reduce this process.

On 7 October 2012, *The Telegraph* published the article 'Anders Behring Breivik's mother "sexualised" him when he was four' (Orange, 2012). The article states that Breivik's mother 'smacked him, and often told him she wished he were dead' (Orange, 2012, para. 1). The article is based on information that surfaced after a book about Breivik was released in October 2012. The article describes how the four-year-old Breivik taunted his mother that the smacks did not hurt, and, according to a psychologist report, smiled in a 'condescending, inappropriate and derisive' manner (Orange, 2012, para. 10). The mother used a 'sexualised' language with Breivik, something the neighbours reportedly were shocked to hear. At the end of the article, the journalist devotes some space to the criticism the book has received for releasing these reports.

VG Nett's 4 October article about the same book is titled 'Grave accusations about Breivik's mother in new book' (Ravndal & Vikås, 2012). In the second sentence of the article, the author of the book suggests that the information about Breivik's childhood provided was decisive for him becoming a mass murderer. The article does not give any details about the smacking

or the so-called 'sexualised' language Breivik's mother used with him. The article instead takes the side of Breivik's mother and questions if it is ethical to provide this information to the public.

Yet again the two articles differ in how they portray Breivik. *The Telegraph's* coverage can be understood by the news factor of 'consonance'. In this instance, *The Telegraph* has employed a 'demonising' frame on Breivik, which in turn is reinforced by the new details about his childhood. This seems to be the dominant form of framing Breivik for the British news media. The news factor that is most prevalent in the Norwegian article may be 'meaningfulness'. Scandinavian countries are known to be egalitarian, and creating sympathy for a Norwegian woman, even though she is a murderer's mother, may be seen as culturally appropriate.

Conclusion

This case study, has shown that the portrayal of Anders Behring Breivik in Norwegian and international media is different. Norwegian media coverage is more focused on the bigger picture, and thus resembles the patriotic and unifying role that Nossek (2008) found the media often use in events of domestic terror attacks. Furthermore, one may expect a higher level of knowledge of the killings, and Breivik in particular, in Norway than abroad. Hence the level of ambiguity and nuances employed may be higher than in foreign media. The foreign media identified in this case study put high emphasis on certain news factors in Breivik's portrayal. The news should be unambiguous and consonant with the pre-image of Breivik as the antagonist.

Galtung and Ruge (1965, as cited in Harcup & O'Neill, 2001) established that news has a tendency to present events as actions of named people. That is certainly the case for Anders Breivik. It does not mean, however, that one should cease to investigate other possible ways of understanding a news story. One must be open to several ways of interpreting a story, even though it is tempting to make a very crude picture of the events when reporting from afar. The consequence of this reporting on Breivik may be to legitimise him, and possibly also, give his agenda more credibility. The society denounces his actions, but is at the same time fascinated by his personality. Thus Breivik has been elevated to celebrity status.

Although, as mentioned, the findings cannot generalised, the author would not be surprised if the finding of this case study proved to be true on a larger scale.

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