Article

Caught in Narrative Patterns? Analysis of the Swiss News Coverage of Christians, Muslims, and Jews

Carmen Koch *[ID] **and Angelica Hüsser**

Institute of Applied Media Studies, ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, 8401 Winterthur, Switzerland; angelica.huesser@zhaw.ch
* Correspondence: carmen.koch@zhaw.ch

Abstract: The media coverage of religious communities can have an impact on society and contribute to the manifestation of certain images in society. Since recent surveys show social tensions concerning Muslims and Jews, it is important to monitor media coverage. In this study, we investigate the images of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the news media. Theoretically, the approaches of framing and narrative patterns are used. The study was conducted in two steps. (1) Focus group discussions were held with members of the three religions, which showed, among other things, that all three religious groups do not feel adequately represented. (2) A quantitative content analysis of selected Swiss newspaper articles (online and print) was conducted. The results of the content analysis suggest that a different perspective is taken depending on the religious community: while Christianity is framed from an internal perspective, Judaism and Islam are framed from an external perspective.

Keywords: content analysis; focus group; Christianity; Islam; Judaism; newspaper; electronic newspaper

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1. Introduction

In Switzerland, every tenth person feels disturbed by people of religious affiliations other than their own. The FSO Federal Statistical Office (2019) observed "a concentration of social tensions on the Muslim faith community, but also on 'visible minorities' such as people of colour or the migrant population as well as Jews" (translation ck). A total of 29% of the Swiss population have a negative attitude towards Muslims, and 11% towards Jews. The mass media contribute to this situation: "Knowledge and judgments about ethnic minorities as well as patterns of interaction and action toward them [are] influenced by media coverage" (translation ck, Geissler and Pöttker 2015, p. 394). According to Appel (2008), the media at least make stereotypes available and stereotypical knowledge more accessible. Many people obtain information and views about other religions from the media, as personal points of contact are often lacking. It especially is a problem when a religion is often framed negatively. Moreover, journalists show little knowledge about religion (Dahinden and Wyss 2009; Cohen 2023). Various studies examine the coverage of Islam overall, while many covering Christianity and Judaism focus on a more specific topic. However, there are hardly any comparative studies that analyze the coverage of different religious communities. As we are convinced that precisely this comparison is helpful in providing orientation, our study compares the representation of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in selected Swiss news media with a quantitative content analysis. We will also include the emic perspectives of the three religious communities collected via focus group discussions. Both perspectives are important for raising awareness and stimulating discourse in the media and religious communities. A study by Baugut (2021) on the reporting of anti-Semitism shows that stereotypical reporting on minorities cannot simply be attributed to a negative attitude on the part of journalists. Rather, there is great will to act against anti-Semitism, but German Jews nevertheless consider the action to be insufficient.

1.1. Religion and Religious Dimensions

The delimitation of what is understood by religion is not distinct. We limit the object by restricting ourselves to three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) (see justification, Section 3). Switzerland is a country shaped by a Christian history, with two dominant national churches: the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Reformed churches. Both national churches have lost members in the last years towards no religious affiliation (from 2011 to 2021, it was around 6, respectively, 7 percentage points). Nevertheless, Switzerland is still a country with a large Christian population (63%) and, yet, has a great diversity of religions. This is made possible, among other things, by the freedom of faith and conscience written in the Swiss constitution (FSO Federal Statistical Office 2023).

Of course, the mere occurrence of these religions does not mean that the article is about religion. However, we are interested precisely in whether religion and religious dimensions play a role in the coverage at all. We used the following religious dimensions as guidance (Glock 1969; Krech 2018):

- Perception and experience (experience and recognition of the "divine", confidence and trust, transcendence);
- Dealing with materiality and media (e.g., books, sacred objects, ritual objects, dissemination media);
- Cognition (religious truth, religious knowledge, understanding of the "divine");
- Public practice of rituals;
- Private practice of rituals;
- Religious events (e.g., World Youth Day);
- Religious ethics and lifestyle (e.g., abstaining from alcohol or pork);
- Formal religious organizations.

1.2. Framing and Narration

The reduction of complexity is a central task of the media to process information. Journalists must choose from a multitude of events to report on. To understand the process of content selection and presentation, we draw on the approaches framing and narration. Frames are the result of selection and salience (Entman 1993; Lecheler and de Vreese 2019). They are understood as abstract interpretation patterns that reduce complexity, guide the selection of new topics, and have an evaluative function (Dahinden 2006, p. 194). Following on from this, Reese (2001, p. 11) explains that "frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world". Formal stylistic frames and content-related frames (de Vreese 2005) can be differentiated, whereby the latter—what the story is about—is of interest to us. Specific to religious framing, we can concretize media frames as "pervasive, durable, sociocultural, and professionally shaped constructs that convey ethnocentric, nationalistic, elite views and largely reinforce the status quo" (Ross and Bantimaroudis 2006, p. 87). Thus, the way religious communities are framed is crucial for how they are perceived in society. In a content analysis of religious coverage, Dahinden et al. (2011, p. 203) showed that dominant frames were ethics, conflict and personalization. A religious frame with explicit reference to religion itself was rare but was found much more often in coverage of Christianity and less in the coverage of Islam. A study by Wyatt (2012) showed that blame narratives often used frames in religion news.

The representation of religious communities is also shaped by the narrative elements used.

> "The ways in which news stories are 'used' or 'processed' are characterized very much in the same ways that all other kinds of stories are used, decoded, or experienced. A complex of cognitive, affective, and instrumental factors is involved in the process. It involves at one and the same time learning from other

people's experiences, and a kind of vicarious evocation of emotions of empathy or of distanced renunciation.". (Roeh 1989, p. 166)

Myths, as a form of narration, offer guidance for journalists: "Like myth tellers from every age, journalists can draw from the rich treasure trove of archetypal stories and make sense of the world" (Lule 2001, p. 18). This does not mean that journalistic stories are invented, but rather that myths and archetypes provide a setting to embed events and reduce complexity.

Archetypes in this setting can be described as agents with stereotypical patterns (Dahlgren 1991; Bird and Dardenne 1990). Such narrative patterns have manifested themselves over centuries and are found regularly in religious writings. Based on Lule (2001), Dahinden et al. (2011) identified several archetypes that become visible in the context of reporting on religious communities. There is the hero who unselfishly, full of strength and energy, takes on a challenge, helps others, and is celebrated for it. The "good mother" embodies the archetype of a thoroughly good and kind-hearted person who makes a positive difference to others and puts herself at the service of others. The victim represents a person who, through no fault of their own, has come into a negative situation full of suffering and grief. The victim is often ascribed a superior importance. The villain is brutal, evil, and often dehumanized. The archetype of the criminal stands for a person who pursues immoral, illegal goals and thereby harms others. The culprit is held responsible for gross mistakes, which are said to have been committed due to his irrational actions. Consequences are demanded. Finally, the trickster is a mischievous, clever person who sometimes acts illegally, but does it for a good cause and messes with the powerful. Two patterns are independent of persons. The "big flood" stands for a great unexpected misfortune that leaves people helpless. The cause is sought in the faulty behavior of people. After the misfortune, hope is created and chances for the future are recognized. The "other world", positive or negative, stands, as the name says, for another world with other beliefs, values, and practices, deviating from what one knows oneself.

We are interested in how religions are portrayed in the media. By the term 'representation' we mean, in addition to the linking of topics, the setting, framing, and narrative embedding in archetypal stories.

1.3. Comparative Studies and Study Focus

Media research on the representations of religious groups in the mass media mainly focus on Islam (Al-Azami 2021; Baugut 2020b; Ettinger 2019; Ahmed and Matthes 2017), parallel with the ever louder public discourse on Islam in Western societies. Studies on other religious communities often look specifically at certain conflicts or topics such as antisemitism, the Middle East conflict (Troschke 2015), clergy abuse (Baker 2015), or the pope (Kennedy 2015; Hepp and Krönert 2010). Results of a few selected studies are provided when presenting the hypothesis. While the strength of such studies lies in going into detail and illuminating a topic, the broader overall picture is missing. Thus, Thiele (2015) argues that more studies comparing the portrayal of different religions are needed. The comparison of different religious communities proves to be profitable because it highlights differences in the coverage of each religious community, and possible extremes become visible. This advantage of the comparative also became evident in the cross-national research of Taira and Kyyrö (2021), Poole (2021), Weng and Halafoff (2021), and Helland and Michels (2021).

Our literature searches revealed another gap: very few studies survey the emic perspective of the religious communities on their representation in the media. Baugut's (2020a) study, for example, shows how valuable this is and that this new perspective can draw attention to blind spots.

This study is guided by the question of how Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are portrayed in the Swiss news media, specifically how they are framed, what narrative patterns are used, and what is striking in comparison. We chose these three religions for a combination of different reasons:

1.   Their size (Christianity has a 63% and Muslims a 6% population share; however, Judaism has a very small community: 0.2% in Switzerland);
2.   Their long historical roots in Switzerland (Christianity and Judaism);
3.   Their position as subjects of tension in Swiss society (Islam and Judaism, see Introduction) (FSO Federal Statistical Office 2023).

Based on the elaboration above, we decided on a method triangulation in the sense of additive perspectives. The present study examines the media coverage and provides results of focus group discussions with religious representatives. It would also have been valuable to examine the journalists' side of the story, which was unfortunately not possible due to resource constraints.

1.4. Hypothesis

In the following, we present the research hypotheses that guided the quantitative content analysis. The categories "differentiation", "context of thematization", "moral evaluation", and "attribution" also provided the structure for the focus group discussions.

Differentiation: studies show that the coverage of Christianity is much more differentiated than for other religious communities. This refers to the naming of denominations, but also to the explanation of backgrounds and the reference to religious dimensions (Koch 2012, p. 314).

Hypotheses 1. *Media coverage differentiates when it comes to Christianity, while Islam and Judaism are homogenized.*

Context of thematization: Islam is strongly connoted with politics and connected with (the danger of) terrorism (Baugut 2020b; Ettinger 2019; Ahmed and Matthes 2017; Weng and Halafoff 2021; Taira and Kyyrö 2021; Vanasse-Pelletier et al. 2021). Coverage of Judaism often has a focus on antisemitism (Baugut 2020a). In Norwegian newspapers, Døving (2016) found most articles about Judaism in the cultural section. Additionally, she found that the Holocaust "often form a backdrop for the representation of Jewish minority in the press" (Døving 2016, p. 4). In the case of Christianity, a focus on formal religion can be observed (Hahn et al. 2013).

Hypothesis 2. *In the case of Christianity, the context of thematization is ambivalent, with a focus on formal religion. Islam is thematized in a negative setting, with a focus on politics and conflict. The valence of Judaism is also negative, with a focus on the themes of criminality.*

Moral evaluation: studies show a stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as villains (e.g., Baugut 2020b). Koch (2012, pp. 319–20) illustrated persistent patterns in the coverage over a decade, where Muslims are represented as "villains" in a "negative other world" and Jews in the role of "victims". Only for Christians can positive archetypes such as the "hero" or "good mother" be found, parallel with the "villain".

Hypothesis 3. *The moral evaluation of Christians is ambivalent, while Muslims are portrayed as villains and Jews as victims.*

Attribution: according to Koch (2012), Muslims, like Jews, are rarely represented by clergy, in contrast to Christians. To describe religious representatives, active attributions are made, which turn out to be explicitly negative in 48% of the cases for Muslims, and in 18% of the cases for Jews. For Christians, negative attributes can be found in between 12% and 26% of cases, depending on whether Christianity in general, Protestantism, or Catholicism is being spoken of. Regarding studies that have investigated Islam coverage, these results agree to a large extent on topics such as: (a) the dominance of male, extremist actors, and (b) the attributions of being ready to use violence (e.g., Baugut 2020b; Ahmed and Matthes 2017; El Saeed 2015).

Hypothesis 4. *Christians are portrayed in the role of male clergy without specific attribution. Muslims are described as an anonymous group with negative attributes. Jews are described as an anonymous and helpless group.*

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Focus Groups

To gather religious representatives' perspectives, we used focus groups, which were an appropriate method to dive into the discourse in religious communities. One should be aware that the results reflect participants' subjective perceptions depending on personal experience, attitudes, and their media consumption. A total of eight focus group interviews with five to seven participants were conducted in September 2019: two mixed-gender groups each with Christians and Jews, two with female Muslims and two with male Muslims. The additional groups with Muslims were made possible by additional project funding. For each religious community, one group consisted of official religious representatives in their role as leaders (including clergy, board members, and communications managers), while the other group consisted of members without an official position in the community. All group participants described themselves as religious and practicing their religion. Within the group, a distinction was made between those who said they practiced their religion intensively (e.g., weekly attendance at a religious house, daily prayer) and those who practiced irregularly (e.g., attendance at religious services, especially but not only on religious holidays, irregular prayer). Within the groups, attention was paid to variance by religious denomination, gender, and age. For recruiting, various communities of the individual religions were approached. In addition, calls were launched via social media.

In the focus group interviews, participants' impressions of media coverage were discussed according to the four defined categories of differentiation, context of thematization, moral evaluation, and attribution. After an initial open round, four religion-specific news stories from newspapers and television news were presented as a stimulus. The stimuli were varied according to theme, negative vs. positive/neutral valence, and event-related vs. background reports. The discussions were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. For the evaluation, a summary content analysis (Mayring 2014) was used by first condensing the statements, then structuring and categorizing them. A distinction was drawn between statements that reflected the group attitude and those that were a matter of individual opinions.

2.2. Content Analysis

In the next step, we conducted a quantitative content analysis. The sampling and coding were carried out after coder training and two pre-tests by five people. Table 1 gives a rough overview of the operationalization.

By coding who is represented and allowed to speak on what topics, and what attribution of responsibility and moral evaluation is made, frame elements can be identified. Narrative patterns were collected as archetypes (e.g., hero, villain, etc.) and person-independent patterns (great flood, other world), as well as by attributions made (last section in Table 1).

As samples, six digital (20 Minuten, Blick Online, Watson; publication frequency: daily) and analogue daily (NZZ, Tages-Anzeiger, Aargauer Zeitung; publication frequency: weekdays) news media with a high reach in German-speaking Switzerland were selected. We included tabloid and quality media, and free and paid, as well as regional and national newspapers. None of these high-reach news media are associated with religion and were chosen because of their impact on society as a leading medium. The news articles were identified by means of a keyword search in the period from 1 March 2019 to 29 February 2020. For the keyword search, a list was created for each religious community, which consisted of terms such as: (a) name of the religious community (Islam, Christianity, or Judaism, as well as variants), denominations (e.g., Catholic*, Sunni*), (b) members (e.g., Muslim*, Jud*), (c) clergy (e.g., imam, pope), (d) the holy scriptures (e.g., Bible, Torah), and specific terms clearly related to the religion, such as antisemit*. From this selection, every

tenth article per medium and religion was considered. In this way, seasonal frequencies or accumulations due to events could be represented. This resulted in 1,125 articles. While coding, a distinction was made between articles in which (a) religion is mentioned only in passing (e.g., "the pastor's son") and those in which (b) religion plays a role in at least one third of the article or a religious actor is the main actor. For the present analysis, only the latter (b) were considered, leaving 529 articles. More than one main religion can appear per article, resulting in 279 articles in which Christianity, 218 in which Islam, and 77 in which Judaism appears.

Table 1. Operationalization.

Subject	Variables
Differentiation	Is a denomination mentioned? (R = 1.0) Which religious actors appear? (R = 0.83) Does the religious actor get to comment at all? (R = 1.0)
Thematic Context	Place of the event (R = 1.0) Valence of the event? (R = 0.83) Topics? (Open recording and recoding) Religious dimensions (R = 0.85) Is the religious community addressed as part of a conflict? (R = 0.75) Is the religious community's good coexistence with others addressed? (R = 0.83)
Implicit Moral Evaluation	Is the religious community (main actor) portrayed as responsible for a conflict? (R = 1.0) Is the religious community (main actor) portrayed as responsible for good coexistence? (R = 1.0) Is there a moral evaluation of the religious community's actions? (R = 0.93) Narrative patterns (see archetypes and narrative patterns, chapter 2.2) (R = 0.8)
Attribution	What attributes are used for religious actors? (R = 0.75) Gender of the actor (R = 1.0) Nationality of the actor (R = 1.0) Is the person's appearance described in the text? (R = 1.0) Is the religious actor portrayed as an exception? (R = 0.83) Is the actor acting or passive? (R = 0.83)

R = Intercoder reliability.

The statistical evaluation was conducted at three levels: (1) level of the individual article (N = 528), (2) level of the individual religious community: several religious communities could be coded per article (N = 574) and (3) actor level: a main actor, as well as secondary actors, were coded. Due to space limitations, only the results for the main actor are presented in this paper (N = 467). As the analysis shows, the main actor in particular shapes the image of the respective religious community in the article.

3. Results

3.1. Results of Focus Groups

In the focus groups, the religious participants reported their impressions of the media coverage about their religion. The results are presented in bundles according to religious communities.

Christianity: Christians complain that the reporting about their religion is too repetitive. The same topics come up again and again (e.g., Easter and Christmas are explained every year). According to the group, the media do not cover the core of Christianity: "People think about breaks in life, e.g., 'what do I do when my parents die?' Journalists don't dare approach such topics where we have something to say, because it's too intimate, too personal", said one Christian. Overall, they complain of a strongly Rome-oriented, conservative perspective, which portrays Christians as curiosities, old and prudish. Modern Christians, the group agreed, are emphasized as something exceptional. The breadth of

Christianity is not represented in news coverage; this is also due to the strong personification, especially the focus on the pope and bishops.

Islam: Muslims note that Islam is constantly covered in a negative light. Even minor negative events were taken up and exaggerated (e.g., missing parking spaces in front of a mosque). In their opinion, negative events should not be suppressed, but more contextualization is needed. Journalists, for example, could show current figures on the (low) proportion of Muslims in Switzerland when protagonists at a congress complain about the threat of Islamization. Alternatively, they could explain, as a Muslim woman pointed out, that mosques are in industrial areas because Muslims cannot find other spaces and not because illegal actions are planned there. That the diversity of Islam is not considered, and Muslims are spoken of in a homogeneous way, is one of the strongest criticisms of the group. They complain that always the same few exponents are given a voice in the name of the whole of Islam: mostly the extremists, which, according to the participants, are not perceived by them as their representatives. More voices from independent experts, e.g., Islamic scholars, are desired.

Judaism: Judaism has too much media presence compared with its share of the population—this perspective is shared by Jews in both discussion groups. The media coverage focuses almost exclusively on Israel or anti-Semitism. The Jews also have the impression that they are portrayed as a homogeneous mass and that the diversity of representatives in the media is far too small. The stereotype of the rich, miserly Jew with a long beard and hat still prevails, the Jews explain.

One aspect came up equally in all groups: They place emphasis on how the reporting is dependent on the journalist. For Christianity, the socialization of the journalist plays the decisive role in how the reporting turns out. Whether they have been socialized as Christians, but also whether they have had positive or negative experiences with the church has an influence. Regarding Islam and Judaism, on the other hand, they complain of a broad lack of knowledge and a lack of knowledge of current topics.

3.2. Results of Content Analysis

Christianity is most frequently represented as the main religion (53% of the articles), followed by Islam (41%), and Judaism (15%). It is striking that Judaism rarely appears as the sole religious community in the articles. In 74% of the articles about Judaism, another religious community is presented. In the coverage of Islam, this is the case in 42% and of Christianity in 39% of the articles. A religious main actor appears in 467 articles, and in 61 none.

There are differences in the religion focused on according to the medium. However, Cramer's V (0.176, $p = 0.100$) indicates a rather weak association and the frequency of thematization does not affect the mode of coverage.

Role of the journalist: twenty-six percent of the articles were fully or partially written by news agencies (mainly the Swiss SDA, but also the German dpa, Austrian AFP, and the international news agency Reuters—all of which describe themselves as independent of religion). Depending on the medium, the proportion varies greatly, from 44% to 2% of news agency articles. Especially in one journal (Tages-Anzeiger), it becomes obvious that they have an established religion journalist (Michael Meier) in house: he is responsible for 26% of the examined articles, and he reports almost exclusively on Christianity. In total, the samples were distributed among 310 authors. Thus, further analysis by author proved to be of little use.

Differentiation: in 75% of the articles in which Christianity is the main religion, a denomination is mentioned, and a differentiation is made between Catholic, Protestant, and other denominations. Catholics are far more present (60%) than Protestants (15%). In contrast, in the reporting on Islam (13%) and Judaism (18%), only seldom is a differentiation of denominations made. They are referred to in a general and unspecific manner.

As shown in Figure 1, clergymen are at the center of 54% of articles about Christian religions (Cramer's V 0.313, $p = 0.000$), in contrast to only 14% of the articles about Muslims

and 7% about Jews. In these two cases, individual representatives are thus significantly less likely found. Mostly non-specific terms are used for a supposedly homogeneous religious community, i.e., "the Muslims in Switzerland".
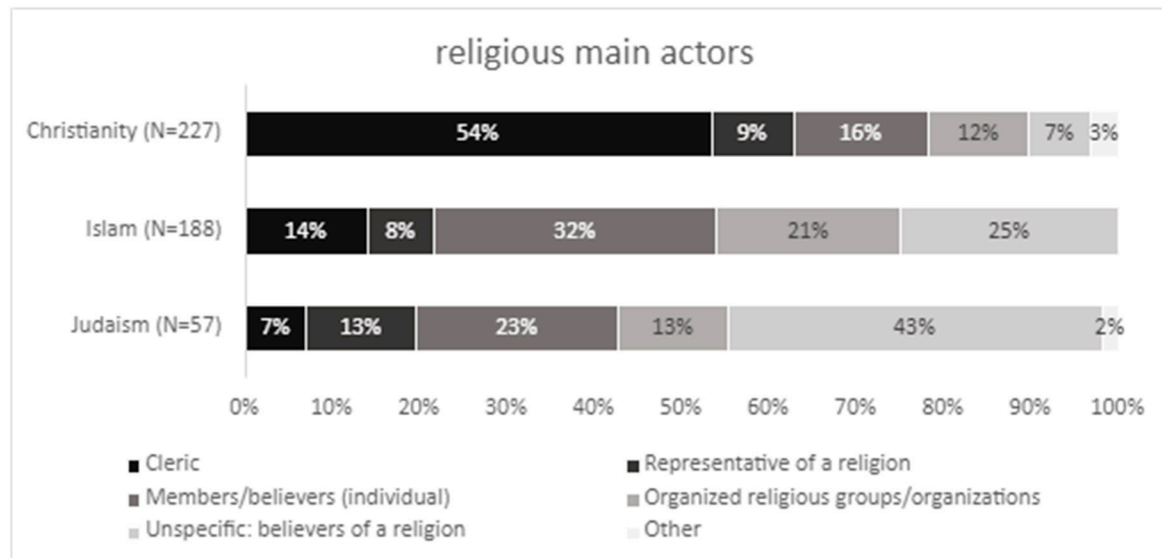

Figure 1. Occurrence of main religious actors by religious community. Note: Percentages are rounded to whole numbers. 0.5 is rounded up to 1. This results in the sum of the percentages for Christianity on the one hand, and for Judaism on the other, being 101%.

Christians are quoted directly or indirectly in two-thirds of the articles, while Muslims (37%) and Jews (30%) only in about one-third (Cramer's V 0.237, *p* = 0.000). The difference may be because, in the coverage, Christian individuals are focused on much more often.

Thematization context: the location of the event shapes the image of a religious community. The description of events abroad without the participation of Swiss actors conveys distance and foreignness. The fact that, in the case of Christianity, the place of the event is Switzerland in almost 48% of all mentions is not surprising, due to Switzerland's long Christian history. The scope of the events ranges from local (7%) to regional (13%), cantonal (12%), and national (40%). In cases where Christianity is discussed abroad, events happen mostly in Swiss neighboring countries, including the Vatican. Muslims and Jews, on the other hand, are more likely covered in events abroad without the involvement of Swiss actors (for both, 58% of the main actors). For reports on Muslims and Jews, the focus is on neighboring countries, as well as West Asia, and, for Muslims, also South Asia. The events depicted are mainly internationally or nationally relevant; regionality or even local relevance can hardly be found. Without concrete localization, Christians and Jews appear in 11% of the articles, compared with 5% for Muslims.

The events portrayed in the media are based on an implicit valence, which shapes the perception of the religious community. Islam is discussed in 78% of articles in connection with negative (events associated with violence, physical injury, and death) or neutral–negative events (events that are not affected by direct violence but generate damage), and Judaism in 53%. This contrasts with negative/negative–neutral mentions of Christianity (Cramer's V = 0.242, *p* = 0.000) in 39% of articles. Christianity is often reported in the context of positive (events associated with success or benefit) or neutral events (events that are not in any way related to harm but are also not to be considered positive events), with topics such as religiosity (39%), ethics, morals, and values (17%) being the focus. Islam, on the other hand, is the focus of attention, with topics related to the political system (42%) or crime and justice (27%), in both cases with a pronounced focus on terrorism. The topics for Judaism are much broader: politics (22%, more than half focus on the

Holocaust), music/film/literature/art (17%), ethics, morals, and values (14%), and crime and justice (12%).

Different religious dimensions (Krech 2018) were researched. Only 12% of all articles did not address any of the religious dimensions. For many dimensions, the differences between the religions were not significant or achieved a low Cramer's V. The test for differences between Christianity and the other two religions also revealed no significant correlations. Overall, the most important dimensions are "formal religious organization" (40%), "religious ethics and lifestyle" (38%), and "public rituals" (31%).

Christianity is mentioned significantly less often in connection with a conflict than Islam or Judaism. Thus, 38% of all Christian articles do not describe a conflict, compared with 20% of the articles about Judaism and 8% of the articles mentioning Muslim main actors (Cramer's V 0.337, $p = 0.001$). In the case of Islam, the conflicts described relate to conflicts with other religious communities (21%), with other social systems (29%), or with the majority society (30%). The presentation of conflicts in articles on the Jewish religious community is similar, with conflict with other social systems being particularly prominent (37% of mentions). "Good coexistence", in the sense of joint action between different religious communities and denominations or with other social systems, is less frequently addressed in articles about Islam than in articles about Judaism and Christianity, but Cramer's V of 0.198 is rather small ($p = 0.000$).

Within an article, the focus can be on benefits or harms caused by the respective religious communities. The researched religious communities differ significantly (Cramer's V = 0.285, $p = 0.000$). Judaism is mostly portrayed without any benefit or harm (70%) compared with 34% of all articles on Christianity and 36% of all articles on Islam. The coverage of Christians is more likely to place emphasis on benefits (31%) or both (8%) and Islam is more likely to be associated with harm (52% of all articles on Islam). Christianity and Judaism are less likely to be associated with harm (Christianity 26%, Judaism 16%)

Implicit moral evaluation: when a conflict is described, the attribution of this conflict is decisive. Who is (co-)responsible? The main religious actors are more likely to be (co-)responsible for the conflict when they are Christians (43%) or Muslims (57%), and less so when Jews (11%) (Cramer's V = 0.289, $p = 0.001$). On the other hand, Christians are more likely to be presented as (co-)responsible for good coexistence (50%, vs. 20% Muslims and 26% Jews) (Cramer's V = 0.283, $p = 0.001$).

Religion is strongly connected with value attitudes. Journalists address these and make moral evaluations. Such evaluations are least evident in reports on Judaism (59% with no evaluation). A total of 39% of all cases for Christianity and 38% of all cases for Islam show no evidence of moral evaluations of the actions of the respective actors. Islam shows rather negative (36%) or ambivalent moral evaluations (17%). Christianity tends to be morally evaluated positively (26%) but also occasionally with a rather negative (22%) or ambivalent moral focus (14%). However, the differences in the portrayal of the religious communities are rather weak (Cramer's V = 0.194, $p = 0.001$).

The pattern underlying the reporting depicts archetypes, which in their coloring also fundamentally shape the image of the religious actor. Ten different narrative patterns were researched (see Figure 2). Several pattern attributions were possible per religious community. In the analysis, it became clear that the patterns villain, criminal, and culprit on the one hand, and the patterns hero and good mother on the other hand, were intertwined in descriptions of the same actor. We decided to group them together to prevent an accumulation of patterns per actor giving a distorted picture. In 85% of the articles, narrative patterns were used.

In 79% of the articles about Christianity, in 86% about Islam, and in 70% about Judaism, we found at least one narrative pattern. Among all the patterns, that of the villain/criminal/culprit (35%) was found most frequently, followed by the victim pattern (30%), and the hero/good mother (21%). The coverage of the three religions differs significantly (Cramer's V = 0.303, $p = 0.000$) (cf. Figure 2). Christianity is most frequently associated with the hero/good mother (37%). This pattern is hardly used for Islam (6%)

or Judaism (14%). Islam is merely described as a villain/criminal/culprit in nearly half of all cases, compared with 29% of cases for Christianity or 9% for Judaism. Judaism is mainly linked to the pattern victim in more than two-thirds of all cases. However, this pattern also occurs in 30% of cases for Islam and in 20% for Christianity. If several religious communities appear in one article, mostly the two opposing patterns villain vs. victim appear in an "other negative world". The narrative patterns are evaluative and can be seen as a form of attribution. Attributions have been studied at the actor level.
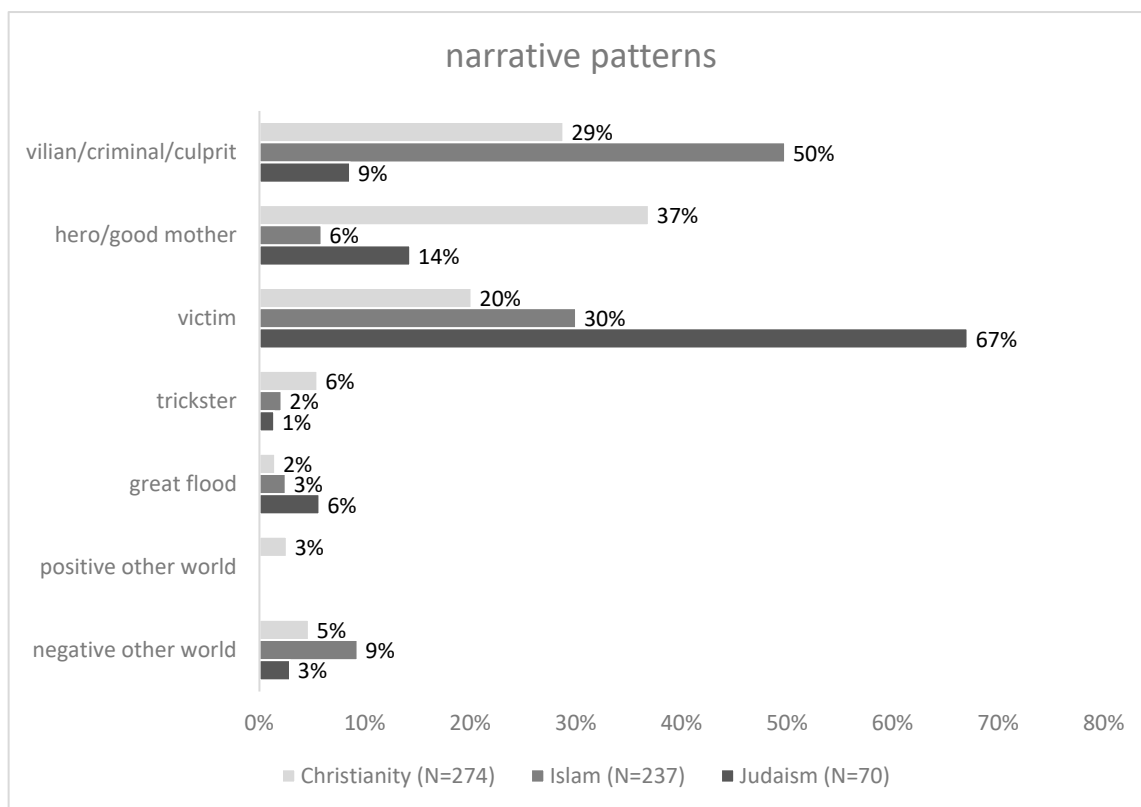
Figure 2. Occurrence of narrative patterns.

Attributions: the typical religious actor in the news coverage (N = 295)—here individuals not groups—differs, depending on the religious community; however, a few aspects are shared. For example, the religious actors in the news media are mainly men in all three religions (75%). Additionally, the individuals tend not to be portrayed as especially extraordinary. A Muslim's nationality is mentioned more often (43% Islam, 26% Christianity, 30% Judaism); however, Cramer's V is rather weak (0.173, p = 0.012). The same applies to appearance, which is discussed more often for Muslims (21%), compared with 10% for Christians and a single article on Jews (Cramer's V = 0.156, p = 0.005).

Attributes are explicitly used in 150 articles. For Christians and Muslims, this is the case in 51% of the articles, and for Jews in 42%. Every third (30%) Muslim actor is attributed negatively or strongly negatively. For Christians, this is true in only 15% of the cases. Christians are attributed neutrally or positively in one third (33%); for Muslims, this is the case in 21% of the articles with individuals as actors. For Judaism, no values can be determined, since only 10 articles show attributions for the main person (Cramer's V = 0.206, p = 0.005).

4. Discussion

In the focus group discussions, the religious community (a) regretted the lack of variety of topics, (b) did not see themselves adequately represented in the media, especially not by the protagonists, and (c) claimed that religiosity and religious actors were displayed too

much as a curiosity. The criticism behind this is that reporting on religion conveys distance and presents religiosity as something exotic. Thus, members of the religious community localize the problematic issues very similarly, even though there are differences in form and extent. These results are based on the groups' media use, whereas the findings of the content analysis reflect the representation in the news media. To sum up, hypotheses one to four are mainly confirmed. In the case of Judaism, only a stronger focus on criminality was expected, but the topics covered proved to be more diverse. This confirmation of the hypotheses also means, among other things, that little has changed in the reporting compared with 2009 and 1999 in reference to Koch's content analysis (Koch 2012). Rather, the frames and narrative patterns used have solidified and tended to strengthen. This can be assumed, especially regarding the portrayal of Islam, since it has gained even more media attention, with a similar or even more negative overall image than 10 years ago. Participants in the focus groups feel that the media representation about their religion influences the way they are perceived and treated in society. All of them reported experiences, which, due to their perception, are an effect of their representation in the media. It is difficult to prove this media effect in studies. Weber-Menges (2015) has compiled studies on the "effects of the presentation of ethnic minorities in the German media" as well as theoretical considerations. She concludes that "a negative image of ethnic minorities that has been disseminated almost uniformly over a longer period of time in a large number of media, in which the 'threatening and criminal foreigner' is often the subject of discussion, has a significant influence on the image that the recipients of such media messages form of ethnic minorities in Germany" (translation ck, Weber-Menges 2015, p. 174). It can be assumed that the influence is greater among uncritical recipients, those who do not yet have an opinion, and those who have little contact with the persons portrayed in the media.

The results of the content analysis suggest that a different perspective is taken depending on the religious community: while Christianity is framed from an internal perspective, Judaism and Islam are framed from an external perspective. This can be seen in the setting of themes and the locations of events, as well as in the narrative patterns. The creation of distance and the mediation of foreignness is particularly evident in Islam coverage, when the archetype of the villain dominates with a thematic focus on politics and crime. It is a distancing framing. Coverage of Judaism seems restrained. It is reported in various subject areas, but often in connection with the topic of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. The role of the victims is still emphasized, even if the Gaza conflict does raise the issue of the role of the perpetrators. The comparatively rare attributions indicate an attempt to be very cautious in view of the sensitive topics. But here, too, the portrayal is distancing, especially when, as in the case of Muslims, they are portrayed as a faceless homogeneous mass. When it comes to Christianity, more closeness is conveyed, more differentiation is evident, and the church is more often shown as integrated into society. The differentiation in denominations, but also the ambivalent image of perpetrator and hero, and good and bad attributions, as well as the proximity or at least the reference to Switzerland, points to a more detailed view. Thematically, religious community issues are still most likely to be covered with reference to Christianity than the other two, even if often formally. Religious dimensions are found in the reporting on all three religions and no striking differences can be discerned. Obvious things like rituals and lifestyle, which in the case of Muslims and Jews are also used to convey foreignness, are addressed, but deeper dives into the world of faith are rare. We suspect that religious dimensions for Islam und Judaism are quickly used as a kind of attribute to make the reference to religion and the story more vivid, but without having to talk further about the religion itself. Religion seldom is a theme in the context of Islam und Judaism, in contrast to Christian coverage.

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