

Abstract

With the aim of going into depth of the critical perspective on terrorism, this project analyses how the term *terrorism* has been framed in Spain, and which consequences this has had in the counterterrorist response implemented by the Government. Spain is an interesting case study due to its wide experience in dealing with terrorism, both *old* (separatist) and new (transnational), which might help to reflect the different approaches to this term. Spain was affected by the independentist terrorist organization *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) for more than 40 years. Furthermore, it was targeted by an Islamist cell, pertaining to Al-Qaeda, 11th March 2004. More recently, 18th August 2017, a group of young radicalised Islamist accomplished an attack in the centre of Barcelona under the umbrella of the Islamic State (ISIS).

Following a critical perspective, the objective of this research is to analyse how terrorism has been framed in Spain and the by-product consequences of it in the counterterrorist measures applied by the government. Due to the vast material available about terrorism in Spain, I focus on three cases studies that changed the way terrorism was framed in this country: The Madrid attacks in 2004, The Madrid-Airport attack in 2006, and The Catalonia attacks in 2017. Therefore, the aims of this project are divided into three elements:

1. To examine how terrorism has been framed in political discourse.
2. Analyse how terrorism is characterised in the political discourse by the government and the opposition.
3. To identify the effects of the framing in the CT policy developed by the Spanish government.

This project will be divided into two different sections, theoretical and empirical. First, I will conduct a deep literature review of the definition and conception of terrorism, starting from the traditional approximation, but with the focus on the Critical Terrorist Studies (CTS). Then, I address the differentiation between *old vs new terrorism*, based on a constructivist approach of this dichotomy to clarify whether this classification can be used in the case study examined in the latter part. Finally, I will cover the framing theory and securitization theory, as methods to give meaning to, and explain the effect of the crisis in social dynamics.

The latter part will cover an analysis of the case of study, the framing of the term terrorism in Spain and its implication in the counterterrorist policy. Due to the wide history of terrorism in Spain, I will focus on three specific cases. Furthermore, because of a large amount of publications and speeches on these attacks, I only examine the political position and discourse, leaving aside media and public opinion. The aim is to compare the governmental response to both events and the measures adopted, following the specific frame of terrorism they employed.