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Framing analysis of government crisis communication in terrorist attacks (Case in New Zealand and Sri Lanka)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the frame of the government official statement in Mosque Christhurch Attack in New Zealand (March 2019) and Easter Sunday Attack in Sri Lanka (April 2019). The two cases were chosen because they place Muslim in contradictory positions: as victim in New Zealand and as perpetrator in Sri Lanka. This study uses framing analysis method to examine the official statement uploaded in the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, within seven days after the incident. The data gathered from the text analysis is then followed by data triangulation using expert judgement technique. The result shows that there are differences in information content. The New Zealand government emphasizes their own actions in the country, while the Sri Lankan government focuses on the activities carried out abroad and the supports, they receive from other countries. In doing so, the New Zealand government highlights the presence of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern while the Sri Lankan government presents information from many state officials, instead of the head of state. These differences show that the content of official statement is highly influenced by the socio-political condition in the country.

Keywords: *Crisis Communication, Framing Analysis, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Terrorism*

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a crisis in a form of intentional acts taken by external agents that are designed to harm the organization directly or indirectly. This includes product tampering, hostage taking, sabotage and workplace violence. Since the tragedy of September 11, 2001 (9/11) in the United States, every organization should be aware of the crisis potential in terrorism that threatening the organization as well as the country in general (Cornelissen, 2011; Ulmer et al., 2011).

The terror attack in mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15, 2019 claimed 51 casualties. More than a month later, the attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday (21 April 2019) is allegedly to revenge the attack in Christchurch. The Sri Lankan government responded to this situation by declaring national emergency state for a month after the attack and it was extended twice later. It means, there were speculations that these two incidents is related each other.

Terrorism is actually very rare in New Zealand. Before the terror attack in Christchurch in 2019, there was only one case of armed violence in 1990 in Aramoana. This was ignited by a personal dispute between neighbors, which led to a shooting that caused 50 casualties and 50 wounded victims (Ozdeser et al., 2019). New Zealand is also known for its good rank in multiculturalism. A survey to New Zealand citizen shows that 60% of respondent agrees that Islamic holy days need to be respected. However, 50% of them state that Islamic values do not comply with the values in New Zealand society. Also, there is 45% respondent who does not want mosque in their neighborhood and who thinks that *burqa* should be banned in New Zealand (Ward et al., 2019).

In contrast, Sri Lanka has a long history of religious conflict. Until the early 20th century, Muslims enjoyed harmonious relations with other communities, including the majority Sinhala who believes in Buddhism. When there was a conflict between the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Muslims opposed the LTTE's quest for separatism. As a result, many Muslims were killed by LTTE and more than 60,000 Muslims were evicted from their community (Devotta, 2018).

However, following the peace treaty between Sri Lankan government and LTTE in 2009, the violence toward Muslim is increasing. Physical violence, hate speech, demonstration, business boycott, Muslim attire ban, and labelling (as immigrants or rebels) are among other things that are used to attack Muslim. The security forces, sadly, do not do anything significant to end the violence. Instead, the existing law kind of protects the violent offenders who are mostly the members of Buddhist Sinhala extreme group. Islam in Sri Lanka itself is a minority with 10% from the total population (Aliff, 2015).

The first attack on Muslim in Sri Lanka took place in September 2011, when a group of Buddhist monks declared the demolition of a 400-year-old Muslim shrine in Anuradhapura. They argued that the site was built on a sacred Buddhist ground and that Muslims planned to convert the shrine into a mosque. There were many pamphlets put around the shrine that claimed, "Muslim is going to vanish the Sinhalese from the Earth", along with insulting words toward Muslim. Anti-Islam movement is significantly increasing since mid-2012. The group named Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) is the group that has spearheaded Islamophobia in Sri Lanka. They accuse Muslim of extremism, being involved in drugs selling, smuggling illegal Muslim migrants, exclusivity in business, and also treating Buddhist employees poorly and preventing them from going to temple. In private matters, BBS accuses Muslim men of forcing Buddhist women to convert to Islam by marrying them. This is particularly highlighted because Muslims never convert to other religions when marrying non-Muslims even as they insist that non-Muslim spouses convert to Islam (Devotta, 2018).

This paper aims to look at how government frames official statement in the case of terrorism in Christchurch Attack

(for New Zealand) and Easter Sunday Attack (for Sri Lanka). Government plays an important role in handling terrorism as it puts the reputation of a country at stake. Thus, terrorism cases need a particular crisis management including distinctive communications strategy (Canel & Sanders, 2010; Mubarok & Wulandari, 2018). The cases discussed in this paper are Mosque Christchurch Attack in New Zealand (March 2019) and Easter Sunday Attack in Sri Lanka (April 2019). These cases are selected due to their contradictory positions in placing Muslim, as victim in New Zealand and as perpetrator in Sri Lanka.

Communication is essential in the time of crisis as the need of information during the period is rapidly increasing. The development of Internet and social media nowadays make it even easier for everyone to spread and share information. However, not every information shared in the time of crisis is valid and reliable. Some information is invalid or at least questionable. Unfortunately, such information can be uncontrollably shared or even intentionally shared to create more chaos (Cornelissen, 2011; Ulmer et al., 2011)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The government official statement regarding terrorism is an important as well as a complicated matter. It is important because terrorism definitely draws media attention, making the government as the most wanted or even the one and only source (Mubarok & Wulandari, 2018). But it is also complicated because terrorism is often linked to religious sentiment. When the perpetrator is Muslim, for example, media coverage tends to link it with transnational terrorism network and to expose the information that the risk of terrorism in the United States is far from over. On the other hand, when the perpetrator is non-Muslim, media portray the action as an individual act unrelated to any network and the action was caused by mental disorder. When the people who committed armed attack are not Muslim, they are never described as terrorist. Moreover, their action that ends people lives and spread terror is described merely as a criminal act (Corbin, 2017).

Due to this complexity, a government should be extra careful in giving official statement, especially because Muslim all around the world can be extremely solid when it comes to defending Islam. This can be seen in the cases of ARLA in Middle East (Gaweesh, 2013) and Sari Roti in Indonesia (Fadli, 2018; Ma'arif, 2017). Even though the cases have nothing to do with terrorism, they both show how Muslim can boycott a product not because of the ingredients in the product, but because the manufacturer upsets Muslim.

Generally, government uses six terminologies to respond terrorism act. First terminology is defining the nomenclature of perpetrator, such as terrorist, criminal, gang, subversive offender, assassin, and fanatic group. The second one is to describe the action, for example "terrorism is a crime" or "police is undergoing investigation". Third terminology is to interprete the mandate by stating that there's no support or justification for terrorism. The next one is motivation, showing that government tries to protect its citizen from the villain. The fifth one is the description of violence such as killing the innocence or horrible crime. Last terminology is victim's description, stating that the victim is innocence people or victim of crime (Hargie & Irving, 2016).

There have been several previous studies on government's crisis communication in the context of terrorism. Canel & Sanders (2010), for example, discuss the official statements from the government of Spain in response to the bomb attack in Madrid in 2004 and the official statements of the UK government to respond the 2005 bomb attack in London. In the case of Spain, the government initially claimed that the separatist group Basque, ETA, launched the attack. However, during police investigation, there was indication of Al-Qaeda involvement. This caused uncertainty among Spanish public. They did not care weather it was ETA or Al-

Qaeda, they preferred to know who was untruthful about the perpetrator. This created burdensome for the government of Spain to arrange communication messages, especially because the bombing took place not long before the general election so it could be politically designed to win votes. The decrease in trust to the government caused the post terror handling to be considered unimportant by public. The people chose to focus on the new government to replace the current government who had lied and was misleading in giving information (Canel & Sanders, 2010).

The same study reveals that in the UK, on the contrary, the government official statement (from police, Prime Minister office, and Buckingham palace) draws a clear line between them (the perpetrator) with "the Muslims who live in the UK and elsewhere, the Muslims who obey the law and condemn terrorism." The UK government chose the unity discourse as the main frame for the messages. Opposition party and media quickly adopted this decision so the debate about who the perpetrator is or where he comes from was considered inappropriate (Canel & Sanders, 2010).

Another example is the study on terrorism handling in the United States after the 9/11 attack in New York and Oklahoma bombing in 2004. Information uncertainty was the main thing that became apparent after the 9/11 attack. Although the US government claimed that it was definitely a terror attack, the identity of perpetrator was not clear. Moreover, for the New York regional government, that kind of terror was a new form of crisis so they were not ready to handle it. Amidst the information uncertainty, New York City Major Rudolph Giuliani tried to solve it by giving information about the number of evacuated victims and the progress from the rescue team. In doing so, Giuliani sometimes show his emotion when talk about the attack, and communicating strong values and beliefs that terrorist attack is violation of human rights. In contrast, the governor of Oklahoma, Frank Keating, showed transparency, accessibility for public, seriousness and empathy to the victims during press conference and public meeting (Ulmer et al., 2011).

In addition, Flanja (2019) looks at the government official statement in four European countries, France, Belgium, Spain and the UK, in handling the terror acts occurred in each country during the period of 2016-2017. Generally, the four countries share similarities in the structure of message from the governments. All of them convey sympathy to the victims and their families, give information about planned or completed steps, appreciate the effort from rescue team and police, promote the discourse about the unity importance to defeat terrorism, and state that acts of terrorism have damaged the basic values of the state such as democracy, freedom, human rights, or unity. Yet, there are some differences in the message content such as the emotional degree and the level of sympathy to the victims; the contrast ways in handling terrorism in the future (the importance of community unity in combating terrorism or make eradication of terrorism as a global agenda); and the previous experience from each country in handling terrorism.

METHODS

This study uses framing analysis method to examine the official statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka that were uploaded in their respective official websites. The samples are the official statements that were published on the day of the attack up until seven days later. Authors assumed in this time frame, there would be many rumors, false information, etc. In the other side, the people not only in Sri Lanka and New Zealand, but globally, were waiting the current news. It means, in this time frame, the government of both countries should give the official statement as immediately as possible.

The reason why the authors choose the official statements published in the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

because terrorism is a global issue. Thus, even if a terrorist attack only directly affected one country or one region, the world actually suffered together from the impact (Hargie & Irving, 2016).

In public relations activity, framing is an attempt from organization to define reality based on the perspective of organization and to disseminate it to public. The publishing official statement in the organization official website is one of framing strategies. In a crisis situation, public perception regarding the source of crisis plays an important role in forming the attribute. Therefore, framing is crucial. If the public attributed the crisis to organization fault, they will demand for the organization's responsibility. Public attribution depends on how a crisis is framed. This means, attribution is a result of framing strategy because the public selects the message or the information, they receive from various sources such as organization or mass media, and this information surely comprehends the sources' interest (Kriyantono, 2014).

Framing analysis is relatively uncommon in public relations research as it is more popular in journalism research especially news framing. Nevertheless, framing as a construction of reality is also applicable in public relations research because organization can also frame reality (Prastya, 2016). Unlike media framing analysis, public relations framing relies on organizational official statements as the object.

This study adopts the framing model from Robert N. Entman that consists of the following components: (1) *defining problem*; (2) *defining causes*; (3) *making moral judgement*; and (4) *treatment recommendation*. According to Canel & Sanders, the most important function of framing is to define problem because this is the basic that determine the other three components (Canel & Sanders, 2010).

As data triangulation, this study uses expert judgement. The experts here refer to academics in the field of Communication Studies and International Relations. According to Benini et al., (2017), academics in terms of proportion for data triangulation. In regard to that, the authors interviewed three lecturers from three different universities. They are : Mrs. Baiq L.S.W Wardhani, from International Relations, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya (interviewed on August 18, 2019); Mr. Taufiqur Rahman from Communications Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (interviewed on August 23, 2019); and Mr. Ganjar Widhiyoga from International Relations from Universitas Slamet Riyadi, Surakarta (interviewed on September 27, 2019). The purpose of interview is to get an overview about the social political condition in South Asia, Asia Pacific and the trends of how government crisis communication when dealing with terrorist attack.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frame Analysis of New Zealand Government Official Statement

This sub chapter consists of two parts. The first is the textual analysis while the second part is the data triangulation using expert judgement. The textual analysis examines three official statements from each country that were published within seven days after the terror attacks. The data is presented by describing each framing component along with the excerpt from the official statement as supporting evidence. The authors highlight some parts of the official statement to emphasize the content. In addition, to see the context of the framing, the authors use expert judgement for data triangulation.

In the case of New Zealand, the first sample used in the study is the first official statement from the government that was delivered on March 15, 2019, the day of the attack in the mosques in Christchurch. The source of the statement is the Prime Minister (PM) of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019a)

In defining the problem, PM Ardern explains the chronology of event and the number of victims. The explanation is followed by a statement that the event is a

profound tragedy for all New Zealanders. As written on the text: "*It is with profound sadness that we learnt that 49 people have lost their lives in an act of terrorism..*" While in defining the cause, the official statement directly states that the perpetrator is a terrorist, even before the investigation was undertaken. The perpetrator is also labeled as someone who is an extremist that holds different views from New Zealanders: "*New Zealand mourns and grieves this terrorist attack on a core community in our country. The people who carried out these acts have extremist views and do not represent the values of New Zealand".*

The official statement also states that the victims are part of New Zealand despite their immigrant background. This indicates the component of making moral judgement. PM Ardern emphasizes that New Zealand is a multiethnic country by underlining hundreds of ethnicities and local indigenous languages in the country. She also adds that the values of New Zealand will not be changed because of the terror.

For treatment recommendation, PM Ardern stresses that New Zealand completely rejects the terrorism act and strongly condemns the perpetrator: "*And the secondly the strongest possible condemnation of the ideology of the people who did this. You may have chosen us but we utterly condemn and reject you*."

The second sample is the official statement from PM Ardern after the police successfully arrested the perpetrator (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019b). In defining the problem, PM Ardern reiterates that the victims of the attack are all New Zealander. Therefore, it is not just a loss for their family but also for the whole nation. The day was also declared as the darkest day in the history of the country.

As for the component of defining cause, PM Ardern provides the details about the perpetrator who comes from outside New Zealand and where he got the idea of attack. Nonetheless, PM Ardern refuses to expose the name of the perpetrator. Instead, she encourages people to remember the name of the victims. In the official statement the perpetrator is labeled as "terrorist, criminal, and extremist".

In making moral judgement, PM Ardern reveals how the Muslim in the location of attack tried to protect themselves and others by bravely confronted the perpetrator. The official statement contains sentences such as : *"he lost his life trying to save those who were worshipping..."; "he risked his life ad no doubt safe many with his selfless bravery"*. This official statement also contains of Ardern's statement about the name and country of origin (Afghanistan, Pakistan) of the Muslims in the statement.

For treatment recommendation, PM Ardern appreciates the quick response from police and medical team. She even exposes the dramatic chronology of the arrest by police. The New Zealand Government also gives some solutions such as prioritizing visa application for the victim's families who live abroad, covering the funeral cost for the victims, providing posttraumatic recovery service and intelligence agency to anticipate similar actions in the future.

The third sample is the official statement from New Zealand government that was published at the emergency meeting with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This meeting was conducted based on a consideration that the victims in the Christchurch Attack are all Muslims and that the attack happened in mosques (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019c). In defining the problem, the government of New Zealand highlights the importance of cooperation with Islamic countries.

In defining the cause, the government of New Zealand reiterates the fact that the perpetrator is a coward who doesn't come from New Zealand and that the victims are "our Muslims." As written on the official statement : *Last Friday in Christchurch, New Zealand, at worship on their holy day within the sanctuary of the mosque, our Muslims were attacked in an utterly callous and cowardly act of terrorism.*

The component of making moral

judgement can bee seen in the statement that the terror attack was a failure because New Zealanders stand together, even stronger than before. The government underlines that an attack to a certain group in society, including religious group, is an attack to the whole New Zealand. To support this, for the first time in the history, the parliament convention in New Zealand was opened with an Islamic prayer in the presence of several Imams and representatives of many other faiths.

For treatment recommendation, the New Zealand government exposes the law enforcements they had already taken such as controlling gun ownership and information flow in social media, as well as guaranteeing the safety of Muslim in New Zealand. The government said protecting the Muslim community as their special focus, as written on the text : "*Ensuring Muslim communities in New Zealand feel safe and secure is a particular focus. Police stand guard outside all mosques to ensure people can pray in peace".* This official statement also contains word "*the largest investigation in our history in New Zealand*" to describe the New Zealand government great effort to ensure the law enforcement.

The following table (Table 1) summarizes the official statements from the government of New Zealand.

Table 1. The Official Statement Framing from the Government of New Zealand

Framing Component	Official Statement Framing
Defining Problem	The shooting attack is a terrorism act
Defining Cause	Terrorist, people who come from outside New Zealand
Moral Judgement	The victims are New Zealanders even though they are immigrants
	New Zealand is a multi ethnic country
	The character of New Zealand as a country remains strong despite the terrorism attack
	The sacrifice from New Zealand Muslims will not be taken for granted
Treatment Recommen-dation	Condemn the terrorism attack
	The government provides medical and psychological aid to the survivors and simplify the visa requirements for the victim's families who want to attend the funeral in New Zealand
	The government guarantees the safety of Muslim community in New Zealand

Source: data summary

The next part in this discussion is data triangulation, which aims to juxtapose the findings in the text with expert judgement. Regarding the communication of the New Zealand crisis, two experts argue that PM Ardern's figure plays an important role. However, one expert believes that New Zealand response is standard and normative because the real condition in the capital city of Wellington is people still hold suspicion towards Muslims. The excerpts from expert judgements can be seen as follow:

> *In New Zealand the role of the state is quite good. The Prime Minister was very empathetic by immediately stated that this incident was terrorism since the very beginning. There is a balance, even though the perpetrators are not Muslim. Victims who are Muslims are*

treated equally (Taufiqurrahman).

For me, the biggest factor is the personality of Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand. She has a democratic socialist background and she has been fought for marginalized people and minority in the country ... New Zealanders themselves, as I said earlier, are multi culture. Thus, the community shows their support and sympathy to Muslims as victims. After the incident, for example, the community came to provide support, to guard the mosque and even to dance Hakka, a traditional dance to honor the spirits of the fighters (Ganjar W).

I think there is nothing special with the response from New Zealand government. It is standard. Any country will definitely respond like that ... That is actually normative. It will be a deviation to not state like that. In reality, the people act differently. Some New Zealanders still fear Muslim. There was this survey that asked: "If you have Muslim neighbors, do you want to be friend with him?" The answer was "yes". But for the next question: "If you have several neighbors from various religions, which neighbor is the most unwanted?" The answer was "Islam" ... So we can conclude that what appears on the surface is different from the truth (Baiq Wardhani).

For New Zealand, the Christchurch Attack is certainly unexpected. This country did not have experience in terrorist attack. The last armed attack that killed and wounded tens of people happened in early 1990s, and the problem was an individual issue (Ozdeser et al., 2019), it means what happened 30 years ago did not relate with terrorism. In responding the Christchurch attack,, New Zealand government uses general terminology in terms of perpetrator nomenclature, action description, interpretation toward terrorism, violence description, and victims' description (Hargie & Irving, 2016).

According to Ulmer et al., (2011), the presence of a leader in a place that had just suffered from a terror attack is very important. Thus, the presence of PM Ardern as the main source in the official statement indicates the seriousness of New Zealand government in handling the crisis. PM Ardern chooses a discourse about the importance of unity among New Zealanders, and repeatedly emphasizes that the victims are part of New Zealanders. Indeed, the theme of unity in the official statement of terrorism is commonly chosen by government in most countries (Canel & Sanders, 2010; Flanja, 2019).

The interesting finding in this study is PM Ardern's "courage" to directly label the perpetrator, who is white and comes from Australia, as terrorist. She also shows a strong support to Muslims as the victims. This is different from the trend in Western countries which tends to claim that the perpetrator acts individually (not related to any network), the perpetrator is suffered from mental disorders, and the act is purely crime, if the perpetrator was not Muslim (Corbin, 2017).

The attitude from New Zealand government is reasonable as terrorism is a global issue (Hargie & Irving, 2016) and when it comes to Islam, the issue can be sensitive and potentially create wider crisis (Fadli, 2018; Gaweesh, 2013; Ma'arif, 2017) Moreover, although the government is sympathetic, some New Zealanders still have concerns about Muslims (Ward et al., 2019), so the discourse on strengthening unity is still needed. Related with Islam, What New Zealand government did is quite same with the official statement of United Kingdom in the London bombing terrorism in 2005. At that time, the UK government chose "the unity" as the main frame for the messages. Opposition party and media quickly adopted this decision so the debate about who the perpetrator was or where they comes from was considered inappropriate (Canel & Sanders, 2010). The effort from New Zealand government to cooperate with international Islamic community (in this case OIC) in combating terrorism shows the importance of various organizations involvement -- especially Islamic organization-- in crisis resolution.

Frame Analysis of Sri Lanka Government Official Statement

In the case of Sri Lanka, the first sample is the statement regarding the number of foreign nationals who were victims of the Easter Sunday Attack. This statement was released on the same day as the attack, April 21, 2019 (Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2019a) To define the problem, the government of Sri Lanka states the number of foreign nationals who were victims or reported missing, and details the country of origin of the foreign victims who were successfully identified. In defining the cause, the government of Sri Lanka uses the word "explosion" to describe the event, without addressing the identity of perpetrator. As written on the official statement: "*Following the explosions that took place in Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa, earlier today."*

For the component of treatment recommendation, the government of Sri Lanka states that they have visited the hospitals where the victims are treated while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intensively communicates with the hospital about the current condition of the victims. This statement does not contain message that indicates moral judgement.

The second sample is the official statement that contains sympathetic message from the Netherlands kingdom to Sri Lanka. It is also written in the statement that the Netherlands kingdom sends the sympathetic message not long after the attack. The word "terrorist" is found in this statement (Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2019c).

In the component of defining problem, the statement writes that Sri Lanka gains sympathy from other countries following the bomb attack. To illustrate the severity, the statement emphasizes the massive number of death toll and serious injuries. Meanwhile, the defining cause component can be seen in the statement from the Netherlands kingdom, which clearly states that the explosion was a terror attack by using strong words such as "barbaric" and "cold blooded" to describe the event: "*King Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands was among the first world leaders to reach out to the people of Sri Lanka, within hours of the cold-blooded and barbaric multiple terrorist attacks...in which over 350 people lost their lives, leaving more than 500 others seriously wounded."*

For moral judgement, the official statement states that act of terrorism will never win against love and humanity. In addition, the statement also writes that in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, spontaneous peaceful actions have taken place, to support Sri Lanka. Not only Dutch citizens, citizens from other countries in The Netherland, joined the action as well. As written on the official statement : "*...attended not only by the Dutch but also several people belonging to various nationalities...in a spontaneous outpouring of international solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka".*

The treatment recommendation component is seen in the statement that quotes the Dutch Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, who strongly suggests that the perpetrators and organizations behind the attacks should be punished: "*Prime Minister Mark Rutte, delivered a Statement on behalf of the Dutch Government, in which he strongly denounced the horrendous terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. He expressed the hope that the perpetrators and organizations behind the attacks will be punished".*

The third sample is the statement about an event that held by Sri Lanka embassy in Dubai to reminisce the memory of the victims. The statement states that many Sri Lankan from various religions attend the event (Ministry of Foreign Relations, 2019c). In defining the problem, the statement mentions the importance of unity and collectivity of Sri Lanka to face and deal with the difficult times. In defining the cause, the statement mentions that the cause of the problem is an explosion. As written on the official statement : "*...Commencing with observing two minutes' silence in memory the victims of the Easter explosions"*

For moral judgement component, the statement highlights the joint prayer in the event in Dubai that was attended by four Sri Lankan religious leaders. To further portray the solidarity among Sri Lankan, the statement also writes that 200 Sri Lankan in and around Dubai attended the event. In the official statements there are sentences such as : *"Multi-religious blessings invoke on the motherland by the religious leaders representing Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim & Christian religions at the event"; and "promoting ethno-religious harmony among the Sri Lankan expatriate community"*

For the component of treatment recommendation, the statement states that the event provides opportunity for the four religious leaders to say their views about Easter Sunday Attack and to give advice in preventing similar events in the future. As written on the official statement : *"The community members represented four major religions of Sri Lanka also had the opportunity to voice their insights into what has happened and the importance of averting such misfortunes on the motherland in future"*

The following table (Table 2) summarizes the official statements from the government of Sri Lanka.

Table 2. Official Statement Framing from The Government of Sri Lanka

Framing Component	Official Statement Framing
Defining Problem	Exposing the number of victims and casualties
	Sri Lanka people should unite to handle the tragic event
Defining Causes	The Sri Lankan government called the action "explosion" while the label "terorist" is used in the statements from other countries
Moral Judgement	Other countries give their moral supports to Sri Lanka
	The Sri Lankan people living abroad show unity despite their different religion
Treatment Recommendation	The actions from the government to handle post-terror acts, especially to take care of the foreign nationals who were victims
	Sri Lankan embassies provide opportunities for Sri Lankan citizens abroad to share their views and suggestions regarding this event
	These opportunities are open to all Sri Lankan abroad regardless their religion

Source: data summary.

Data triangulation. In the Sri Lanka case, two experts argue that the potential for religious conflict in Sri Lanka is indeed high. The Easter Sunday Attack incident is also linked to international terrorism networks. However, one expert believes that the Easter Day terror attack has a new pattern, because it was carried out by people of Islamic background to Christian worship

place, where both religions are minority in the capital city of Colombo.

This is actually a new tension. The conflict used to be between Hindu-Buddha, but suddenly there was violence between Islam and another minority. So, I think the government of Sri Lanka is not prepared for this. As a result, they desperately try to control the news coverage to avoid other violence (Ganjar W).

From what I read, there is an internal conflict in Sri Lanka that is linked to separatist group. Some sources even say that it links to international terrorism network such as ISIS (Taufiqurrahman).

The government of Sri Lanka decides to conceal the identity of the perpetrator and focuses on the event and the victims instead. This approach is different from the regular terminology of government official statement, which tends to be dominated by how government labels the perpetrators and their actions (Hargie & Irving, 2016).

This frame is based on government's consideration of internal socio-political conditions since Sri Lanka is indeed vulnerable to inter-religious conflicts (Aliff, 2015; Devotta, 2018). Terrorism is a global issue (Hargie & Irving, 2016) and when it relates to Muslim, the issue could become more sensitive and potentially cause wider crisis (Fadli, 2018; Gaweesh, 2013; Ma'arif, 2017). In Sri Lanka, the conflict between Buddhist extremist group and Muslim has risen since 2010 (Aliff, 2015; Devotta, 2018). Thus, extra precaution is needed to avoid the same mistake from the government of Spain who once lost people trust after immediately accused local separatist group as the mastermind of Madrid bombing in 2005, even though there was no official result from the investigation (Canel & Sanders, 2010). Unlike New Zealand, the government of Sri Lanka does not prioritize the figure of country leader in their official statements. This is also different from previous literatures that expose the presence of leaders in the official statement (Ulmer et al., 2011).

In terms of message content structure, the government of Sri Lanka focuses on the attempts to calm the religious tension in the country by holding inter-religion event in the embassies of Sri Lanka. Indeed, the frame of unity importance is commonly used by the governments that suffer from terrorism (Canel & Sanders, 2010; Flanja, 2019).

As the wrap up, there are three main findings. *First,* there are significant differences in terms of content in which New Zealand government focuses on the actions they undertook within the country while Sri Lankan government focuses on the actions undertaken by other countries and their supports for Sri Lanka. *Second,* the New Zealand government highlights the presence of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern while the Sri Lankan government presents information from many state officials, instead of the head of state. *Third,* these differences are highly influenced by the socio-politics situation in the countries, as indicated in the statement of Sri Lankan government that does not reveal the identity of perpetrator during the period of this study.

CONCLUSION

The experience in handling previous terror attacks and social-political situation affects the differences in communication content between two countries. This study has a limitation in terms of methods, only textual analysis and the time frame. Thus, for further research, the authors recommend the same method with longer time frame to gain deeper data or to compare the government official statement with the news in the media to see if there was any different frame. Another possible research can also look at how media policy and media production affect the framing of terrorism in the news coverage as opposed to the framing from official government. If it possible, the further research also interviews the representatives for both countries (e.g. from the embassy)

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